



STUDENT ASSESSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Overview

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process of collecting relevant evidence and making informed judgements to evaluate student learning outcomes.

The Sydney Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine (“SITCM”) has designed this policy to ensure that all student assessment tasks are appropriately designed to determine the extent to which students have met the learning and skills outcome requirements within a unit of study and to assist teaching staff to make decisions about the performance of individual students within a unit of study.

2. Rationale for assessment

The rationale for assessment is:

- to promote, enhance, and improve the quality of student learning through feedback that is clear, informative, timely, constructive and relevant to the needs of the student;
- to measure and confirm the standard of student performance and achievement in relation to a unit of study’s defined learning objectives;
- to reward student effort and achievement with an appropriate grade;
- to provide relevant information in order to continuously evaluate and improve the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

3. Forms of assessment

Normally, assessment of a unit of study will involve a minimum of two different forms of assessment but no more than 4. Some assessment is formative; it is specifically intended to assist students to identify weaknesses in their understanding, so that they may improve their understanding and enhance their learning. Other assessment is summative; its objective is primarily to pass judgment on the quality of a student’s learning, generally in terms of assigned marks and grades. Furthermore, critical reflection on the outcomes of assessment tasks, both formative and summative, can inform lecturers and students, not only about the quality of student learning but also about the effectiveness of teaching. The forms of assessment to be utilised for each unit of study will be clearly set out in the documentation given to students at the commencement of each unit of study.

Forms of assessment may include:

- **Short Answer Questions**

For a number of subjects, students are assessed on their developing knowledge and understanding of material covered throughout the duration of a subject. Short Answer Questions are designed to test the student’s ability to describe, reflect upon, evaluate and analyse their developing knowledge and understanding of subject content (theory and knowledge) and in some cases their skill acquisition. This assessment genre provides the lecturer with an indication of the student’s developing engagement with and understanding of the subject matter, their technical development and level of competency; their integration of theoretical concepts; and their overall contribution to the class/tutorial.

- **Practical Test**

Practical Tests provide the student with opportunities to test their skills in a supportive and supervised context. Practical Tests are often conducted in simulated environments to test the application of knowledge and/or skills to determine varying levels of expertise and skill competency.

For a Practical Test the student may be required to address an audience and verbalise, demonstrate, explain and/or interpret theoretical and/or practical constructs presented through lectures/tutorials.

- **Essay**

Essays are intended to be an academic piece of writing to demonstrate a student's understanding and interpretation of theory and its application in practice (where appropriate). The essay should include appropriate and relevant reference sources (drawing on content presented in lectures and tutorials and reference to literature). The essay should involve the description, discussion, analysis and interpretation of theory and practice through comparisons, contrasts and the investigation of key theoretical concepts and knowledge and include explanation, synthesis, evaluation, and demonstrate a student's ability to formulate their own opinions and conclusions based on research and a well-balanced argument.

- **Case Study Analysis**

Case Study Analysis requires the student to analyse a case study of a patient (either chosen by the student in liaison with the lecturer or assigned by the lecturer). The analysis should provide an accurate interpretation and/or understanding of the client's histology and present an appropriate assessment of the patient's presenting issue including the identification of the issue, the application of theory, techniques, strategies and/or methodologies to treat the patient or assess the presenting issue. Case Study Analysis is designed to demonstrate a student's ability to communicate effectively; to adhere to assessment requirements and conditions; and to analyse a case accurately.

- **Final Examination**

Examinations are a pivotal part in the development and integration of knowledge required for TCM practice. Examinations are employed to assess achievement of learning outcomes in the majority of subjects. Examinations include Multiple Choice Questions and Short Answer Questions and may include Case Study Analyses and Practical Test questions.

4. Notification of assessment

A fundamental aspect of developing a unit of study is the specification of the prescribed assessment tasks in a way that relates them directly to the unit objectives (including expected learning outcomes), the course structure, the teaching methods to be used, and the learning strategies to be fostered. Lecturers should ensure that students are fully informed, in writing, by the end of the first week of the of the study period, about unit objectives and expectations, including the assessment requirements. The details of all assessment tasks should be stated clearly in the *Unit Guide* and include a statement of the objectives of the unit; its assessment plan, including weights allocated to each assessable component and related submission dates; deadlines, sanctions and penalties; and the objectives of the unit in a way that is appropriate to the academic level of the students.

5. Timing and weight of assessments

Students are expected to reach the objectives of a unit of study progressively throughout the course of the unit. They should be set tasks during the study period that allow their progress to be evaluated against established criteria. Such tasks should contribute to the final assessment in a unit of study.

Assessment tasks should be designed carefully, first, to keep in proportion student time commitment and the weight of the assessment task in the overall assessment, and second, to reflect, as far as possible, the importance of each task in determining the effectiveness of students' having met the unit objectives. This might mean that an important task, such as a final examination, is weighted heavily. Care should be taken to avoid the imposition of a heavy imbalance of assessment load toward the second half of the study period. Assessment should reflect both the level of the unit (100, 200, 300, 400) and the credit points assigned.

Usually, one or more assessment tasks should be set, submitted, marked and returned to students by the mid-point of a unit. Although students need regular feedback on their progress, set assessment tasks should be kept to the minimum that is sufficient to enable students to make judgements about their

progress. Due dates for assessment tasks should be well separated in time so as to give students periods of time for reflective learning that are free from the pressure engendered by a looming deadline.

In some disciplines, students are expected to practise skill development continuously. To evaluate students' ability to perform such on-going tasks, consideration should be given to strategies for self-assessment. In this way, students can obtain evidence concerning their level of understanding of the work, while avoiding the stress of frequent formal appraisal by an examiner.

Apart from examination scripts, all assessed work should be returned to the student, preferably in a class context where the student has the right to query the assessment result for clarification either then or at a later time. Lecturers are encouraged to provide feedback to students on all assessment events including final examinations.

Unit Guides should advise students at the beginning of a unit of study how all assessment results are to be combined to produce an overall mark for the unit. In particular, the unit guide should make expressly clear:

- the weight of each task in contributing to the overall mark;
- the formulas or rules used to determine the overall mark;
- minimum standards that are applied to specific assessment tasks, and the consequences if such standards are not met (including failure to submit particular tasks);
- rules regarding penalties applied to late submissions; and
- precise details of what is expected in terms of presentation of work for assessment.

The *Unit Guide* should also make clear to students that the aggregated mark for the unit of study will be moderated. Moderation may result, in some cases, in a variation of the final grade awarded to the student for the unit of study which is inconsistent with the individual marks awarded to the student for individual assessment items.

Emphasis should be placed on appropriate referencing conventions and requirements, on the degree of cooperation permitted between students, and on what constitutes academic dishonesty and the consequences of committing it as outlined in the *Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy and Procedure*.

6. Submission of assessment items

Students are required to submit assessment items at the time and date specified in the *Unit Guide*. Assessment items submitted after the due date will be subject to a penalty unless the student has been given prior approval in writing for an extension of time to submit that item.

Assessments should be submitted in the form specified in the unit guide or as notified by the Lecturer. Where assessment items are submitted electronically, the date and time the email was received will be considered the date and time of submission. Written papers or other physical submissions are to be time and date stamped as a record of receipt.

7. Penalties for late submission

An assessment item submitted after the assessment due date, without an approved extension or without approved mitigating circumstance, will be penalised. The standard penalty is the reduction of the mark allocated to the assessment item by 10% of the total mark applicable for the assessment item, for each day or part day that the item is late (a 'day' for this purpose is defined as any day on which campus administration is open). Assessment items submitted more than ten days after the assessment due date are awarded zero marks.

Extensions to assignment deadlines based on mitigating circumstances shall be at the discretion of the Associate Dean, and should be granted in writing. Mitigating circumstances are circumstances outside of the student's control that have had an adverse affect on the student's work or ability to work.

8. Special consideration

Students whose ability to submit or attend an assessment item is affected by sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond their control, may be eligible for special consideration. No consideration is given when the condition or event is unrelated to the student's performance in a component of the assessment, or when it is considered not to be serious.

Students must apply in writing to the Associate Dean for special consideration within five working days of the due date of the assessment item or exam.

When considering the application for special consideration, the Associate Dean may take into account one or more of the following:

- the student's performance in other assessment in tasks in the unit;
- the severity of the event;
- the student's academic standing in other units and in the course; and
- any history of previous applications for special consideration, especially where they indicate a chronic problem.

If an application for special consideration is accepted, any one of the following outcomes may be appropriate:

- no action is taken;
- additional assessment or a supplementary examination is undertaken. Additional assessment may take a different form from the original assessment. If a student is granted additional assessment, the original assessment may be ignored at the discretion of the Associate Dean. Consequently, a revised mark based on additional assessment may be greater or less than the original mark;
- marks obtained for the completed assessment tasks are pro-rated to achieve a final percentage result;
- the deadline for assessment is extended in accordance with the circumstances for special consideration, but no longer than 6 months;
- the student is allowed to discontinue from the unit of study without failure. This is unlikely to occur after an examination or final assessment has taken place.

9. Assessment feedback

To minimise the number of requests for reviews of an assessment decision, SITCM will provide students with feedback which enables them to understand the reason for their results. The timeframes in which students usually receive feedback on assessment are within 2 weeks.

10. Reasonable adjustment

Students with a disability may request reasonable adjustment to an assessment task to accommodate their disability. Adjustments to assessment must take into account the special characteristics of the student. Any adjustments made must be 'reasonable' so that they do not impose an unjustifiable hardship upon SITCM.

A request for reasonable adjustment is made by the student in writing to the Lecturer for the unit of study affected.

Making a reasonable adjustment will involve varying the procedures for conducting an assessment, for example:

- allowing additional time for the completion of an assessment;
- extending deadlines for an assessment;
- varying question and response modalities for an assessment;
- providing or allowing additional resources in examinations.

11. Requirements for successful completion of a unit of study

Students must attempt all assessment tasks and achieve at least 50% of the total marks for the unit of study to pass the unit. Students must achieve a mark of at least 40% in the assessment which is of the biggest weight among all assessments in the module.

12. Resubmission

Where a student marginally fails a unit of study (i.e. has achieved a score of 46-49.99%) the Associate Dean may recommend that the student be offered the option of completing additional assessable work which, if completed at the prescribed standard, will result in the student passing the unit. The grade awarded after the additional assessment is finalised is limited to NGP or F. If the student does not take up the opportunity to complete additional assessment work the grade remains as an F.

13. Grades

During each unit of study, students will be provided with an evaluation of their individual performance with reference to the criteria for each assessment task. Student performance in individual units of study shall be graded in accordance with the following guidelines:

Grade	Definition
High Distinction (outstanding performance) Code: HD Mark range: 85% and above	Complete and comprehensive understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to an outstanding level; demonstration of an extremely high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and excellent achievement of all major and minor objectives of the unit.
Distinction (very high level of performance) Code: D Mark range: 75-84.99%	Very high level of understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to a very high level; demonstration of a very high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and comprehensive achievement of all major and minor objectives of the unit.
Credit (high level of performance) Code: C Mark range: 65-74.99%	High level of understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to a high level; demonstration of a high level of interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all major objectives of the unit; some minor objectives not fully achieved.
Pass (competent level of performance) Code: P Mark range: 50-64.99%	Adequate understanding of most of the basic unit content; development of relevant skills to a satisfactory level; adequate interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all major objectives of the unit; some minor objectives not achieved.
Non-graded Pass Code: NGP	Successful completion of a unit assessed on a pass/fail basis, indicating satisfactory understanding of unit content; satisfactory development of relevant skills; satisfactory interpretive and analytical ability and achievement in all major objectives of the unit.
Fail (unsatisfactory performance) Code: F Mark range: below 50%	Inadequate understanding of the basic unit content; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve some or all major and minor objectives of the unit.

Grade	Definition
Withdraw With Failure Code: WD	Cancelled enrolment in the unit after the final date for withdrawal without failure (the census date).
Advanced Standing Code: AS	Credit has been granted for the unit of study following an application and its approval for Advanced Standing.

14. Publication of results

All grades must be reviewed and properly approved before publication. The Teaching and Learning Committee will nominate three of its members to sit at the end of each study period as the Review Committee to approve results prior to publication. At least one of the members of the Review Committee will be an independent member of the Teaching and Learning Committee. The student representative is not permitted to be a member of the Review Committee.

Once grades have been approved the Dean will ensure that the approved grade is recorded in the student database against the relevant unit of study and students notified of their results by post.

15. Review of an assessment decision

A student may request a review of an assessment decision. In the first instance, students should approach the Lecturer, where appropriate, to discuss their concerns about the assessment decision. Where the issue regarding the assessment decision is unable to be resolved at this level, a request for a review may be made in writing and lodged with the Associate Dean within five working days of formal notification of the assessment result.

The grounds upon which the student may request a review of an assessment decision are:

- that the student believes that an error has occurred in the calculation of the grade; and /or
- a demonstration that the assessment decision is inconsistent with the published assessment requirements or assessment criteria.

Students should note that each review against an assessment decision is determined on its own merits without reference to other applications.

The Associate Dean will normally respond to the request for a review of an assessment decision in writing within ten working days and may confirm or vary the original decision. All decisions relating to reviews of assessment decisions are sent to the Dean who compiles an annual report for review by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of an assessment decision they may utilise SITCM's grievance handling procedures.

16. Version control

Document: Student Assessment Policy and Procedure		
Policy Owner: Academic Board		
Policy Developer/Reviewer: Dean	Version #: 3.1	Date: 4 May 2017

Version History

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Academic Board	24 March 2011	Document creation
2.0	Academic Board	26 November 2014	Various (minor clarifications regarding timeframe of feedback etc.)
3.0	Academic Board	3 March 2016	Section 12: Grade changed from P to NGP Section 13: Specify mark range for resubmission and grades with accuracy to .99
3.1	Dean	4 May 2017	Review for alignment to HESF 2017
4.0	Academic Board	25 May 2015	Section 8: Minor changes to timeframes for completion of assessment under special consideration