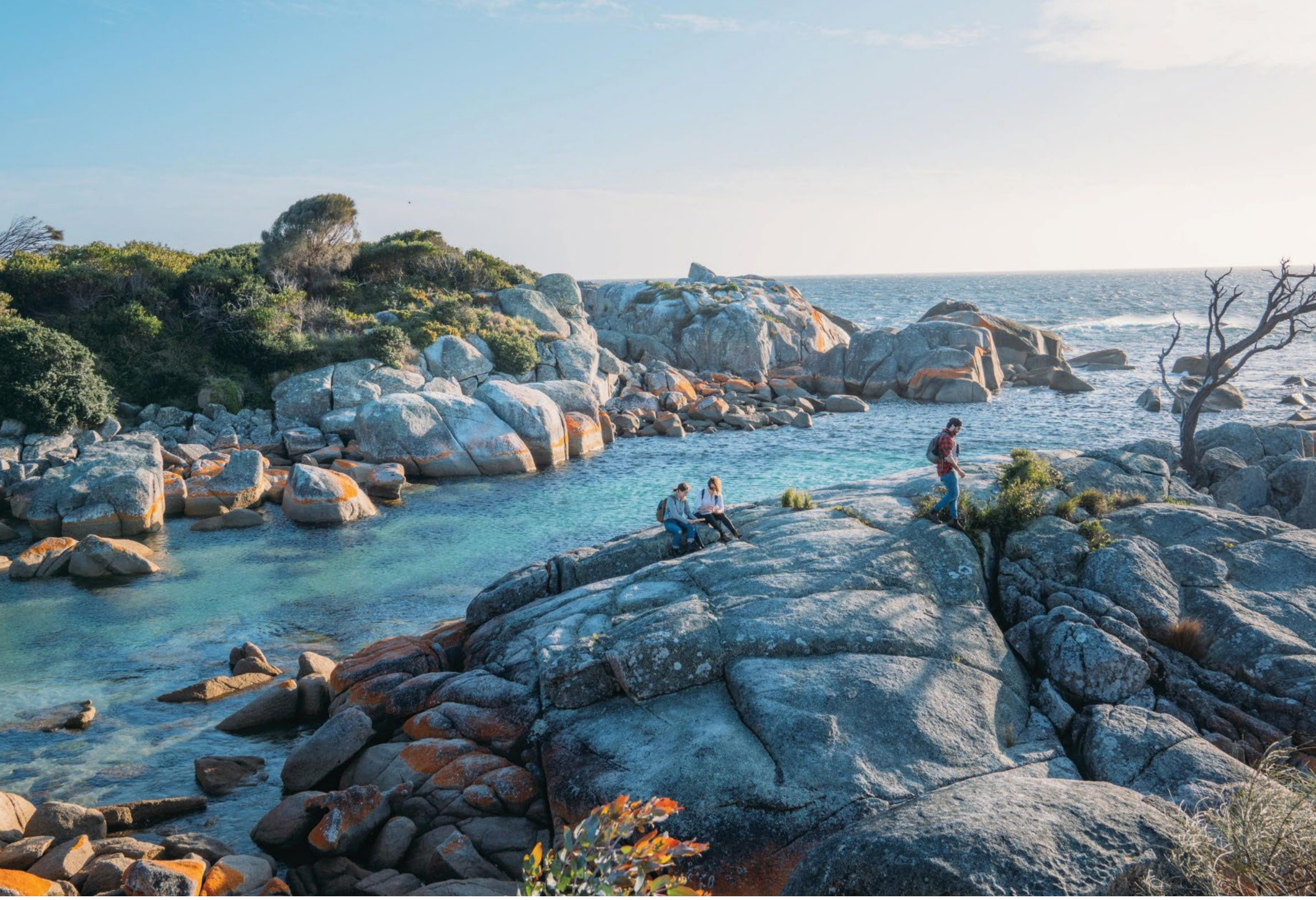
Guidelines for Good Assessment Practice



FIFTH EDITION (2022)

The *Guidelines for Good Assessment Practice* (5th ed.) provide a printable version of assessment guidelines at the University of Tasmania as of April 2022.

More information is available at: www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/assessment

UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA

2022

GOOD ASSESSMENT PRACTICE

Guidelines

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Version History

Version 1 (2007) was compiled by the University of Tasmania Assessment Working Group (Pam Allen, Natalie Brown, Lisa Butler, Greg Hannan, Noel Myers, Heather Monkhouse, and Jo Osborne).

Version 2 (2011) was revised by Moira Cordiner, Centre for the Advancement of Learningand Teaching, University of Tasmania.

Version 3 (2016) was written by Nell Rundle, Tasmanian Institute of Learning and Teaching.

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Version 5 (2022) was revised by Lori Abell, Professional Learning and Networks for Teachers, Curriculum and Academic Development, in line with new University policy, procedure and practice.

Contents

Introduction

Assessment refers to the processes employed by academic staff to make judgements about the achievement of students in units of study and over a course of study. These processes include making decisions about what is relevant evidence for a particular purpose, how to collect and interpret the evidence and how to communicate it to the intended users (students, academic colleagues, university administrators) (Harlen, 2005).

The foundations of good assessment practice are identified in the objectives of the University of Tasmania Assessment and Results Policy. This Policy outlines the University's commitment to assess student academic work appropriately, noting that:

1.1 Assessment will be designed to promote student learning.

1.2 Assessment will be undertaken in a manner that is fair, transparent and equitable.

1.3 Results will reflect student achievement against specified learning outcomes.

1.4 Assessment will be regularly reviewed and enhanced.

1.5 University decisions regarding assessment and results will be subject to review and appeal on grounds specified within relevant procedure.

The Assessment and Results Procedure supports the Policy and ‘establishes the processes for assessment of coursework units at the University of Tasmania and assists University staff to undertake assessment that promotes student learning and measures student achievement in ways that are valid, reliable, fair, transparent, and equitable’.

The Student Participation and Attainment Ordinance outlines the University's rules regarding academic assessment for all courses and non-award units and the students enrolled in those courses and units, and should be read in conjunction with the Assessment and Results Policy.

The Student Academic Integrity Ordinance outlines the University of Tasmania’s position and processes for protecting the integrity of the University and the qualifications it offers. The Ordinance sets out the University’s definitions and examples of breaches of academic integrity. It defines and makes clear for students the consequences of breaches of academic integrity.

This document provides background information, ideas, and suggested processes to help you to ensure that assessment in your unit enacts University policy, procedure and guidelines.

> Desktop Guides with step-by-step instructions for the set-up and use of a number of tools in MyLO for assessment purposes can be found by searching in the MyLO Staff Guides - try searching using the key word 'assessment' or other related terms.

Definitions

Assessment criteria	Specific outcomes that are expected to be demonstrated in any assessment task.
Formative assessment	Assessment tasks that are designed primarily to provide feedback to students on their progress against learning outcomes. Formative feedback can also inform staff on student progress which can inform their teaching.
Hurdle requirement	A task that is mandatory to complete to meet the requirements of a course.
Learning outcomes	Clear statements to indicate what students are expected to know or be able to do at the completion of a unit (unit level) or course (course level or graduate learning outcomes).
Organisational Unit	University of Tasmania college, faculty, school, institute, centre, division, section, entity or business enterprise.
Performance standard	A clearly articulated description of the level of attainment that acts as a stable reference point or recognised measure for the purposes of reaching a decision on the quality of a student's work.
Summative assessment	Assessment tasks that contribute to final unit marks or grades.
Reasonable adjustment	Alterations or modifications that are to be provided to alleviate the implications of a disability/health condition, after due consideration is given to inherent requirements and academic integrity.

Criterion Referenced Assessment

Criterion referenced assessment (CRA) is the process of evaluating (and grading) the learning of students against a set of pre-specified qualities or criteria, without reference to the achievement of others (Brown, 1998; Harvey, 2004). The pre-specified qualities or criteria are what students must do during assessment to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes. How well they do this is described at different levels - these are standards (or performance descriptors) often presented in a rubric. Thus, CRA is assessment that has standards which are 'referenced' to criteria.

What is the value of CRA?

Criterion referenced assessment is an important foundation for engaging students with the learning process. When done well, it:

- provides a shared language between students, teachers and assessors about assessment
- identifies what is valued in a curriculum, and ensures that what is measured by assessment is the same as the skills, knowledge and understandings defined by the intended learning outcomes
- makes explicit to students and assessors what evidence of achievement is expected at each of the grade standards (HD, DN, CR, PP, NN)
- enables reliable and valid judgements about student work which in turn provide:
    - comparability between assessors and streamlined moderation processes
    - relevant feedback to students about the quality of their work, and what is required for improvement on future assessments
    - transparent and defensible marks and grades
- enables evaluation of how well students have achieved the unit's ILOs, and identification of teaching, learning, and assessment practices that may need review
- supports students to develop strong self-evaluation capacity, providing tools for them to review, refine, and improve their own work

CRA means that the assessment process is transparent for students and the grades they receive for a unit can be traced to their specific performance on each of the set tasks. Criterion-referencing can also enable reporting of student achievement or progress on a series of key criteria rather than as a single grade or percentage.

What does CRA involve?

CRA involves:

1. Rubrics (criteria sheets) that are provided to students when the assessment task is assigned, and which contain:
    a. Specific criteria for each assessment task in a unit (that enablemeasurement of ILOs)
    b. Meaningful standards descriptors for each assessment criterion (specific to the task)
2. Moderation of criteria and standards, and active familiarisation of students with them, prior to submission of the assessment task
3. Use of the rubric when assessing student work, to assign a grade and provide effective feedback to students
4. Review (and modification) of the criteria and standards descriptors after marking of each assessment task.

Further reading: Writing Assessment Criteria and Writing Standards Descriptors.

For CRA to be an effective element of constructively aligned units and courses, the assessment criteria for each task need to be aligned with both the intended learning outcomes of the unit and course, as well as with the type of assessment the task is. In addition, the performance standards for each criterion should be specific to the task as well as reflective of the criterion and learning outcome being measured, as overly generic criteria and standards are not useful in communicating to students what is required for a specific task.

Further reading: Writing Assessment Criteria and Writing Standards Descriptors

Practice and moderation are also essential elements for CRA to be effective and well implemented, and are as important when there is a single assessor as when there are multiple assessors. Discussing with students the meaning of the criteria and standards descriptors ensures that there is a shared understanding of them. Providing examples for students to apply the criteria and standards to can be an effective way of building understanding, as well as self-evaluation and critical analysis skills.

Further reading: Moderation.

Choosing and Designing Assessment Tasks

At the heart of designing or choosing assessment tasks for a unit is remembering that in addition to promoting student learning, their purpose is to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate how well they have achieved or are progressing towards achieving the intended learning outcomes of the unit.

Decisions about the sort of assessment task to use, and the criteria used to measure student achievement are interrelated. Therefore, the process to define criteria to measure ILOs may come before task design or after. Often, the process is cyclical, such that decisions about assessment design influence and lead to modifications of the criteria to assess which lead to modifications of the design.

When choosing the best assessment task(s) for your unit, evaluate their suitability against the following criteria (as outlined by Boud, 1998). These same criteria should be used to guide design or modification decisions.

1. The task is **authentic** and set in a **realistic context** (i.e., oriented towards the world external to the course itself).
2. They are **worthwhile** learning activities in their own right. (i.e., each separate act of assessment can be credibly regarded as a worthwhile contribution to learning).
3. The assessments permit a **holistic** rather than a fragmented approach.
4. The tasks are not repetitive for either student or assessor - they should work as a productive use of time for all those involved. (There are some limited situations in which practice, which might appear to be repetitive, can be justified).
5. The assessment **prompts student self-assessment**. (i.e., the range of assessment tasks leaves students better equipped to engage in their own self-assessment now and in the future. They shift the emphasis from students looking to teaching staff for judgements to looking to themselves and the nature of the task).
6. The tasks are sufficiently **flexible** for students to tailor them to their own needs and interests.
7. The assessment is not likely to be interpreted by students in a way fundamentally different to that of the designer.
8. The task does not make assumptions about the subject matter or the learner which are differentially perceived by different groups of students, and which are irrelevant to the task (e.g., use of unnecessarily gender-specific examples, assumptions about characteristics, references relevant to upbringing in a particular country or state).

The Course and Unit Builder Assessment scheduler provides suggestions of potential assessment methods appropriate to a unit's Intended Learning Outcomes, Professional competencies and standards, and Graduate themes and skills.

Ensuring Equity and Inclusion

The University of Tasmania is committed to creating diverse, inclusive, and accessible educational experiences; recognising that inclusion encompasses a wide range of initiatives that enable equitable participation in University life and activities.

Implementation of the University's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2024 specifically includes a review of assessment and examination processes to ensure equity and inclusion.

Inclusive practice is good practice for all students. It is important to consider anything that may negatively impact your students' ability to access or complete an assessment task.

Accessibility

Some students will need very specific adjustments to enable them to have fair access to learning materials and assessments. Some 'adjustments' are always required, such as providing text alternatives to audio-visual materials. However, it is worth remembering that making materials and tasks more accessible usually makes them better for everyone. Information about making accessible documents, presentations, videos, etc. can be found on the Designing Accessible Learning Content page.

Some of the key accessibility guidelines (for the web, but relevant beyond web documents) covered include:

- Text alternatives are provided for non-text content
- Content is easy to navigate
- Readability of the content is good
- Reasonable time is provided for access to content

Internet access

Not all students will have consistent, reliable access to a high-quality Internet. Critique your assessment tasks and consider whether students require Internet access to:

- do research to complete the assessment
- use online tools to do the assessment
- submit the assessment

Think about how to ensure students who have less than optimal internet access can complete the task. For example:

- If students must access certain online resources during completion of a task, can you provide those resources in a downloadable format, so they can be downloaded in one sitting?
- If students are asked to submit answers in a quiz or survey, what happens if they lose internet access while completing the task? Can you provide a downloadable and editable copy of the questions, and advise students to work offline, then copy their answers into the online form so they don't lose all their working?

Further reading: The University's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2024, Designing Accessible Learning Content, Inclusive practices.

Alternatives to Invigilated Examinations

The University's Assessment and Results Procedure notes that exam tasks must align clearly with ILOs, and exams are to be weighted no higher than 40%.

There are many assessment task designs that enable students to demonstrate their learning more authentically and in more depth than is possible in an invigilated examination. The choice of appropriate assessment task depends on the learning outcomes you are trying to measure.

Suggested options for alternatives to invigilated examinations include:

- **Open-book, take-home examinations**
  Open book tests simulate work environments better and are lower stress than closed-book exams. Students can use the resources available to them in in the real word, such as books, reference materials and the internet.
- **Podcasts**
  A podcast is a series of audio recordings that a user can download and listen at their own pace. The podcast usually features one or more hosts talking about a specific topic. Many podcasts include information such as an associated website with links and show notes, transcripts, additional resources, and additional commentary. This is a task you could ask students to complete individually or as a group. Each student 'host' would contribute different perspectives or information to the podcast, helping to clarify group roles.
- **Portfolios**
  Portfolios can be used to demonstrate progress towards, and achievement of, topic or course objectives. Portfolio focus on higher order thinking and ability to synthesise information and evidence, and leave room for creativity. Portfolios can include real world tasks making them a valid and authentic assessment format.
- **Synthesis Tasks**
  Ask students to synthesise concepts from course readings, class discussion and any other experiences they have had related to the course and create an artefact (a model, a photo, a collage, a poem, a short story, a cartoon, a drawing, a painting). Objects can be submitted as photos.

Further reading: Getting started with Alternative Assessments

Group work

The Assessment and Results Procedure notes that if group work is used as an assessment task, teaching staff must ensure that students are equipped and trained to work in groups.

For group work worth more than 10% of the unit grade, both the group as a whole and the individual student contribution must be graded as separate components. ePortfolios, peer evaluation and reflective tasks may be used to evidence an individual student's contribution to group work assignments.

Examples of Assessment Tasks

These examples are provided to give you some ideas about different approaches that can be used for assessment at UTAS.

Example 1: Report Writing with Feedback

Context

First Year | Biology | First half of Semester

Large (1200 students) first year biology unit with multiple tutors and lecturers. This assessment is seeking to support student development of writing skills, and in giving and responding to feedback.

Task Description

As part of a report writing module in the unit, students write a report on a lab experiment in the first weeks of the semester. Each student then provides feedback to two of their peers (online or in class) about their reports, using the provided feedback sheet. Students then have a week to respond to the feedback and redraft their report, which they submit along with a freshly completed feedback sheet. In the following lab session, each student has a 10-minute discussion with their tutor during which additional feedback is added to the feedback sheet. Students then have an additional week to respond to the feedback and redraft their report before final submission and formal grading and feedback. Submission for, and completion of peer review has a nominal weighting of 3%, and submission of the draft report and feedback sheet has a weighting of 2%. The final report is weighted at 15%, for a total weighting of 20%.

Instructions to students

Students are provided with a step-by-step description of the process and access to the feedback sheet and the assessment rubric for the final report.

Criteria and Task Length

Information about the assessment criteria and standards descriptors would need to be provided to students, and would mirror the core elements covered in the feedback sheet (e.g., style of writing, methods and results, discussion).

Example 2: RESEARCH BRIEF

Context

Second or Third Year | Agricultural Science | During Semester (Early)

The assessment can be used in either second- or third-year units. The assessment seeks to build capacity to apply information to multiple contexts, to provide an early opportunity for feedback on understanding, and to build secondary research skills.

Task Description

In the first weeks of the semester, students are asked to locate and read journal articles on topics relevant to the unit, and to use these to prepare a research brief suitable for non- academic audiences. The learning activities in the first two weeks include access to a selection of relevant articles, as well as instructions for using appropriate databases to find articles on particular topics. Students choose their own topic, for which they must seek and gain approval from the Unit Coordinator/lecturer. They then have a little over a week to prepare and submit their brief.

Instructions to students

Write a research brief on an *agricultural problem of your choosing*. The research brief will use information from detailed research reports or journal articles (that you will find and select yourself), and present this in a more concise form, suitable for readers outside of academia (e.g., the general public, farmers, other agricultural professionals).

You will need to gain *approval* for your research brief topic by *Wednesday, Week 2*. Please email the topic, and the full references of at least three journal articles that you will likely refer to when developing the brief, to the Unit Coordinator. You will receive confirmation, or a proposed alternative topic, via return email.

The final brief is due at *2pm on Monday, Week 4*, to be submitted in the Research Brief MyLO Assignments Folder.

** Students are also provided with example research briefs.

Criteria and Task Length

Information about the assessment criteria and standards descriptors would need to be provided to students. The report brief would be approximately 800 -1000 words, and may contain diagrams or charts.

EXAMPLE 3: LETTER OF ADVICE AND ORAL ADVOCACY

Context

Fourth or Fifth Year | Law | Week 3 (+ Weeks 6, 9, 12)

A compulsory unit, typically studied in the final semester of the degree, prior to entry into the Legal Practice course. Students are expected to have basic letter-writing skills on entry to the Legal Practice course. One of the Course Learning Outcomes for Law is that students can collaborate effectively, and this is mirrored in one of the unit's Intended Learning Outcomes. Students organise themselves into 'firms' of four at the start of the semester, and work in these same firms throughout. There are four assessments during thesemester that require a written letter and oral advocacy - each member will represent the firm through the oral advocacy component at least once.

Task Description

Over the first three weeks of the semester, students are provided with the facts of a civil dispute, and each firm is assigned the same client in the dispute. During the three weeks they are able to clarify the facts by communicating with and asking questions of their client, using a Discussion Board. The Unit Coordinator responds to these questions in the character of the client. Each firm submits a formal letter to their client, advising of the dispute resolution options available. The firm then attends a seminar during which one of their representatives justifies and responds to questions from the lecturer about the advice given in the letter. Each of the three firms in the seminar engages in peer feedback on each other's letters, using the rubric, prior to the oral advocacy.

Instructions to Students

The facts, instructions and assessment rubric are available to view on this Letter of Advice and Oral Advocacy [pdf].

Criteria and Task Length:

a) Explain how courts contribute to civil dispute resolution.

b) Advise a client about the options available to them within the civil justice and dispute resolution landscape.

c) Apply professional and ethical considerations.

d) Demonstrate respect and observance of legal formalities, etiquette, style, and presentation.

e) Communicate clearly, within word or time limits, and respond to the needs of theaudience.

These criteria provide a measure of the following Intended Learning Outcomes:

ILO1 Contextualise the role of courts that deal with civil disputes (Criteria A, B, D, E).

ILO3 Apply principles of lawyers' professional responsibilities and legal ethics in the context of civil litigation and dispute resolution (Criterion C).

ILO4 Collaborate effectively (embedded in quality of work).

Task Length: letter (500 word maximum); oral justification (10 minute maximum + 5 minutes for questions).

EXAMPLE 4: PORTFOLIO OF WORK

Context

Postgraduate | University Learning and Teaching | During Semester, Submit at End

Fully online unit with the learning activities designed to ensure at least one opportunity eachweek for students to add an item to their portfolio. The majority of students are currently practicing lecturers, tutors, or teachers.

Task Description

Students are asked to provide a portfolio of their work that demonstrates achievement of the three Intended Learning Outcomes of the unit. They are provided with the assessment criteria and rubric against which they should prepare their portfolio. The learning activities and other two assessment tasks are designed to provide opportunities for students to develop work that could be used in the portfolio. However, there are no specific requirements about what must be included in the portfolio. It is up to the students to make a self- assessment about whether and how well the portfolio demonstrates achievement.

Instructions to Students

Throughout this semester you will be provided with opportunities to demonstrate progress towards and achievement of each of the three ILOs for this unit. In the final week of the semester, you will present an ePortfolio of work that you feel best demonstrates your achievement of these learning outcomes. In addition to the activities that you complete as part of this unit, you may wish to include work from your current practice, or anywhere else. Your achievement of the ILOs will be evaluated using the provided rubric, and you are encouraged to make reference to its elements (criteria and performance standards) throughout your portfolio, as relevant. The work presented in the portfolio can include any media type, and should include personal reflections. Where relevant, you may wish to cite literature, guidelines, quality standards etc.

During the semester you will have opportunities (in the form of the weekly learning activities) to seek and provide feedback from your peers on your developing ePortfolio.

Criteria and Task Length

a) Explain how and why specified technologies are or could be used by you in your teaching (15%).

b) Design learning activities and assessments that enact principles of good technology-enhanced teaching and learning practice (30%).

c) Explain how a teacher could maximise the potential benefits of using the technology (15%).

d) Reflect on how technology-enhanced learning and teaching principles have affectedyour teaching philosophy and practice (40%).

These criteria provide a measure of the following Intended Learning Outcomes:

ILO1 Select technologies appropriate for your teaching context(s), and justify their use (Criterion A).

ILO2 Design learning activities and assessments that utilise online technologies to enhance student learning and experiences (Criterion B).

ILO3 Critically reflect on your role as a teacher in online environments (Criteria C, D).

The ePortfolio can contain a range of media types and styles, equivalent to a maximum of 3,000 words.

Maintaining Integrity of Assessment

The University's Statement on Academic Integrity notes that "Academic integrity is an ideal that underpins the quality of every aspect of academic work."

The University's approach to upholding the integrity of assessment comprises:

- Education of students
- Positive student relations
- Detection and referral of potential breaches of academic integrity
- Planning and scheduling of assessment.

The Academic Integrity page has more information and access to documents, resources and toolkits for staff.

Promoting Academic Integrity

Designing out plagiarism and cheating

To ensure that your assessments provide a genuine measure of a student's achievement of the learning outcomes, there is a need for the work to have been performed by the student who is being assessed. There are a range of reasons for students to plagiarise or cheat when it comes to assessment, and with the rise in stakes, and in access to people who are willing to complete assessments for money, the decision to do so is becoming more common. We need to be smart about how we design assessment to promote academic integrity.

The most effective approach to reducing or eliminating cheating and plagiarism in your unit is through a combination of educating about academic integrity, and designing assessment that minimises opportunities.

Further reading: Academic Integrity, the Academic Integrity Module and the Assessment and Results Procedure FAQs.

Teaching strategies

Inform and explain. In addition to including the mandated *Academic integrity* section in your unit outline, and possibly asking students to sign a plagiarism statement upon submission of assignments, talk to students about academic integrity and why it matters - you could make reference to the policies during teaching sessions and modules, and provide opportunities for students to ask questions, to seek clarification of meaning, and to share their understanding of what these policies and expectations mean.

Clarify. What does and does not constitute plagiarism or collusion can be points of anxiety for many students, so including discussion and clarification of these concepts as part of the unit supports student welfare as well as their learning and achievement. The Academic Integrity Module has been developed to help students understand what plagiarism is, and to inform students of the study supports available. There is a link to this Module and to the Academic Integrity site for students on the Student Portal in the Unit Information section of your unit's MyLO Homepage - consider directing your students to this valuable tool, or integrating its use into one or more of your weekly learning activities.

Stress to your students that they should confirm with teaching staff whether advertised tutoring services (including those claiming affiliations with UTAS or using UTAS logos) are actually legitimate UTAS services. If a ‘help’ site doesn’t have ‘utas.edu.au’ in its URL, it’s not a real UTAS site. Ask students not to respond to unsolicited offers of ‘study help’ that come via email or social media and to report possible cheating services.

Clarify where individual versus group work is required to ensure students know which parts of the assessment task they can collaborate on and which aspects they can't.

Support students' confidence and skill development. Include learning activities which enable students to develop their writing and referencing skills and provide feedback on their attempts. Work with your tutors (if you have them in your unit) to identify as early as possible students who may be struggling to cope or to understand the referencing expectations and direct them to the student support services. Include a direct link from your unit's MyLO Site to the Library page related to the Referencing Style preferred/required to be used in your unit.

Students who are stressed and feel unsupported academically are at risk of resorting to cheating. Make students aware that they can talk to you about challenges they're experiencing with their studies and the support options available. Highlight the University's extension and special consideration provisions.

Assessment Design Strategies

Staff should never wholesale recycle assessment tasks from previous teaching sessions – this is the single most important intervention you can make. Even small changes to the wording or nature of essay questions, scenarios or case studies can be very effective in minimising opportunities for plagiarism.
Below are some broad concepts that will assist you to deter plagiarism and cheating on assessments in your unit (adapted from Carroll, 2002).

1. Change the content or type of assessment task often (e.g., from year to year).
2. Use tasks that require students to reflect, journalise, analyse, or evaluate.
3. Use tasks that require students to integrate, reflect, or apply issues to their own context and experience, or utilise current/recent events and 'hot' topics.
4. Ask students to submit evidence of their information gathering and planning, or havestaged assessment where students submit partially completed work prior to final submission.
5. Ask students to provide working drafts, or incorporate a redrafting process into the task itself.
6. Use tasks that are interdependent and build upon each other.
7. Tie in the classroom experience – for example:
    a. Including class discussions in assignments
    b. Using presentations in class
    c. Ask students to report on their assessment work in class.

Online Assessment

Cluskey Jr, Ehlen and Raiborn (2011) provide a set of recommendations for conducting tests in the online environment in order to minimise opportunities for cheating. These include:

1. Offer the exam at one set time only (also applicable for students in other time zones).
2. Provide a very short open period (e.g., 15 minutes) for students to begin the exam.
3. Randomise the question order, and also randomise the answer order for applicable questions.
4. Present questions one at a time, and do not allow students to move between questions.

5. Set a time limit for completion of the exam (that is suited to the level of performance required).
6. Allow only a single attempt to be made by each student (stipulate expectations for students to take responsibility for having suitable Internet connectivity etc.).
7. Use the Respondus Lockdown Browser.
8. Do not use the same set of questions each semester offering (change at least 1/3 of questions).

Specific Issues regarding the use of online MCQ quizzes

The use of MCQs for assessment is relatively widespread across higher education units, particularly facilitated by the online environment. The use of MCQs can range from providing formative assessment through review quizzes based on content knowledge through to sophisticated media-rich, higher order questions.

The use of MCQs for formative assessment is well established and can be effective to give students an indication of their progress. The inclusion of results from MCQs used for this purpose can be to ensure that students complete the task – or can be linked to specific learning outcomes. Providing these purposes are specifically outlined to the students, these uses are quite legitimate, however unless they comprehensively address the learning outcomes of the unit and steps are taken to enhance integrity of the task, then it would be reasonable to allocate a relatively small percentage of the final mark of the unit to such tasks.

Using MCQs as a more substantial component of assessment requires much greater consideration. The advantages of MCQs for ease of marking, speed of feedback, and capacity for analysis need to be balanced with the complexity of construction of such questions where they are to be used for summative assessment.

There are a number of steps that can be taken to maximise assessment integrity:

1. There is a considerable art to writing MCQs that can assess learning outcomes in a way that is not trivial, and picks up through well written distractors, misconceptions or areas that have not been understood.
2. Questions should relate directly to the learning outcomes of the unit.
3. A large bank of questions that are able to be rotated is desirable when using MCQs for summative purposes.
4. Rotation of the answer for each question should be employed (i.e., the correct answer is randomised from the same stem question).
5. Questions should be of sufficient complexity to prevent easy recall.
6. For online MCQ tests, the window of time for completing the test should be restricted so as to ensure that students are completing the assessment task simultaneously if possible. (Noting that there is flexibility, as in examinations, for students to gain permission to access the test at other times and they can be asked to sign a Statutory Declaration that they have not spoken to any other student.
7. Questions should not be drawn from commercial data banks (e.g., through textbook suppliers) or other data bases where students can access answers through internet searches.
8. Clear guidelines for student's regarding passing on any information regarding the assessment should be given.
9. The use of technology applications such as Respondus lockdown should be used where possible (this limits the students only to accessing the quiz, and prevents them from opening any other application in their browser).
10. Correct answers should not be supplied to students prior to all students completing

the assessment task.

MCQs should be supplemented with other forms of assessment. Moderation of results, according to our 3-point focus should also be undertaken. In this way, most issues with assessment tasks are likely to be picked up during the peer review in the design phase or at the point of assessment, allowing any adjustments to be made in a timely manner.

Staff are strongly encouraged to consult with Educational Developers their College or Professional Learning and Networks for Teachers when initially designing online quizzes.

Moderation

What is moderation for?

The purpose of moderation is to ensure that teachers are **making consistent judgments aboutstandards**. Moderation begins with a shared understanding about the expectations for each standard so that a level of achievement (e.g., a Credit) is awarded to student responses with the same characteristics, regardless of who marks/grades them.

Moderation is an essential part of ensuring integrity in assessment tasks. It is through this process,particularly at the assessment design and point of assessment stages, that issues of assessment validity and reliability are identified and improved.

Validity

Validity is about making sure that the **task assesses what you intend it to assess**. That is, there must be 'truth in assessment'. For example, if the purpose of a task is to assess students' content knowledge, but the task actually assesses synthesis of ideas, then it lacks validity.

Rubrics (criteria and standards descriptors) also have to be valid. For example, if a descriptor indicates that markers will assess a concept for a project, but, in reality you are also (without stating it) assessing the use of literature, then validity is reduced. This means that students cannot confidently rely on the rubrics to guide their efforts. Validity is therefore about *fairness* and *transparency* in the design of tasks, criteria and standards descriptors for students.

Reliability

Reliability means that **different assessors**, acting independently **using the same task description, come to the same judgment** about a given piece of work or student response. Reliability, therefore, is about fairness to students based on *comparability between assessors*. Rubrics associated with tasks also must be reliable. This can be assured when assessors use rubrics to make judgments about grades. Even though complete objectivity between assessors is impossible to achieve, the aim should be to make rubrics as reliable as possible, hence the crucial role of well-written and unambiguous descriptors. Assessors also need to be trained to use rubrics to judge student work, so that they come to the same understanding of the descriptors as other assessors.

Examples of some moderation processes include:

- Involving all teaching staff in a unit in the development and review of criteria and standards descriptors.
- Cross-marking with follow-up meetings for discussion and comparison.
- Using one teacher to mark/grade all responses for a section of an assessment task,(e.g., a section of an examination paper or the first two scenes of a play).
- Holding moderation meetings to confirm consistency of marking across teachers, including:
    - discussing any difficulties encountered when making judgments, (e.g., interpreting a standards descriptor).
    - developing solutions to these difficulties, (e.g., altering the rubric to account for unforeseen and unintended student interpretation of wording).
    - reviewing student responses and profiles of their results, in instances

where there appears to be significant differences in marking/grading - this can assist teachers in fine-tuning their judgments so that they are in line with other teachers' judgments.

Moderation of results

A cornerstone of criterion referenced assessment is the practice of moderation. This practice is very important in ensuring that assessment is fair, transparent, valid and reliable. It is also essential in ensuring that the complexity of learning outcomes is increasing through a degree course.

There are three foci for moderation of assessment at the University of Tasmania, and each has processes which can be followed.

1. Assessment design (pre-assessment stage)
2. Making judgments (point of assessment stage)
3. Marking outputs (post-assessment stage).

Assessment Design (Pre-Assessment Stage)

In the pre-assessment stage, assessment design should ensure:

- Alignment with learning outcomes
- A range of assessment tasks
- Opportunity for feedback on early assessment task
- A balanced number of tasks
- Clearly articulated criteria and standards for major assignments
- Peer review of units
- Benchmarking between units at the same level
- Ensuring course progression of complexity in units at successive levels
- Benchmarking against other institutions.

Making Judgements (Point of Assessment Stage)

Heads of School, or their delegate, should ensure that all staff involved in marking (including casual academic staff) are prepared. This would include, as a minimum:

- The provision of interpretive marking guidelines
- A rubric
- Representative work samples where possible.

Best practice for the point of assessment stage includes:

- A group marking exercise to agree on standards
- Double marking a random selection of assessment tasks
- Use of triggers for review of grades awarded in individual assessment tasks before returning the work to the student, including:
    - discrepancies between grade allocations of individual markers
    - high numbers of failures, or high distinctions
    - clustering of marks
    - discrepancies between grades allocated to individual students in successive assessment tasks.

Grading Outputs (Post-Assessment Stage)

In the post-assessment stage, markers should make use of **triggers** for review of assessment:

- Disproportionate allocation of marks according to **historical** data, noting that:
  - in a large first year course this may be a version of a normal or bimodal distribution, or may be skewed depending upon entry requirements.
  - in specialist units it may be something quite different and could vary considerably between years.
- Large numbers of failures amongst students who have participated in the unit
- Large numbers of students who have received the same grade
- Discrepancies between grades allocated to individual students in different units
- Substantially late submission of results.

Further reading: The document, Processes for Moderating Results, was endorsed by the ULTC in 2010, and provides a table of these processes, as well as associated comments.

Casual Academic Staff

Training in making consistent judgments and subsequently moderating these

It is the responsibility of Colleges to ensure that casually employed academics have had sufficient training in criterion-referenced assessment. This is important in building their confidence in making judgments about the standard of students' responses to tasks. They need opportunities to apply descriptions of standards to a wide range of samples from previous years. Ideally, this would happen in a group situation, so they can discuss their judgments with their colleagues. As well as training in making judgments using standards descriptors, casually employed academics need to be involved in a moderation process organised at course and unit level.

In the case where casual academics need to write rubrics, they will need training and practice writing standards descriptors.

Writing Assessment Criteria and Standards

Purpose of Criteria

Assessment criteria provide students with information about the qualities, characteristics and aspects of an assessment task that will be used to measure their attainment of each of the learningoutcomes. Criteria make it clear to students what factors will be taken into account when makingjudgements about their performance. One of the most direct ways that students experience what isneeded to achieve the unit's learning outcomes is through the assessment criteria.

Therefore, the number of criteria for a single task needs to be suitably small in order to enable students to clearly understand what is expected of them. Criteria define the characteristics of thework or performance, but they do not define how well students must demonstrate those characteristics – that is the job of the standards descriptors.

Elements

There are three key elements of a criterion:

1. Each criterion starts with a verb – describing the level of cognition.
2. Content – what students should be doing something with.
3. Context – the lens that content should be considered from.

As noted, the verb indicates to students the level of cognition that is being looked for. The Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes (SOLO) taxonomy (Biggs & Tang, 2011) highlights four structured levels of verbs for ILOs, which can be applied to criteria:

- Unistructural – identify, recognise, and count.
- Multistructural – Outline, describe, and report.
- Relational – Apply, analyse, and explain.
- Extended Abstract – Theorise, reflect, and create.

The key to a well written criterion is that it works as an instruction to students, helping them to understand what they need to do and include in any assessment task (including exams) to meet expectations. When taken together as a group, the set of assessment criteria for any task could be read by anyone and they would have a reasonable level of clarity about what the task involves.

Assessment criteria provide for students the answer to the question, "What do I have to do?", and the standards descriptors provide the answer to the question, "How do I do that?".

The standards descriptors provide further information, in more detail, about what would be required to demonstrate achievement at the different levels. In this way, the pass description explains what students need to do to demonstrate that they meet the learning outcome (as measured by the criterion). The other levels describe a higher level of achievement than is required.

Examples of assessment criteria

Example: ILO-Criteria relationships

Example 1.

Intended Learning Outcome: Evaluate the impact of leadership on organisational performance

Related Assessment Criterion: Explain how contemporary leaders can foster innovation to improve organisational performance.

- Verb: Explain (Relational-level verb).
- Content: How contemporary leaders can foster innovation.
- Context: To improve organisational performance.

Other examples of criteria include:

- Advise a client about the options available to them within the civil justice and disputeresolution landscape.
- Analyse how you apply your teaching beliefs in practice in higher education.
- Apply user experience techniques and interface design practices to web development.
- Describe the economic, political and social dimensions of climate change.
- Discuss the operation of key biochemical pathways in health and disease using appropriate terminology.
- Explain how the specified use of technology is appropriate for your context, students and discipline.
- Interpret data from your lab experiment.
- Justify the theoretical elements and practical strategies of the plan in a rationale thatexplains your thinking and demonstrates connections to relevant theory and research.
- Reflect on the relevance of the content to your creative practice.
- Reflect on your personal beliefs about teaching and learning, within the wider context of higher education

Writing standards descriptors (for rubrics)

Characteristics of standards descriptors

The job of standards descriptors is twofold:

- Firstly, they inform students of the qualities and elements that are being looked for in order to determine how well they have performed against each criterion.
- Secondly, standards descriptors assist markers in determining student grades by providing information about a typical, mid-level achievement within each standard for each criterion.

Therefore, standards descriptors should:

- Describe evidence in the student's response
- Describe the quality of the student's response in terms of the criteria suited to the task
- Give meaning to the mid-range or typical standards (NN-HD)
- Use descriptive and comparative words
- Contain positive statements about student achievement
- Use inclusive language that is not derogatory
- Use unambiguous language that students understand.

Further reading: Inclusive practices, Communicating across cultures [PDF].

Writing standards descriptors

When writing standards descriptors for a criterion:

1. Writing a description of what a student would need to do to meet the criterion sufficiently to demonstrate achievement of the related ILO,
2. Note all the elements that are expected for the criterion.
3. Describe to what extent students need to include each element to achieve the criterion at the pass level.
4. Use the pass level as a guide for determining the standard descriptor for failure (below a pass), credit, distinction, and high distinction.

When starting to write standards descriptors for a criterion, you should start by going back to the Intended Learning Outcome that is being measured, and then writing a description of what a student would need to do to meet the criterion sufficiently to demonstrate achievement of the ILO. You may also wish to start by noting down all the elements that you expect for the criterion. When you then reflect back on the minimum requirement to demonstrate achievement of the ILO being measured, to what extent students need to include each element can then be considered when writing the descriptor.

The example pass level standards descriptors below demonstrate that it is appropriate to directly address the students, as well as being appropriate to simply refer to the work itself. There is a third option, not shown in these examples, where reference is made to the students' work (e.g., your website).

It is also equally appropriate to either use bullet points, or to identify key inclusions in separate sentences, or within a single sentence. The most important thing to remember when writing a standard descriptor is that it should make clear to students what they need to do within their assessment, and how well they need to do it. The language, therefore, must be meaningful to students and not include vague notions with variable interpretations.

Examples of pass level standard descriptors

Intended Learning Outcome	Related Assessment Criterion	Standard Descriptor – Pass Level
Contextualise the role of courts that deal with civil disputes.	Advise a client about the options available to them within the civiljustice and dispute resolution landscape.	Provides advice about more than one dispute resolution process option that bothaccurately explains the process and applies the client's circumstances to justifythe recommendation.
Use higher education theory, literature and practice to make and support arguments for teaching.	Explain how the activity is appropriatefor your context, students and/or discipline.	You described aspects of your teaching context, student cohort and discipline. You provided some explanation for why the proposed activity is appropriate for your context, students and/or discipline.
Monitor and adapt performance skills in response to various audiences and non-theatrical spaces.	Work with the director, text and production team during the rehearsal process.	During rehearsals you adhered to all theatre rehearsal protocols and worked cooperatively with the director, other actors and the production team by: • contributing ideas that related to the director's vision; and • taking direction.

Once you have a descriptor for the pass standard, the challenge is to describe three standards that exceed this standard, at different levels. Often, writing the High Distinction standard is the easiest place to start, as this is where a description of the ideal performance is appropriate. This descriptor should include similar elements to the pass standard, albeit at a much higher expectation of how well they are done. It is also suitable to have additional elements. If you take the approach of writing the pass and then the high distinction standard descriptors, it can be helpful to then describe the distinction standard as what is not up to the HD level, and the credit either as what is not yet a DN, or what demonstrates a higher level of achievement than a pass. An alternative approach is to start with the credit - describing what a performance a step up from a pass looks like, then a step up from this to a DN, then a step up from this to an HD.

It is also important to describe the sort of performance or work that does not demonstrate achievement of the ILO being measured - the fail standard. This is best written to describe what the work does, rather than what it does not do - i.e., as much as possible, it should be written to describe what can be observed in the submission rather than what is missing.

There is no 'single' approach to take when writing standards descriptors, but it is important that you moderate the rubric once it is complete, to be sure that it provides clarity for students, and for markers as well.

Examples of a complete set of descriptors

EXAMPLE 1

Criterion	High Distinction	Distinction	Credit	Pass	Fail
Advise a client aboutthe options available to them withinthe civil justice and dispute resolution landscape	Distinction, plus: The process options are comprehensively explained and applied to the client's circumstances to justify the recommendation made. The nuanced advice supports the client to make a fully informed choice between the options presented.	Credit, plus: The advice is accurate, appropriate and sufficiently detailed to enable the client to make an informed choice between the options presented.	Pass, plus: The process options raised are appropriate to the client's dispute.	Provides advice about more than one dispute resolution process option that both accurately explains the process and applies the client's circumstances tojustify the recommendation.	Fails to mention more than one process option or the explanation of the process(es) is inaccurate or the process(es) recommended are unsuited to the client's circumstances.

EXAMPLE 2

Criterion	High Distinction	Distinction	Credit	Pass	Fail
Work with the director, text and production team during the rehearsal process	During rehearsals you adhered to all theatre rehearsal protocols and worked cooperatively with the director, other actors and the production team by: contributing ideas that extended the director's vision and the text, and incorporating your interpretation of the role; and taking direction andfully incorporating this into action	During rehearsalsyou adhered to alltheatre rehearsal protocols and worked cooperatively withthe director, otheractors and the production team by: occasionally contributing ideas that complemented the director's vision, and incorporating your interpretation of the role; and taking direction and, for the most part, incorporating this into action	During rehearsals you adhered to all theatre rehearsal protocols and worked cooperatively with the director, other actors and the production team by: occasionally contributing ideas that complemented the director's vision; and taking direction and, at times, incorporating this into action	During rehearsals you adhered to all theatre rehearsal protocols and worked cooperatively with the director,other actors andthe production team by: contributing ideas that related to the director's vision;and taking direction	During rehearsals you adhered to some rehearsal protocols

Example rubrics

The following ILOs and CLOs are linked to the subsequent rubrics:

1. **Second Year Engineering (Example Partial Rubric)**
   ILOs: Apply the mathematical formulation of the basic laws governing laminar fluid flowkinematics and dynamics and be able to discuss the assumptions that underlie them (criteria 1, 3); Apply dimensional analysis to given engineering situations, and apply dynamic similarity laws to scale models and full size components (Criterion 1); Describefluid flow around engineering shapes, including the phenomena of boundary layers andwakes, and calculate their lift and drag characteristics (Criteria 2, 3).
   CLOs: Numerous CLOs refer to teamwork and communication skills (Criterion 4).
2. **4th or 5th Year Law (Example Rubric)**
   ILOs: Contextualise the role of courts that deal with civil disputes (Criteria 1, 2, 4, 5). Apply principles of lawyers' professional responsibilities and legal ethics in the context of civil litigation and dispute resolution (Criterion 3); Collaborate effectively (embedded in quality of work, across all criteria)
3. **Postgraduate Higher Education (Example Rubric)**
   ILOs: Design constructively aligned units where the intended knowledge, skills and understandings are clearly and appropriately communicated, taught, and assessed (Criteria 1, 4); Use higher education theory, literature and practice to make and support arguments for teaching (Criteria 2, 3).

Example 1: Second Year Engineering Unit Criteria and Descriptors Deconstructed

Assessment Criterion that relates to at least one of the ILOs for the unit.

While not mandatory, adding % provides focus for students and markers as to the weighting of the criteria.

Verbs are highlighted in blue.

In green is an example descriptor for demonstrating and applying knowledge that is scaffolded from a fail (NN) to a high grade (HD).

This descriptor was written first as a guide for the other grades.

Criteria	HD	DN	CR	PP	NN
Demonstrate and apply theoretical and practical knowledge of Fluid Mechanics and related engineering principles to design a marine vehicle **(30%)**	Demonstrate and apply *comprehensive* knowledge of maritime fluid mechanics and hydrostatics when *thoroughly discussing and describing* the *main* concepts and features related to the design. Make *meaningful assumptions* and *correctly calculate all* of the expected parameters and variables, *thoroughly justifying* their use and outcomes. *Support all* your work with *extensive, relevant and current* literature, *link all* of your design and development work to *relevant* fluid mechanics theory and maritime industry practices.	Demonstrate and apply *broad* knowledge of maritime fluid mechanics and hydrostatics when *discussing and describing* the *main* concepts and features related to the design. Make *relevant assumptions* and *correctly calculate* the expected parameters and variables, *justifying* their use and outcomes. *Support* your work with *relevant* and *current* literature, *link most* of your design and development work to *relevant* fluid mechanics theory and maritime industry practices.	Demonstrate and apply knowledge of maritime fluid mechanics and hydrostatics when *discussing and describing most* of the concepts and features related to the design. Make *assumptions* and *calculate most* expected parameters and variables, *justifying* their use and outcomes. *Support most of* your work with *relevant* literature, *link some of* your design and development work to *relevant* fluid mechanics theory and maritime industry practices.	Demonstrate and apply *basic* knowledge of maritime fluid mechanics and hydrostatics when *discussing and describing some* of the concepts and features related to the design. Make at least *half the required assumptions* and *calculate some* of the expected parameters and variables, partially *justifying* their use and outcomes. *Support* at least *half* of your work with literature, *link some* of your design and development work to fluid mechanics theory and maritime industry practices.	Demonstrate *partially-developed* knowledge of fluid mechanics and hydrostatics, and *state* concepts and *describe* features related to the design. Make *insufficient or wrong* assumptions and *partially* calculate *some* of the expected parameters, *occasionally justifying* their use and outcomes. *Partially link* to *some* fluid mechanics and engineering practices.

4TH/5TH YEAR LAW (EXAMPLE RUBRIC)

Criteria	High Distinction	Distinction	Credit	Pass	Fail
	Distinction, plus…	*Credit, plus…*	*Pass, plus…*		
Explain how courts contribute to civil dispute resolution	Explanation is accurate and comprehensive, and the client's instructions are comprehensively considered.	Explains some of the advantages and disadvantages of litigation as a dispute resolution option in dealing with the client's dispute.	Takes into consideration the client's instructions about the circumstances of the dispute.	Accurately explains the way litigation can be applied to the client's dispute.	The process option of litigation is ignored or over-emphasised, or the role of the court in dealing with the client's dispute is inaccurately presented.
Advise a client about the options available to them within the civil justice and dispute resolution landscape	The process options are comprehensively explained and applied to the client's circumstances to justify the recommendation made. The nuanced advice supports the client to make a fully informed choice between the options presented.	The advice is accurate, appropriate and sufficiently detailed to enable the client to make an informed choice between the options presented.	The process options raised are appropriate to the client's dispute.	Provides advice about more than one dispute resolution process option that both accurately explains the process and applies the client's circumstances to justify the recommendation.	Fails to mention more than one process option or the explanation of the process(es) is inaccurate or the process(es) recommended are unsuited to the client's circumstances.
Apply professional and ethical considerations	Demonstrates application of a nuanced and thoughtful understanding of the lawyers' professional and ethical obligations.	Thoughtful and wise decisions have been made in applying those responsibilities to the task.	Demonstrates that the lawyers' professional and ethical obligations in the context (including costs) are understood and deliberate decisions have been made in applying those responsibilities to the task.	Complies with the lawyers' professional and ethical obligations in the context.	Does not comply with the lawyers' professional and ethical obligations in the context.
Demonstrate respect and observance of legal formalities, etiquette, style, and presentation				Legal letter complies with all requirements. Oral presentation is appropriate for real world legal practice and complies with all formalities, etiquette and professional requirements. *Requirements are explained in the Legal Letter Writing and Oral Assessment Modules on MyLO.*	Legal letter does not comply with all requirements. Oral justification is not appropriately presented or does not comply with requirements. *Requirements are explained in the Legal Letter Writing and Oral Assessment Modules on MyLO.*
Communicate clearly, within word and time limits, and respond to the needs of the audience	Communication standard as expected of a senior legal practitioner and tailored artfully to suit the audience.	Professional presentation suited to real world application without further amendment (including competent answers to questions).	Concise and precise presentation suited to real world application with minor amendment (including attempting to answer questions).	Communicates clearly, within word and time limits and responds appropriately to the needs of the audience.	Communication lacks clarity or exceeds word or time limits or is unprofessional or otherwise inappropriate to meet the needs of the audience.

POSTGRADUATE HIGHER EDUCATION (EXAMPLE RUBRIC)

Criterion	High Distinction (HD)	Distinction (DN)	Credit (CR)	Pass (PP)	Fail (NN)
Develop a learning activityin line with the UTAS online delivery standards and constructive alignment	You clearly and succinctly described your learning activityincluding any supporting resources. You explained the function of the activity within the unit/curriculum in relation to the UTAS online delivery standards and constructive alignment.	You described the key details of your learning activity and supporting resources. You explained the function of the activity within the unit/curriculum in relation to the UTAS online delivery standards and/or constructive alignment.	You described a learning activity. You discussed the UTAS online delivery standards and constructive alignment and the activity appears consistent with both.	You described a teaching activity. The activity appears consistent with the UTAS online delivery standards and constructive alignment.	You described elements of teaching. The activity was unclear and/or inconsistent with UTAS online delivery standards and/or constructive alignment.
Justify your activity with reference to teaching and learning literature	You convincingly justified all aspects of the learning activity with the use of relevant generaland discipline-specific teachingand learning literature.	You justified your choice of activity with the use of relevant teaching and learning literature. You included reference to some discipline-specific teaching and learning literature.	You used a variety of teaching and learning literature to justify your activity.	You used teaching and learning literature to support some aspects of your activity.	You used minimal relevant literature to support your choice(s).
Explain how the activity is appropriate for your context, students and/or discipline	You provided a comprehensive justification for your activity, using convincing evidence of itsappropriateness for your context, students and/or discipline. Your evidence took a range offorms, including: – personal or peer reflectionsfrom teaching experiences, – student feedback, bothformal and informal, – reference to the literature.Your explanation was succinct and compelling.	You justified your activity using evidence of its appropriateness for your context, students and/or discipline. Your evidence took a range of forms.	You described your teaching context, student cohort and discipline. You used evidence to support your claims that the proposed teaching activity is appropriate for your context, students and/or discipline.	You described aspects of your teaching context, student cohort and discipline. You provided some explanation for why the proposed activity is appropriate for your context, students and/or discipline.	You discussed your teaching context at a general level. You provided unsuitable or minimal evidence to support any claims about yourstudents, context or discipline.
Explain how the activity prepares students to achieve the ILOs as measured through assessment	You clearly and concisely explained how the activity helps students to develop and practicethe knowledge, understandings and/or skills required to successfully complete assessment.	You explained how the activity helps students to develop and practice the knowledge, understandings and/or skills required to successfully complete assessment.	You described a relationship between the activity and assessment of the unit.	You identified a link between the activity and some aspect of the assessment of the unit. The activity appears to relate to the intended learning outcomes and the assessment.	You discussed the activity and the assessment at a general level and/or the activity is unrelated to the intended learning outcomes and/or the assessment.

Peer Review of Assessment

As a self-accrediting institution, the University of Tasmania has a responsibility to ensure that it continues to demonstrate high standards of learning and teaching performance.

Peer review ofteaching and assessment is part of that endeavour. Peer review of assessment is defined as:

> *The practice of colleagues providing and receiving feedback on one another's unit/subject outlines, assessment tasks and marking criteria to ensure that assessment is aligned to intended learning outcomes and includes a calibration process to ensure comparability of achievement standards and an opportunity for professional learning. (Booth, Beckett, & Saunders, 2015)*

Principles of Peer Review

Effective	Enables the external referencing of assessment methods and grading of students' achievement of learning outcomes acrosscomparable courses of study. Supports both the quality enhancement and quality assurance of courses and units
Efficient	Provides a streamlined, efficient and sustainable process for external referencing that can be operationalised and usedroutinely by participating higher education institutions.
Transparent	Engages multiple perspectives and facilitates critical discussion between teaching staff across comparable courses of study to support consensus building around standards of student learning outcomes.
Capacity Building	Contributes to the professional development of participating staffand disciplinary and cross disciplinary communities of practice through a College of Peers process.

Review Questions

The *University Framework for Formal Peer Review* includes a number of questions adapted from Harris et al., (2008). The following list has been adapted specifically for assessment review:

- Which assessment will be reviewed?
- What will be the policy regarding participation?
- Who will the reviewers be?
- What form will the review process take?
- What reporting will take place?
- What follow up will occur after the peer review process?

Further reading: See the University of Tasmania Strategy for Institutional-level Peer

Review (September 2015) (Section 5) for additional information ofthese questions at a broader teaching level.

Finding a reviewer

Peer review is usually best carried out in pairs, or groups of three. These may comprise:

- Colleagues within the same organisational unit
- Colleagues from the same discipline or subject area
- Colleagues from a different unit, discipline or institution
- Staff from Professional Learning and Networks for Teachers
- External academic staff teaching similar units in other universities
- External industry or clinical professionals.

Phases of Peer Review

Effective peer review of assessment should be progressed in stages, including:

Phase	Key Actions
Planning	Focus on defining the purpose, intended outcomes, and most appropriate reviewer.
Pre-Review	In a meeting between reviewer(s) and reviewee, discuss teaching context, documentation for sharing, and agreed timeline.
Review	Enable reviewer(s) to independently review materials, with reviewee conducting a self-assessment.
Post-Review	In a meeting between reviewer(s) and reviewee, discuss feedback fromreviewer(s), discrepancies between self-review and peer review, and any suggested actions.
Reporting	Document the review process and consider improvements to assessment where appropriate.
Improvement	What actions have resulted from the improvement recommendations?What results would be needed to be assured of increased quality?

Further reading: For more peer review guidance see the Peer Review of Teaching. For specific information on external peer review see the University of Tasmania Strategy for Institutional-level Peer Review (September 2015).

Marking

Making Judgements and Assigning Grades

When you award a grade for a student's performance in an assessment task, you use your professional judgment to make decisions. How you arrive at these final judgments must be as manageable for you as possible. These judgments also need to be valid and reliable. Your judgments are underpinned by the principle that *assessment practices and processes must be fair, transparent and equitable* by ensuring that students know in advance how you arrive at these grades.

Using the rubric

When marking a task with criteria and standards descriptors (a rubric), the assigning of a grade for each criterion should be about determining the quality of the student's performance against the descriptions for each grade standard. When making the comparison, make a holistic judgment about the standard that mostly matches, or is equivalent to, the way the student has demonstrated what they know, understand or are able to do. It is important to note here that students sometimes demonstrate achievement of a criterion in a way that you (or the writer of the descriptors) **did not expect**, and which is therefore not described within any of the standards. When this occurs, you will need to go back to the criterion and the ILO it seeks to measure, and use your professional judgement to determine the standard the student has demonstrated achievement of. **Standards descriptors should not be used in a restrictive way** (i.e., used to determine that a student cannot be awarded a standard because their work does not exactly match the description).

Once you have decided that a student has achieved a particular standard (grade) for each criterion, then you have to have a way of coming up with an overall grade for the task, and later for the unit. Grading a task or a unit therefore requires a way of combining the standards achieved for each criterion to determine an overall grade (and mark). No matter which approach you use, results must be moderated to ensure comparability of judgments.

Approaches to determining an overall grade

There are three common approaches which can be used individually or in combination. If you are having difficulty coming to an overall grade for a task or unit, confirm or change your judgments by re-examining the student's actual responses.

1. Profiling Results

This involves making an on-balance judgment that requires looking at the general pattern of achievement in the criteria across the task. It can be useful when taking this approach to note where in a grade standard for each criterion the student demonstrated achievement (i.e., 'high pass', 'low credit', etc.). If you intend to take this approach, and consider some criteria more important than others, it is important that this is clearly communicated to students at the same time as providing them with the rubric.

2. Predetermined Rules

This involves setting rules for how grades for each criterion are combined to reach an overall grade for a task or a unit. Rules can take account of differently weighted criteria and can include the use of algorithms.

3. Assigning Marks

This involves setting mark distributions for each grade, criterion, and task - based on the University's prescribed percentage distribution for awarding of HD to NN grades:

HD – High Distinction 80–100%

DN – Distinction 70–79%

CR – Credit 60–69%

PP – Pass 50–59%

The Rubrics and Grades tools in MyLO make this a relatively straightforward option. When taking this approach, it is important that you first identify the grade standard that the student has demonstrated for a criterion, and then decide where (low, mid, high) in that grade the work sits to determine a mark/score to assign for the criterion.

Feedback

Feedback is a fundamental learning and teaching activity that has a significant impact on student learning and achievement, and as such is an important function of assessment. It has been found that whether or not lecturers provide students with helpful feedback has a bigger impact on student learning and satisfaction than anything else (Gibbs & Simpson, 2005).

What is helpful (effective feedback)

Although perspectives on feedback vary widely, we do know that students are enthusiastic about feedback, and that they want more and/or better feedback (Dawson et al., 2019).

Feedback that is generally considered most helpful (effective):

- identifies and positively reinforces what was done well
- makes useful suggestions about specific ways students could improve their work or change their approach for future work
- corrects misapprehensions revealed in the work
- is respectful of the individuality and worth of each student
- is timely - it comes when it still matters to students and when they can make the most of it
- enables students to refine their capacity to use information to judge themselves in relation to similar work or situations.

Effective feedback as a dialogue or process

Rather than something that teachers *do to* students, feedback can instead be understood as a dialogue or process whereby students seek, engage with and act on feedback from multiple sources (Boud, 2015; Boud & Molloy, 2013; Gibbs & Simpson, 2005).

Boud (2015) highlights 3 requirements for an effective feedback process that influences learning:

1. Knowledge of appropriate standards (by both the teacher and the student).
2. Comparison of one's own work with these standards.
3. Taking action to close the gap between the two.

Effective feedback allows students to reduce discrepancies between their current knowledge, understanding and/or performance and a goal. Thus, according to Hattie and Timperley (2007), the process of effective feedback must answer 3 questions:

1. Where am I going? (What are the goals?)
2. How am I going? (What progress is being made towards the goal?)
3. Where to next? (What activities need to be undertaken to make better progress?)

This understanding of effective feedback as a dialogue or process has implications for unit design, teaching and marking students' work.

Further Reading: Feedback

Giving effective feedback

Although ideally opportunities for feedback on progress should be integrated within many of a unit's learning activities, the focus here is on feedback associated with formal assessment tasks. It is worth noting that students are more likely to engage with feedback when it is provided separately from a mark or grade (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Therefore, if the main intent of an activity is to feed into student development and assist them to improve, it will be most effective if it is not used as a summative assessment.

The Assessment and Results Procedure provides the following guidance on giving effective feedback to students:

- Constructive feedback, indicating what was done well and areas for improvement, must be provided for **all assessment tasks**.
- Feedback should be both generic and individual. **Generic feedback** should be used to provide students with insight into how the cohort has performed on the assessment task by identifying common strengths and errors. **Individual feedback** should be specific, personalised and future-focused to provide each student with insight into their performance on the assessment task and how they might improve performance in future tasks (whether within or beyond the unit).
- For assessment tasks worth 10% or less, at least generic feedback should be provided to the entire student cohort.
- Generic feedback on exams should be made available once the results for the study period have been finalised. Individual feedback on exams should be made available on individual request.

Written Comments

Written comments, in addition to the standard descriptor identified for each criterion, often provide specific feedback unique to each student and can be in the form of an overall comment on the task overall, or comments that address each criterion separately. Guidelines for written comments that students are most likely to engage with, and use to improve future performance indicate that they should:

- Start by **highlighting a strength** - something the student has done well (although this can be difficult when the student has failed the criterion, if they have achieved a pass or above, the standard descriptor can provide suggestions for elements to highlight). This can be particularly beneficial when the comment not only identifies what was done well, but also explains why/how it was good. Using the student's name as part of this positive part of the comment personalises it, which can have a powerful effect.
- Identify one to three important areas where improvements could be made, and **give specific examples and explanations for how they could be improved** (these are most beneficial when the examples and explanations are forward looking - they can be used to make improvements to future work and assessments). When determining the areas for improvement, look at the ILOs for the unit to help you to include only those aspects which are most important and relevant for the learning inyour unit.
- End on a note of encouragement - but make sure that it is truthful and sincere. For example, "you are showing clear improvement in your use of evidence" or "You had some interesting ideas that made me think".

Note that written comments can take quite some time to formulate when ensuring that they are meaningful to students, and written as recommended above.

Audio or video comments

Rather than providing written comments, you could provide students with audio or video recorded comments. This may even be more time efficient when providing feedback to large student cohorts (Broadbent, Panadero, & Boud, 2018).

Just as with written comments, these could be specific to each criterion or could provide comments on the task overall. You could also consider providing the entire student cohort with generic audio or video feedback identifying common strengths and errors in task or exam submissions (e.g., in a MyLO announcement).

To provide students with individual audio or video feedback, you could:

- Use the Record Audio or the Record Video button in the MyLO Evaluate Submissions page to make and share a short audio or video recording.
- Record audio or video feedback using separate software and attach as a file in the MyLO Evaluate Submissions page. Some software (including Microsoft Stream) will automatically generate closed captions and a searchable transcript.

To provide students with generic audio or video feedback, you could:

- Use the Video Note tool in MyLO to record and share your feedback (e.g., in an announcement). You can select to auto-generate captions if you wish.
- Record audio or video feedback using separate software and attach as a file in the MyLO Evaluate Submissions page. Some software (including Microsoft Stream) will automatically generate closed captions and a searchable transcript.

Further reading: Marking Assignments using MyLO, Making videos, Sharing videos, MyLO Video Note

One to one meetings

Sometimes it may be more time efficient to ask students to book in for 10-minute feedback sessions after returning their work, grades and rubric feedback. In this way students receive personal feedback, inclusive of the opportunity to ask questions to receive feedback on areas of concern or interest to them.

This approach can also work well if students do not receive your grade prior to attending but use the rubric to self- assess and award a grade. The two can then be compared and provide useful points for discussion during the meeting.

Further Reading: University of New South Wales Assessment Feedback.

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