

La Trobe University Assessment Policy

SECTION 1 – Administrative information

Policy title	Assessment Policy	Policy grouping/category	Academic
Policy status	New	Policy reference number	[to be allocated later when policy database is developed]

SECTION 2 – Policy Content

	Assessment Policy
Purpose of the policy	To outline the University’s approach to assessment and the principles underpinning this approach, and to identify responsibilities for ensuring the policy is implemented.
Scope	This policy applies to assessment in undergraduate units and courses, and to assessment in the coursework component of honours and postgraduate programs. The policy does not apply to the examination of honours and postgraduate research theses.
Preamble	Assessment encompasses the implementation of assessable activities designed to engage students in learning, the evaluation and provision of feedback on their performance, and the grading of their achievement. This policy outlines the purposes of assessment, the approach and principles to be followed, the University’s commitment to equity and integrity in assessment, and roles and responsibilities of members of the University in ensuring that specified standards are upheld, feedback is provided, and learning is supported through the assessment process.
Content	<p>1. Purposes of assessment</p> <p>1.1 The results of assessment in the higher education context serves multiple purposes and end users. Broad categories of purposes include grading and selection, maintenance of standards or quality control, feedback to students and feedback to teachers.</p>

	<p>For example, selection and quality control are of interest to employers who seek assurance that graduates are competent and to governments who want reassurance that there is a worthwhile return on funds being invested in higher education. Students also want assurance of the quality of the awards they receive.</p>
1.2	<p>Another purpose of assessment is to motivate students to learn. The assessment <i>method</i> chosen will critically influence <i>what</i> students learn.</p>
1.3	<p>Assessment has both formative and summative purposes. Formative assessment facilitates effective approaches to learning by monitoring student progress against explicit standards and by providing feedback to students. Feedback is a key element of formative assessment in that it provides students with information about how their performance compares with the standard required, and it assists them in achieving that standard.</p> <p>Summative assessment involves the making of judgements about student learning against explicit criteria and standards usually towards the end of a unit. These judgements are usually translated into grades. Summative judgements are used to accredit learners at the end of a unit or course.</p>
2.	Approach to assessment
2.1	<p>Assessment must be criterion-referenced. This means that students' work is assessed with reference to written criteria derived from explicit learning outcomes.</p>
2.2	<p>Within a unit there should be both formative and summative assessment.</p>
3.	Principles
3.1	<p>Assessment should be equitable, objective and auditable.</p>
3.2	<p>Assessment should be aligned to specified learning outcomes, including graduate attributes and the generic skills they encompass.</p>
3.3	<p>Unit and course schedules of assessment should have inter-related sequences of tasks which include both formative and summative elements.</p>

	<p>3.4 Assessment tasks should be designed to provide both a valid and a reliable measure of student achievement. Reliability refers to the consistency and dependability of the information obtained from an assessment task. Validity refers to the extent to which an assessment task actually measures performance against the specified learning criteria.</p> <p>3.5 Students should be fully informed of assessment criteria, their relationship to learning outcomes and the performance expectations on which grading is based.</p> <p>3.6 When setting assessment tasks, consideration should be given to the pedagogical basis for the choice of assessment methods, workload demands on students with reference to the credit points allocated to the unit and also the workload demands on staff.</p> <p>3.7 Developing and implementing effective assessment has resourcing implications at each organisational level of the University.</p> <p>4. Equity and diversity</p> <p>4.1 Approaches to assessment should meet the needs of a diverse student population and provide them with an appropriate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes.</p> <p>4.2 The University should ensure that students with identified disabilities or needs have that opportunity by assisting staff where necessary and practicable to adjust assessment. Such assistance would be in the form of advice from the Equity and Access Unit, and may include, for example, additional time in examinations for students with particular physical disabilities or the provision of English dictionaries in examinations for students for whom English is a second language.</p> <p>5. Feedback</p> <p>5.1 Effective feedback should be an integral component of the normal teaching and learning process. Feedback should aim to promote learning, be informative and constructive. It should address the expected learning outcomes, identify strengths and weaknesses, give guidance on how to perform better and encourage students to develop strategies to prepare for future tasks.</p>
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	<p>5.2 Various approaches to formative assessment should be developed including self assessment, peer assessment and teacher feedback, both individually and to the group as a whole. Students should be informed of the nature, extent and timing of feedback they can expect for each assessment task.</p> <p>5.3 Feedback should be provided with sufficient time for students to rectify misconceptions before their next assessment is due. This feedback can take various forms, for example, explaining common misconceptions via an online discussion or in tutorials, written explanations on individual assignments or clearly constructed lists of assessment criteria provided to students.</p> <p>5.4 Feedback needs to be efficient in terms of its communication to students and the demands it makes on staff time.</p> <p>6. Establishing and maintaining standards</p> <p>6.1 The University is responsible for defining the criteria for success at particular award levels and for assuring the academic standards of awards made in its name. Therefore the University should have effective procedures for designing, approving, monitoring and reviewing the assessment strategies for courses and awards.</p> <p>7. Integrity of assessment processes</p> <p>7.1 Moderation procedures should apply to assessment tasks worth a substantial proportion of a unit's final mark. Moderation is the process of scrutinising a selection of pieces of work from an assessment task to review and verify the level and consistency of the marks allocated by the markers against published criteria. It increases the reliability of the assessment process and application of standards, promotes consistency, supports objectivity and establishes a shared understanding of standards and fairness in assessment.</p> <p>7.2 The University should deal fairly and efficiently with issues of student misconduct in assessment processes through its Academic Misconduct Policy.</p> <p>7.3 The University should deal fairly and efficiently with grievances concerning assessment through its Student Complaint and Grievance Handling Policy and Procedures.</p>
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	<p>7.4 Staff should avoid situations requiring them to supervise or assess a student who is a member of their family or with whom they have, or have had, a personal or other significant relationship.</p> <p>7.5 Staff should handle submitted assessment material and results in accordance with the University's Privacy Policy.</p> <p>7.6 All examinations should be marked anonymously (excluding those where this is not feasible such as examinations of practical or clinical skills). In units without an examination, where feasible a proportion of assessment should be marked anonymously.</p> <p>8. Roles and responsibilities</p> <p>8.1 Specific roles and responsibilities for implementing the policy are assigned to staff at a number of levels. See <i>Responsible Officers</i> at the end of this policy document.</p> <p>8.2 Students should take responsibility for using the assessment process to guide their learning.</p> <p>8.3 Students should comply with the ethical and procedural rules of the University when undertaking assessment tasks.</p> <p>9. Staff development</p> <p>9.1 The University should ensure that staff members involved in the assessment of students are provided with the staff development opportunities needed to become competent in their roles and responsibilities related to assessment.</p> <p>10. Procedures for implementing this policy</p> <p>10.1 Procedures will be developed to support the implementation of this policy.</p>
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SECTION 3 – Responsibilities

	Assessment Policy
Responsible Officer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)</i> has responsibility for the implementation of the policy. 2. The <i>Dean of Faculty</i> has responsibility for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 ensuring that all students of the faculty are made aware of the Assessment Policy, the Academic Misconduct Policy and regulations concerning Special Consideration; 2.2 ensuring that all staff are made aware of all university and faculty policies and regulations pertaining to assessment; 2.3 ensuring that procedures are in place for considering student feedback on assessment timing so that students do not suffer from short-term work overload during semester and students are not unduly disadvantaged by the timing of examinations; 2.4 maintaining course documentation of unit learning and assessment criteria sufficient to demonstrate that each graduate may lay claim to having <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) learning skills and knowledge that are highly desirable in their chosen disciplines of study (2) each of the generic attributes specified for its graduates by the University, and also those specified by any professional bodies with which courses are affiliated. 3. The <i>Head of School</i> (or nominee) has responsibility for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 overseeing the development and revision of assessment programs; 3.2 monitoring assessment outcomes in each unit and taking action where appropriate; 3.3 supporting staff to meet the requirements of this policy. 4. The <i>Unit coordinator</i> (examiner) has responsibility for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 designing assessment programs, in consultation with colleagues and students, that are in accord with the principles and guidelines set out in this policy, and the requirements specified in the guidelines <i>Credit Points, Student Workload and Assessment of Undergraduate Units</i> and <i>Different Instances of a Unit</i>; 4.2 communicating to students the timing and weight of each assessment task, the criteria against which assessed work will be marked, and relevant ethical and procedural issues; 4.3 developing and implementing processes that ensure the moderation principles are adhered to. 4.4 ensuring all teaching staff are aware of the assessment strategy for the unit.

	<p>5. <i>Students</i> are expected to take responsibility for</p> <p>5.1 using the learning and assessment criteria provided in the unit outline to guide their study and help develop effective learning strategies;</p> <p>5.2 complying with ethical and procedural rules of the University.</p>
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SECTION 4 – Supporting information

Approved by	Academic Board	Meeting number and date	
Date effective	1 January 2008	Review cycle	Every 3 years. Next due in 2010.
Revision history			
Supporting documents	Procedures to be drafted after policy is approved.		
Definitions/ glossary	Being developed.		
Relevant legislation / statutes / regulations	<p>Regulation 19.1 Academic Progress of Students</p> <p>Regulation 21.12 Examinations and Assessment</p> <p>Examinations – Access to Examined Material www.latrobe.edu.au/policies/assets/downloads/exam_material.pdf</p> <p>Privacy Policy (regarding collection of written material)</p> <p>www.latrobe.edu.au/legalservices/downloads/privacy%20policy.pdf</p> <p>Academic Misconduct Policy www.latrobe.edu.au/policies/assets/downloads/academic_misconduct.pdf</p> <p>Code of Conduct. http://www.latrobe.edu.au/hr/manual/5/5.19-conflicts-of-interest.doc</p> <p>Student Complaint and Grievance Handling Policy and Procedures.</p> <p>Supplementary Assessment Policy www.latrobe.edu.au/policies/assets/downloads/supplementary_assessment.pdf</p> <p>University Ombudsman www.latrobe.edu.au/policies/ombudsman</p> <p>Different Instances of a Unit guidelines www.latrobe.edu.au/secretariat/assets/downloads/acprocdocs/diff-inst-unit.pdf</p>		

	Disability Action Plan.
Key words	[Key words for ‘search’ facility to be identified later when policy database is developed.]

8 August 2007