
Assessment Policy – Higher Education - Martin

Policy Code: ACA-041 **Version:** 1.0 **Effective Date:** 12 October 2016

Purpose:

This policy specifies the College's assessment philosophy and the general principles that guide the College's assessment practices.

Definition of “College” – *Study Group Australia Pty Limited trades in the higher education sector as Martin College and Martin Higher Education (Martin). For the purpose of this policy, any reference to ‘College’ or ‘the College’ should be considered a reference to each or any of these respective trading names.*

- Scope:**
- All Higher Education Students
 - All Academic Staff

Policy Statement

Assessment is the process of gathering and analysing information in order to guide and make judgements about students' learning in relation to curriculum goals. Assessment tasks are designed to indicate progress towards the desired learning outcomes of a particular subject and course; the assessment grade is a measure of the extent to which the learning outcomes of a subject have been achieved. Assessment items are an integral part of the learning process and when well-designed can enhance the overall learning experience and contribute to student achievement.

Assessment Design Principles

The College subscribes to the following assessment principles:

1. Assessment is an integral part of course design

Course design aims to enable students to successfully fulfil the Graduate Outcomes for their chosen course of study. Assessment design will support the achievement of these outcomes

and should not undermine the essential educational philosophy. The College upholds the highest ethical and academic standards in its approach to assessment, and all assessment outcomes are kept confidential.

2. Assessment is linked to Graduate Outcomes

Assessment is linked to graduate outcomes via the course and subject learning outcomes. Assessment should be designed to measure the degree to which students have met the learning outcomes, and different learning outcomes will require different types of assessment.

3. Self-Assessment

The assessment scheme provides a model for internal self-assessment (metacognition) of students' own learning and develops students' skills in critical self-appraisal. Self-assessment is a key professional capability that is necessary to develop a continuous learning plan for professional development. Accurate reflection and self-assessment is also necessary in order to develop as a practitioner and to learn from professional practice.

4. Adult Learning Principles

The teaching of adults at the tertiary level is improved by the application of Adult Learning Principles (Andragogy) and this applies equally to assessment. These principles are widely agreed to include the following:

- Adults are internally motivated and self-directed
- Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences
- Adults are goal oriented
- Adults are relevancy oriented
- Adults are practical
- Adult learners like to be respected

The application of these principles in assessment design includes such things as creating assessment tasks that result in useful artefacts of learning such as monographs, databases of reviewed articles, etc. that can be shared with other students and classes.

5. Assessment is criterion-referenced and performance standards are specified

Assessment incorporates a feedback process and is based on explicit, pre-specified, criteria (criterion-referenced assessment). Assessment decisions are not made solely on the basis of student performance relative to that of the rest of the cohort (norm-referenced assessment). Criteria are valid and justifiable with outcomes aligning to Graduate

Outcomes. Marking guides or rubrics are used in all subjects so that students can clearly see criteria for assessment and how grades are awarded, and use this information to improve their learning outcomes.

6. Assessment inspires learning

Well-designed assessment engages students' natural curiosity and motivates them to learn.

7. Assessment is relevant

Authentic assessment duplicates real life situations such as scenarios or case studies and/or promotes the creation of work product that is useful and relevant to self and/or others.

8. Assessment changes through the course

Discipline-based to integrative

While assessment early in the course may be discipline based as students build the foundations of their professional knowledge, later assessment tasks integrate knowledge from a range of disciplines. Generally they require students to apply what they have learned to a scenario or an experience.

Teacher-directed to self-directed

The level of self-direction increases from years 1-2 to years 3-4 of the course of study. In years 1-2 students may have a choice of individual assignments and group projects, and in years 3-4 assignments or projects may be based on personal experiences.

Completed scenarios to cases requiring completion

When problem-based learning is used, students learn best in the beginning if the case is fully worked out and discussion centres on analysis of the case and its solution. This allows them to learn how to solve future cases. As they progress through the course, more and more of the solution is omitted and the students are gradually trained to be able to solve the case in its entirety.

9. Assessment is appropriately weighted

The amount of assessment is designed to provide enough evidence to judge a student's achievement of the learning outcomes for the subject, and does not incur an excessive workload on the student or the lecturer. The effort involved in an assessment task is commensurate with the value awarded to the task. Assessment is managed across subjects offered in a semester so as not to create an undue load.

Individual assessment items will be weighted no less than 10% and no more than 45% of the final grade for the subject (5% will be permitted only where associated elements of an assessment item total more than 10% e.g. 4 x 5% quizzes = 20%).

10. Assessment is rigorous

The standard of performance that is required for the award of a particular grade is a judgment that is based on the professional expertise of the staff members who contribute to the assessment process, and where appropriate, standards set by professional bodies and other institutions.

11. Assessment is consistent

The College is a national organisation with multiple campuses across multiple states and includes teaching in on-campus and online delivery modes. Therefore consistency of assessment is important to ensure that the learning outcomes for the course are achieved regardless of location, instructor or mode of delivery.

All assessment items will be developed to be deliverable in both online and on-campus modes, and to be deliverable synchronously or asynchronously.

Assessment Methods

Assessment methods may take a variety of forms; the key criterion for choice among methods should be appropriateness to the learning outcomes. Assessment is progressive over time so as to reveal the changes that take place as a student learns. Assessment tasks should vary in application (skills, critical thinking, theory, problem solving etc) with objective and subjective methodologies. A diverse range of fair, equitable, clear, meaningful and specific assessment instruments and processes may be employed.

Feedback

Students receive specific, timely, supportive, constructive and developmental feedback on their learning and performance. Written feedback should be provided to students on all assessments other than multiple choice tests and final examinations. All feedback should reference the learning outcomes for the subject and their relationship to the Graduate Outcomes.

At least one (1) assessable task must be completed, graded and returned to students with feedback by the mid-point of each subject to allow the student to measure and assess their progression in the subject.

Number of Assessments

There must be at least three (3) assessment items per subject and the number and weight of assessments should be commensurate with the learning outcomes for the subject.

Assessment Completion

Students are strongly encouraged to complete and submit all assessments listed in their subject outlines in order to attain a final grade that fully represents the student's total knowledge of the subject and to provide the greatest chance for success in all subjects.

In some subjects, there may be specific requirements for completion of certain assessment items and attaining a specific grade on those items in order to pass the subject. Students must follow strictly the requirements set out in each individual subject outline with regard to the requirements to pass that subject.

Attendance

Attendance is monitored as per the [Attendance Policy – Higher Education](#). Attendance is not compulsory for higher education students, although strongly encouraged. Any specific attendance requirements, and the consequences of not meeting the requirements, are clearly stated in the subject outlines.

Assessment Submission

Written assignments for all subjects must be first submitted through the plagiarism detection software (Turnitin®) and then to the Learning Management System by the specified due date. Assessment submitted through Turnitin® must achieve a similarity score of less than 25% before it can be considered. Any written assessment submitted with a similarity score of 25% or more will be automatically investigated for plagiarism and may be referred for further action under the [Academic Integrity Policy – Higher Education](#).

Online quizzes must be completed within the stated window (usually one week) in which they are offered; quizzes will be closed at the time and date stated on the subject outline even if students have commenced but not completed the quiz.

All assessment submissions must be completed by individuals; no group submission is permitted for any assessment items. If a group component is included in an assessment item, it will be configured to be assessable for each individual student.

Written Assessments

Writing Standards

All assessment must be submitted in alignment with the writing guidelines that specify style (font size, spacing, margins), mode of expression (grammar, style, syntax), prohibitions, and method of submission and collection in the assessment information for the subject. All assessment must also correctly reference any external sources APA referencing.

Word Limits

Word limits for written assessment items will be adhered to in grading, with a variation of up to +/- 10% from the specified word count accepted. Where a range of word count is specified, the assessment must fall within this range without additional variation.

Where an assessment item is submitted with a word count more than 10% in excess of the specified limit, the marker will stop marking the assessment at the permitted word limit plus 10%. In cases where the marker excludes content beyond the specified limit, the marking criteria will be applied only to the portion of the assessment falling within the acceptable word limit.

Timeliness

It is the student's responsibility to manage their individual study and assessment workload to ensure they are able to attend all examinations and meet all relevant due dates. Assessment must be submitted within the timeframes specified unless there is an extraordinary circumstance that prevents the student from meeting the deadline. In this case the student must follow the appropriate procedure to arrange an extension of time for written assessment (refer to [Extensions of time – written assessment](#) and [Application Form for Extension of Written Assessment Item](#)) or a deferral of examination for any quizzes or exams (see [Examination Policy – Higher Education](#) and [Deferred Examination Application Form](#)).

Students submitting an assessment after the due date and **without** an approved extension of time will lose 5% of their mark on the assessment per day it is late.

Examination Deferral

Students may apply for deferral of an examination if there are circumstances that significantly hamper their ability to attend at the scheduled examination time. Only examinations worth 15% or more of the final grade for a subject may be deferred. Applications for deferral of examination will not be granted where the decision-maker is not

satisfied that the student took reasonable measures to avoid the circumstance that contributed to the student missing the examination.

Full details of the circumstances under which deferral may or may not be granted are outlined in the [Examination Policy – Higher Education](#).

Extensions of time – written assessment

In certain circumstances, students may apply for an extension of time of up to two (2) weeks over the original due date of written assessment items. These circumstances include:

- Serious personal or emotional trauma (such as a death in the immediate family)
- Exceptional circumstances involving serious student illness which would prevent completion of the assessment item
- Sporting or cultural commitments at State, national or international level.

Applications for extension of time on assessment will not be granted where the decision-maker is not satisfied that the student took reasonable measures to avoid the circumstance that contributed to the student missing the due date.

For applications of extension of up to five (5) days, the decision-maker will be the Lecturer for the subject (on campus) or the Online Academic/Tutor for online subjects. For applications of extension from six (6) days up to 14 days (two full weeks), the decision-maker will be the Head of Department or Senior Student Adviser (where a Head of Department is not appointed).

Extensions of time on assessment will **not** be granted for:

- Work commitments
- Holiday arrangements (including overseas travel and school holidays)
- Social and leisure events or personal commitments (including weddings)
- Misreading the assessment schedule or
- Forgetfulness.

Applications for such consideration should be submitted at least three days **before** the scheduled due date of the assessment. In rare situations where that is not possible, applications will be accepted until one business day **before** the scheduled due date. Applications received after that time will not be considered eligible for extension of time. To apply for extension of time on assessment, students must complete the [Application Form for Extension of Written Assessment Item](#) and submit this within the above timeframes to the subject Lecturer for approval and/or passing onto the Head of Department / Senior Student Adviser. The application form must be accompanied by documentary evidence supporting the application for extension of time.

On approval and/or denial of the application for extension, the decision-maker will copy the finalised form and pass it to Student Services for logging the decision on the student's electronic file, before passing the original signed form back to the student (this form must be submitted with the finished assessment item).

Please note – if the student is claiming serious illness as their reason for deferral or extension application, a medical certificate will be required which details the student's lack of fitness to study, and which must cover the relevant due date and the previous two days to the due date.

Special Consideration / Disability

Students may apply for consideration of circumstances that significantly hamper their ability to submit an assessment and which are outside of the normal circumstances for deferral or extension of time (i.e. further to or outside of other provisions outlined in this policy).

These circumstances may include temporary or permanent disability, original circumstances extending beyond the agreed extension or deferral date, or other exceptional and unforeseen circumstances.

Applications for such consideration should be submitted **before** the due date for the assessment task. In rare situations where that is not possible, applications will be accepted until three days after the scheduled due date. Students must follow prescribed procedures to apply for special consideration and must supply supporting documentary evidence. The Director, Student Services & Retention will make decisions on approval of special consideration based on the evidence provided.

It should be noted that applications for special consideration will not be granted where the Director, Student Services & Retention is not satisfied that the student took reasonable measures to avoid the circumstance that contributed to the student missing the assessment due date or examination date. Please refer to [Special Consideration Policy – Higher Education](#) for further details.

Academic Integrity (e.g. cheating and plagiarism)

Students are accountable to standards of professionalism and ethics throughout their course of study and therefore the College takes a strong position on cheating and plagiarism. All students should ensure that their assessment appropriately references research or other sources. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy – Higher Education](#) for details on plagiarism detection and the consequences for students who breach this policy.

Resubmission of Assessment

Students repeating a subject must complete new assessment items for the subject and may not resubmit items submitted during an earlier attempt at the subject. Additionally students may not submit the same, or substantially the same, work for more than one subject.

Resubmitted assessment items that have a similarity score of 25% or more as compared to a previously-submitted assessment item (through Turnitin®) will be considered in the same way as any other assessment with such a similarity score, and will be automatically investigated for plagiarism and may be referred for further action under the [Academic Integrity Policy – Higher Education](#).

Assessment Re-marks or Examination Resits

The College does not offer standard examination resits or assessment re-marks for any higher education subjects, however under certain circumstances a resit or re-mark may be offered as resolution to an academic issue (e.g. grade appeal). Any student who wishes to be considered for a resit of an exam or a re-mark of an assignment due to grade appeal or other academic circumstances must follow the steps outlined in the appropriate policy such as the [Grievance Policy – Higher Education](#) or the [Special Consideration Policy – Higher Education](#).

Where a resit or re-mark is granted due to the application of either of the above policies, the resit / re-mark grade will be the final grade applied to the subject.

Grading System

Assessment items for a particular subject are assigned weightings and marks for each item are aggregated into a grade that reflects the student's achievement in meeting the learning outcomes for the subject. The method of weighting and aggregation is explicit in the Subject Outline.

The College follows a standard 7 point grading system that is common in Australia for assigning a subject grade. This system is as follows:

Grade	Description	Grade Point	Percentage range
HD	High Distinction	7	85 - 100%
D	Distinction	6	75 - 84%
C	Credit	5	65 - 74%

P	Pass	4	50-64%
F	Fail	0	49% or less

Grade Point Average

A grade point average (GPA) on a scale of 0-7 is calculated once the student has completed all subjects for a course, and it is placed on the course transcript.

$$\text{GPA} = \frac{\text{Sum of (subject grade point X subject credit points)}}{\text{Total credit points attempted}}$$

Advanced Standing credit obtained via Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Transfer, or Informal or Formal Articulation, does not contribute to the GPA. Please refer to the [Educational Pathways Policy – Higher Education](#).

Definition of Grades

The following grades contribute to the Grade Point Average:

High Distinction (HD)

Exceptional performance indicating complete and comprehensive understanding of the subject content; genuine mastery of the relevant skills; demonstration of an extremely high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and mastery of all the learning outcomes of the subject.

Distinction (D)

Excellent performance indicating a very high level of understanding of the subject content; development of relevant skills to a very high level; demonstration of a very high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and comprehensive achievement of all learning outcomes of the subject.

Credit (C)

Good performance indicating a high level of understanding of subject content; development of relevant skills to a high level; demonstration of a high level of interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all learning outcomes of the subject, although some minor elements of outcomes may not be fully achieved.

Pass (P)

Satisfactory performance indicating an adequate understanding of the subject content; development of relevant skills to a satisfactory level; demonstration of adequate interpretive

and analytical ability, and achievement of the learning outcomes for the subject although some elements of the outcomes may not be fully achieved.

Non-graded Pass (NGP)

Successful completion of a subject assessed on a pass/fail basis, indicating satisfactory understanding of subject content; development of relevant skills to a satisfactory level; satisfactory interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all learning outcomes for the subject. To be counted as a Pass for grade point calculation purposes.

Fail (F)

Unsatisfactory performance indicating an inadequate understanding of the basic subject matter; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve the learning outcomes for the subject. Students have failed to obtain a pass mark using the aggregation of all individual pieces of assessment, or have failed to complete a summative assessment item.

Fail – No Assessment Submitted (FNS)

Student did not present any work for assessment; to be counted as failure of the subject for grade point calculation purposes.

Withdrawal with Failure (WF)

Student cancelled enrolment in the subject with penalty after the census date and is awarded a Fail grade point for the subject.

The following grades **do not** contribute to the Grade Point Average:

Grade Pending (GP)

This grade is used when a final grade for the subject cannot be awarded because all information to make the final assessment is not yet available.

The student may have applied through Student Services and been granted an extension of an assessment with a specific date for completion. This can include deferred exams.

In such cases, action must be taken by students to rectify Grade Pending grades within 14 days of results release (excepting College closure times at year end). This may include sitting a deferred exam or submitting a final piece of written assessment (which has been granted an extension of time). These grades will be finalised by the College as soon as possible following submission by the student, but must be finalised by census date of the following semester.

Grade Pending grades revert to a Fail (F) if the deferred assessment is not submitted and/or made up (i.e. clinic) within the timeframes outlined above (refer to [Application Form for Extension of Written Assessment Item](#)).

A GP grade will also be recorded if an assessment item is subject to moderation following recommendations from the Assessment Committee, or is undergoing ongoing investigation due to a marking grievance or plagiarism allegation. In these instances, a final grade will be recorded as soon as the moderation and/or investigation process is complete, and the student notified accordingly.

Supplementary Assessment (SA)

A final grade is yet to be awarded for the subject as a supplementary assessment task or exam has been approved due to special consideration. This is a temporary grade only and must be finalised before census date of the following Semester (as per Incomplete grades above).

Withdrawal without Failure (AW)

Student withdrew from the subject after census date but under special consideration is not awarded an academic penalty. In such cases this grade may be awarded at the discretion of the Director, Student Services & Retention.

Withdrawal Recorded (WR)

Student officially cancelled enrolment in the subject after commencement but before the end of census date. The student withdrew from the subject without academic penalty. There is no grade point for a WR notation.

Advanced Standing (AS)

Exemption from a required subject is recorded when a student has applied for and been granted Advanced Standing in a course as a result of:

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for life and work experience
- Credit transfer internally or from another Higher Education institution
- Formal articulation from a VET qualification through an Articulation Agreement between providers
- Informal articulation from a VET qualification, or partial qualification, based on assessment of competencies achieved.

Students must apply for Advanced Standing and undergo an evaluation process consistent with the method of credit sought.

Credit is not given for subjects awarded a grade of Pass Conceded at another institution.

Once an exemption is granted through one of the above processes, AS is applied to the subject on the student's transcript. There is no distinction on the transcript based on the method of achieving Advanced Standing. Please refer to the [Educational Pathways Policy – Higher Education](#).

Moderation of Assessment

Moderation of a sample of assessment occurs at a variety of points during the year for quality assurance purposes: during department meetings, between the individual lecturers teaching a subject and the Head of Department, and at the end of each semester by an external moderator and the Assessment Committee (refer to the [Moderation of Assessment Policy – Higher Education](#)).

Definitions: **Student/Learner** is an individual person who is formally enrolled to study at the College. The individual person is that who appears on the College's documents such as enrolment, admission and payment documents, and who is assigned an individual student ID.

Further Information:

Related Policies: [Academic Integrity Policy – Higher Education](#)
[Attendance Policy – Higher Education](#)
[Grievance Policy – Higher Education](#)
[Educational Pathways Policy – Higher Education](#)
[Examination Policy – Higher Education](#)
[Moderation of Assessment Policy – Higher Education](#)
[Special Consideration Policy – Higher Education](#)

Related [Results Administration Guidelines](#)

Procedures: [Moderation of Assessment Procedure](#)

Benchmarking: Flinders University, University of Newcastle, RMIT, Deakin University, University of Queensland, Christian Heritage College, Endeavour College of Natural Health

Supporting Research and Analysis: 1. Boud, D. and Associates (2010) *Assessment 2020: Seven propositions for assessment reform in higher education*. Sydney. Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

Related Documents: [Application Form for Extension of Assessment Item](#)
[Application for Special Consideration](#)
[Deferral of Examination Application Form](#)

Related Legislation: N/A

Guidelines:

Policy Author:	National HE Compliance Manager – E Holswich
Policy Owner:	Director of Education, Martin HE
Contact:	Director of Education, Martin HE
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Key Stakeholders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Education • Director, Student Services & Retention • Heads of Department • All Academics • National Examination Coordinator • Student Services staff • Higher Education Students