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Policy Document Approver	Academic Board
Responsible Body/Person	Teaching and Learning Committee
Next Review date	August 2027
Superseded documents	<i>Assessment Guidelines</i> <i>Assessment Feedback Guidelines</i> <i>Take-home Exam Guidelines</i>
Related documents	Academic Integrity Policy for Coursework Awards Benchmarking Policy Courses Policy Exam Computer Use Guidelines Extensions Policy Freedom of Intellectual Inquiry Policy Grievance Resolution Policy – Students Late Penalties Policy Moderation Policy Support for Students Policy Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan Units Policy Wellbeing and Safety Policy
Related HE Standards	1.3, 1.4
Related National Code Standards	
Glossary	Definitions for any words in Bold in this document can be found in the Policy Glossary . The first instance of each defined term has been outlined in bold.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Assessment Policy is to set out the **Australian University of Theology's** (ACT) approach to **assessment**, providing processes for designing and implementing assessment, assessing the work of students and reporting **student** progress.

2. DEFINITIONS

Definitions for any words in **Bold** in this document can be found in the [Policy Glossary](#). The first instance of each defined term has been outlined in bold.

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

criteria are specific performance attributes or characteristics that the **marker** takes into account when assessing a student's attainment of different elements of an **assessment instrument**.

feedback is information about a student's performance in an **assessment instrument** and is intended as a basis for encouragement and improvement.

marking scheme is a document which explains how a student's performance in an **assessment instrument** will be evaluated. It identifies **assessment criteria** and articulates qualitative standards of attainment for each criterion, e.g. a **rubric**.

rubric is a **marking scheme** which tabularises specific criteria for grading and marking an assessment instrument.

summative assessment is assessment of learning. It refers to assessment that evaluates and measures student performance and attainment against established benchmarks, e.g. **grade descriptors**, **learning outcomes**, and **rubrics** with a view to assigning grades.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn.

3. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all coursework units of study approved for delivery in the accredited courses of the University.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The University's process of assessment is designed to facilitate, measure and certify the achievement of specified course and unit learning outcomes and progress towards developing the graduate attributes. Assessment facilitates student capacity to meet learning outcomes (i.e. it is formative); provides evidence of achievement of learning outcomes (i.e. it is summative); provides opportunity for individualising the student learning experience through **feedback**; and develops student capacity to become confident self-evaluators through reflective practice and lifelong learning.

Learning outcomes must adhere to the constructively aligned Learning Outcomes Table and glossary in the [Units Policy](#) reflecting the attainment of knowledge, skills and values which promote learning and form Christian graduates.

5. POLICY APPLICATION

5.1 Assessment Design

- 5.1.1 Assessment is learner centred, i.e. designed to engage students in the learning process and to facilitate their learning. Assessment design will:
- a) support student learning through the clear definition of skills and knowledge students are expected to demonstrate;
 - b) align with the **unit learning outcomes** (ULOs), which are constructively aligned with the **course learning outcomes** (CLOs), the **AQF level**, and **graduate attributes** (GAs);
 - c) have an assessment scheme which ensures all unit learning outcomes are assessed, and which considers a variety of assessment instruments and types through which students can demonstrate learning;
 - d) consider positive use of (emerging) technologies, and minimise the risk of **academic misconduct** including but not limited to unauthorised use of **generative Artificial Intelligence** (genAI);
 - e) be consistent, fair, transparent and valid (i.e. assessment is consistently measurable, equivalent or comparable across **Affiliated Colleges**, and supports the judgements of student performance);

- f) be equitable and inclusive, considering the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The needs of diverse learners will be considered to ensure individuals and student cohorts are not unfairly disadvantaged, and to allow for reasonable adjustments;
 - g) create opportunities for students to receive, reflect on and use effective feedback.
- 5.1.2 All foundational and developing units (category A and B – see [Units Policy](#)) will have at least three assessment instruments. **Either:**
- a) One early formative assessment which does not contribute to a student's grades, and two summative assessments contributing to grades; or
 - b) One early formative assessment which is low-weighted and does contribute to grades, and two summative assessments contributing to grades; or
 - c) Scaffolded assessment with early formative feedback given on the first task/s or first stage/s of the task, which may contribute to grades, and one summative assessment.
- 5.1.3 Academic staff with responsibility for assessment design will develop knowledge and skills in contemporary assessment methods and design assessment tasks which are authentic, inclusive, varied, seek to be innovative, and minimise academic misconduct.

5.2 Mode of Assessment¹

5.2A *Formative Assessment*

- 5.2.1 Early formative assessment:
- a) informs students of their strengths and weaknesses and identifies how they can improve;
 - b) identifies "at risk" students who may require additional academic support;
 - c) promotes student learning through effective feedback on their progress towards the achievement of learning outcomes;
 - d) facilitates students making informed decisions about whether they choose to continue in a unit beyond the census date.
- 5.2.2 In accordance with the [HESF](#) 1.3, [HESA](#) and the ACT's [Support for Students Policy](#):
- a) All foundational units (category A) will have early formative assessment with feedback given **before** the census date.
 - b) All developing units (category B) will have early formative assessment with feedback given as early as possible in the unit.
- 5.2.3 Through early formative assessment, lecturers gauge student learning, understanding and progress, and adjust teaching accordingly.

5.2B *Summative Assessment*

¹ This section is not exhaustive, rather it sets out the AUT's approach to and the legal and compliance requirements for assessment commonly undertaken across the consortium.

- 5.2.4 Summative assessment:
- a) Identifies to what extent students have met the unit learning outcomes;
 - b) Recognises student performance in the unit overall;
 - c) Requires providing effective feedback to improve student learning;
 - d) Indicates how teaching and assessment may be revised for future iterations of the unit; and
 - e) Takes place at strategic points throughout and on conclusion of the unit.

5.2C Participation

- 5.2.5 Participation-based assessment must:
- a) Explicitly identify the activities on which the assessment is based;
 - b) Have clear criteria for discriminating student performance;
 - c) Not award marks only for attendance at, or completion of, the learning activity; and
 - d) Have an assessment weighting of no more than 15% of the total marks for the unit.

5.2D Group Assessment

- 5.2.6 Assessment instruments which require students to work in collaboration to prepare, conduct, submit and/or evaluate an assessment must clearly explain what is required of the students and how marks will be allocated.

5.2E Take-home Exams

- 5.2.7 Take-home exams:
- a) are subject to the requirements of the *Academic Integrity Policy for Coursework Awards*, particularly restrictions on the use of genAI;
 - b) have a time allocation for completion of up to one (1) week;
 - c) have a word count per question of up to one thousand and five hundred words (1500) words;
 - d) require standard referencing for quotations, paraphrasing, etc. from readings or textbooks; and
 - e) usually limit research to lecture notes, handouts, readings and textbooks. Students may consult more widely if they wish.

5.2F Capstones

- 5.2.8 Capstones are designed to:
- a) measure the capstone unit learning outcomes;
 - b) engage students in real-world scenarios (whether in historical or contemporary contexts) and/or to solve real-world problems in order to apply their learning from throughout their course;
 - c) integrate learning from the three (3) distinct AUT Departments (e.g. **PC** is within the department of Ministry and Practice, and a PC capstone will primarily focus on learning from the PC field, and then integrate learning from a field/s within the department of **Bible and Languages**, and a field/s within the **Christian Thought** department);

- d) challenge students to demonstrate the outcomes of their learning within their own unique and authentic personal and/or professional contexts;
 - e) allow students to demonstrate personal and professional growth, especially with regard to the knowledge, skills and values of learning outcomes; and
 - f) create opportunities for students to suggest, adapt, co-create, or design their own capstone unit or assessment.
- 5.2.9 Capstone units may consist of up to three (3) assessment instruments designed to build to the integration of learning from the three (3) AUT departments and addressing a real-world scenario.

5.3 Academic Integrity

- 5.3.1 Assessment design must promote academic integrity and discourage and minimise the possibility of **academic misconduct**, such as **plagiarism**, collusion, contract cheating and unauthorised use of genAI.
- 5.3.2 Assessment must adhere to the [Academic Integrity for Coursework Awards Policy](#).
- 5.3.3 The elements and content of assessments must be sufficiently dissimilar to previous assessments. No two exams for any one unit should be the same as a past iteration. All other assessments must be periodically reviewed and/or renewed every three years (maximum).

5.4 Reasonable Adjustments

- 5.4.1 Reasonable adjustments refer to the support provided for students with a disability, health condition, or in other appropriate circumstances, including but not limited to following a **SASH** incident or on cultural grounds. Reasonable adjustments may be more and other than for assessment.
- 5.4.2 In accordance with the **HESF**, **HESA**, the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005, reasonable adjustments ensure equal access to learning and teaching.
- 5.4.3 Reasonable adjustments:
 - a) may be made to an assessment instrument when a student's disability/ies, health condition/s, and/or other circumstances are a disadvantage to or preclude them from completing the assessment;
 - b) to an assessment instrument must align to the learning outcomes of the assessment it modifies or replaces;
 - c) to the assessment design of a unit must align to the unit learning outcomes;
 - d) may include but are not limited to:
 - i. change to the of type of assessment,
 - ii. allowance of additional time for an assessment,
 - iii. changed circumstances to undertake assessment,
 - iv. redistribution of assessment due dates,
 - v. extensions beyond that which are normally permitted,
 - vi. the use of a student support plan.

5.5 Assessment Information for Students

- 5.5.1 Assessment information is criterion-centred, clear and unambiguous in expectation, and provided no later than the start date of a unit.
- 5.5.2 Assessment information clearly informs students about:
 - a) assessment due dates, presentation requirements, marking rubrics, penalties for late submission, granting extensions, reasonable adjustments, the process of moderation, and the grievance resolution process;
 - b) how each assessment instrument aligns with the unit learning outcomes;
 - c) the particular type, details, conditions, and expectations of each assessment instrument;
 - d) how judgments will be made about the quality of their work; and
 - e) the expected quality and level of student performance for obtaining a specific grade.
- 5.5.3 The assessment criteria communicated to students at the beginning of a unit must align with the assessment criteria used to grade and give feedback on students' work. It is highly recommended that a rubric or marking scheme be used to achieve this.

5.6 Approval of Assessment Instruments

- 5.6.1 Approval of assessment instruments is conducted by the relevant Unit Field Moderator as per the Moderation Policy (5.2ff.), and considering the assessment information provided to students as set out at section 6 above.
- 5.6.2 The Moderation Policy sets out the AUT's approach to moderation, ensuring parity of esteem across Affiliated Colleges, and benchmarking.
- 5.6.3 For word requirements and weightings see Appendix 1 of the Moderation Policy.

5.7 Assessment Submission

- 5.7.1 Assessments should be submitted by the due date. For extensions see the Extensions Policy and for late submission penalties see the *Late Penalties Policy*.
- 5.7.2 Assessments should be submitted through **Turnitin** via the Affiliated College Learning Management System (LMS).
- 5.7.3 Assessments which are unable to be submitted electronically, due to sensitive or personal content, or assessments which include a physical piece of work (e.g. artwork) may be submitted in hard copy. This should be noted when the unit is submitted to the moderation portal and approved by the moderator.

5.8 Assessment Marking

- 5.8.1 Judgements about student learning will be made by reference to unit and course learning outcomes and pre-determined criteria.
- 5.8.2 Grades awarded to students will be based on the extent to which they fulfil the learning outcomes, predetermined criteria and attain stated performance standards.

- 5.8.3 The same rubric or marking scheme given to students at the start of the unit should be used to mark the assessment.
- 5.8.4 Early formative assessment marking should not be anonymous. Where possible, summative assessment marking should be anonymous.
- 5.8.5 As per the Moderation Policy, a degree of second marking should occur.

5.9 Assessment Feedback

5.9A *Assessment Feedback - General*

- 5.9.1 Effective feedback is accurate, clear, constructive (formative and summative), meaningful, specific, supportive in tone, timely and avoids unnecessary academic jargon.
- 5.9.2 Feedback must be:
 - a) prompt, with assessments returned to students as soon as possible and within four (4) weeks;
 - b) focused on, aligned to and directing students to the learning outcomes assessed by the task, and then comment on any other marking criteria communicated about the task (e.g. form, style and structure);
 - c) based on the rubric or marking scheme, but should contain additional (formative and summative) feedback;
 - d) relevant, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and offering constructive guidance and suggestions for improvement;
 - e) helping students to understand the mark or grade they received for the assessment and providing them with an accurate sense of their learning and performance; and
 - f) made available to students in (a combination of) different ways (e.g. written, verbal, peer, etc.)
- 5.9.3 The volume of feedback should be commensurate with:
 - a) the function of the assessment task. Most assessments have both a formative and summative aspect. E.g. A greater volume of feedback may be warranted for assessments which are designed to be more formative.
 - b) the length and weighting of the assessment. E.g. Assessments with more weighting and which involve a greater amount of work from students should have a greater volume of feedback.
 - c) the learning needs of individual students or a student cohort, based on their assessment performance, especially in early formative assessment. E.g. A greater volume of feedback may be provided where a student has a number of areas in which they need to develop.
- 5.9.4 High-performing students also require the identification of strengths, so they may reproduce them in another situation, and any “weaknesses” along with suggestions for how to improve (even if this extends beyond the normal outcomes achieved in the unit or course).

5.9B *Modes of Feedback²*

² This section is not exhaustive, rather it sets out the AUT’s approach to and the legal and compliance requirements for assessment feedback commonly undertaken across the consortium.

5.9B - Written

- 5.9.5 Written assessments should receive succinct in-text comments. Though brief, it must be of substance and specific. Ticks and crosses (without explanation) should be avoided. Cryptic feedback, e.g. "More", "What's this?", "Link?", should also be avoided.
- 5.9.6 In-text feedback (usually formative) should be supplemented by extended feedback (usually summative) on the student's performance at the end of the script.
- 5.9.7 In-text and summative feedback may include the following:
 - a) an explanation of the mark/grade awarded for the assessment, with reference to the learning outcomes and other marking criteria;
 - b) identification of the merits and deficiencies (strengths and weaknesses) of the assessment, with reference to the learning outcomes and other marking criteria;
 - c) feedback related to the assessment type, which may include argumentation, use of conventions, language, structure and style, etc.;
 - d) suggestions for how students can enhance their learning and improve their performance in future, in relation to the learning outcomes, the unit and/or their course;
 - e) further readings or learning resources with which the student could enhance their learning and performance;
 - f) support services the student could access to enhance their learning and/or maintain wellbeing while they study.

5.9C - Rubrics

- 5.9.8 Generic rubrics, which are standardised across an Affiliated College, or used for all instances of a particular type of assessment, for example, may be used to give students standard feedback on assessment.
- 5.9.9 Where generic rubrics are used, supplementary feedback focusing on the particular learning outcomes of the assessment will need to be provided.
- 5.9.10 Rubrics developed for particular assessment tasks are a highly effective form of feedback and are preferred over generic rubrics. Such rubrics should:
 - a) set out marking criteria that are aligned to the learning outcomes (and the AQF level), then other criteria;
 - b) performance standards for each criterion are aligned to the AUT Grade Descriptors (see Appendix 1); and
 - c) indicate weighting where some criteria are more significant in determining the overall mark or grade.

5.9D - Verbal

- 5.9.11 Individual verbal feedback may be given where the cohort-size permits. E.g. This feedback could be given in conjunction with written feedback, self-evaluation, peer feedback, and/or generic written or verbal feedback.
- 5.9.12 Generic verbal feedback may be given to a class/cohort following an assessment. E.g. Such feedback may include what was generally done well and where there is room for improvement, and gives context for individual feedback.
- 5.9.13 Recorded verbal feedback may be provided instead of written (summative) feedback. To ensure quality and consistency, a standard feedback structure should be used.

5.9E - Peer

- 5.9.14 Students should develop peer and self-evaluation skills, taking responsibility for their learning, to become effective life-long learners and reflective practitioners.
- 5.9.15 Peer feedback can be an effective strategy in teaching students to evaluate performance against learning outcomes. Peer feedback will require students to be provided with:
- a) guidance on how to provide feedback, including both content and manner;
 - b) marking rubrics, templates, or checklists aligned to the learning outcomes and other assessment criteria;
 - c) sufficient time to offer considered feedback on the assessments of their peers.
- 5.9.16 Examples of peer feedback include:
- a) A class/cohort may be asked to provide general feedback on the performance of the group, rather than on particular peers;
 - b) Peer feedback may be used to support a marker's assessment of student performance in a groupwork task;
 - c) Peer feedback may be given on oral presentations (completing a rubric or checklist rather than verbally immediately after a presentation).

5.9F – Self-evaluation

- 5.9.17 Students accurately evaluating their own learning and performance in assessment is a vital skill. Examples of self-evaluation include:
- a) a learning activity where students write a self-evaluation of their assessment (with a rubric, template, checklist);
 - b) students can perform a self-evaluation in relation to the broader issues identified for the cohort in generic feedback;
 - c) at key stages throughout their course, students can self-evaluate their progress towards the course learning outcomes and graduate attributes.

5.9G – Promoting Student Engagement with Feedback

- 5.9.18 It is crucial that feedback is timely, however, even when students are provided with timely, high-quality feedback, there may be some who do not engage with it. To promote student engagement with feedback some of the following strategies may be used:
- a) scaffolded/staged tasks in which the initial feedback will inform students' progress in the task;
 - b) create a learning activity involving the feedback. E.g. Students perform a self-evaluation of their assessment task before receiving the mark and feedback from the marker, and then compare their self-evaluation to the marker's feedback;
 - c) in response to the feedback they have received, ask students to write down how they will approach their next assessment, or one like it in another context;
 - d) provide time in class for students to read the individual feedback on an assessment (before discussing feedback generally); or
 - e) invite students to include with their assessment submission, a request for feedback in particular area.

5.10 Appeals and Grievances

5.10.1 A student may appeal their grade according to the [Grievance Resolution Policy – Students](#).

6. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Identify explicit mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness of the organisation in achieving the objectives of this policy.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATION

Australian Qualifications Framework
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards), 2021
Higher Education Support Act 2003

8. REFERENCES

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9. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1	Coursework Committee	4 October 2019	4 October 2019	Policy approval
2	Coursework Committee	24 April 2020	24 April 2020	Minor editorial updates
3	Coursework Committee	20 October 2023	20 October 2023	Reference to Academic Integrity Policy, generative Artificial Intelligence
4	Academic Board	2 August 2024	2 August 2024	Policy review; combine multiple documents into Assessment Policy (Assessment Guidelines, Assessment Feedback Guidelines, and Take-home Exam Guidelines); updates to comply with recent amendments the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA).
5	Vice-Chancellor	April 2025	April 2025	Update to new document template; minor editorial updates to implement University status.

APPENDIX 1

AUT GRADE DESCRIPTORS

Grade	Grade Range	Descriptor
High Distinction	85-100	Satisfies assessment learning outcomes at an exceptional level
Distinction	75-84	Satisfies assessment learning outcomes at a very high level
Credit	65-74	Satisfies assessment learning outcomes at a high level
Pass Plus	58-64	Satisfies assessment learning outcomes at an adequate level
Pass	50-57	Satisfies assessment learning outcomes at a minimal level
Fail		Does not satisfy assessment learning outcomes
	40-49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most but not all assessment learning outcomes met
	25-39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few assessment learning outcomes met
	0-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No assessment learning outcomes met