

Policy on Assessment

Policy and Procedures

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1.0 Policy Statement

Assessment is a core academic activity and an essential component of the learning and teaching process. For proper alignment and direction in teaching, a teacher must use an appropriate assessment guideline comprising of meaningful and relevant assessment tasks.

Teaching and assessment complement each other hence, a holistic approach to assessment includes:

- 1.1 Design and specification of learning outcomes which students undertake.
- 1.2 Moderation of assessment activities.
- 1.3 Feedback/ early-alert on student progress and achievement.

2.0 Purpose

This policy provides coordinated and consistent guidelines for the assessment of student performance at Fiji National University. The policy sets out the principles that underpin FNU's approach to assessment and required procedures, which ensure that the principles are implemented.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to:

- 3.1 Students enrolled in all Higher Education / TVET courses excluding Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) programmes.
- 3.2 Academic staff involved in curriculum design, development and assessment processes.

4.0 Objectives

To ensure that assessments are:

- 4.1 Reliable, valid and in line with learning and programme outcomes;
- 4.2 Consistent and reflect graduate attributes;
- 4.3 Compliant to academic standards and the set criteria.

5.0 Definitions

Terms used in this policy and the associated procedures are consistent with the UASR (2017).

Assessment	Any testing, marking, examining or evaluating of students' performance, whether or not it counts towards the final grade for any paper or other course component.
Competency based assessment	Assessment of student performance by collecting evidence and making judgements whether a student has successfully completed a task.
Course Coordinator	Is a person that takes responsibility for a particular course and supports the planning, development and delivery of that course.
Equitability	Exhibiting fairness and being just.
Examiner	Is a person who sets and marks written or oral examinations to test people's knowledge or proficiency and recommends the final result for the course.
External Examining	Is a review whereby experienced higher education teachers offer an independent and impartial advice on assessment of academic standards and the quality of assessment to the appointing institution.
Formative assessment	Assessment intended to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by teachers to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning.
Inclusivity	Is a practice of providing equal access to opportunities and resources to all members by not excluding any on the grounds of race, gender, class, sexuality and disability.
Internal assessment	All components of assessment that contribute to a final grade but which are not derived from performance in a final examination.
Reliability of an assessment	Is the extent to which the assessment consistently and accurately measures student knowledge.
Summative assessment	Assessment in which student performance is graded and marks count towards the final marks for a paper and the award of a degree. Summative assessment may also be formative, particularly if feedback on work is provided.
Validity of an assessment	The extent to which an assessment fulfils its intended purpose(s), such as fairly measuring what it sets out to measure, guiding student learning, and motivating student learning activity.

6.0 Responsibilities

- 6.1 All academic staff at the University are responsible to ensure that the set principles and the guidelines in this policy and procedures are complied with. It is recommended that Associate Deans – Learning and Teaching monitor College-wide compliance.
- 6.2 The Dean is responsible to ensure that there are no deviations from the guidelines set in this policy, should there be any beyond normal circumstances, the Dean will be responsible to justify.
- 6.3 The Monitoring and Compliance Section, under the Office of Pro Vice Chancellor- Learning and Teaching is responsible for monitoring of the agreed assessment principles and arrangements defined in this policy.

7.0 Relevant Legislations and Authorities

- 7.1 University Academic & Student Regulations (Revised 2017)
- 7.2 Academic Quality Assurance Manual
- 7.3 Policy on Plagiarism
- 7.4 Examination Policy
- 7.5 Moderation Policy
- 7.6 Disability Policy
- 7.7 Learning and Teaching Policy

This policy must be read in conjunction with the above documents.

8.0 Assessment Principles

The University's approach to assessment of student performance for all programmes (excluding HDR) is based on the following principles, which must be observed by the Colleges:

- 8.1 Assessment must be designed to encourage and reinforce high quality student learning.
- 8.2 Assessment must be valid and constructively aligned to clear and realistic learning outcomes that enable robust and fair judgement about student performance.
- 8.3 It must focus on essential knowledge and skills and provide evidence of the level of achievement with respect to learning outcomes, generic skills and graduate attributes.
- 8.4 Assessment must have formative element to enable students to keep track of their progress and feedback to inform their learning.

- 8.5 Assessment must comprise a variety of tasks, which are reasonably achievable by students.
- 8.6 The workload related with assessment need to be reasonable and the assessment tasks must be introduced sufficiently in advance so that adequate time is provided to students.
- 8.7 Assessment should be carried out with utmost honesty, integrity and confidentiality ensuring fairness, inclusivity and equitability for all students.

9.0 Assessment Procedures

Assessment activities must be conducted in accord with the assessment procedures.
(Refer to **Appendix 1** for assessment procedures)

9.1 Summative Assessment of Group Work

Performance from group work can be used to determine students final grades. While setting group work as assessment tasks, the course coordinator must ensure that:

- 9.11 The tasks are carefully planned to ensure that the contributions from all students to a task are equal and marks / grades are awarded to individuals based on their contribution and performance on group task.
- 9.12 The design, definition of learning outcomes and the assessment criteria for summative assessment based on group work should be clearly captured in the Course Descriptor.
- 9.13 The assessment marking criteria must indicate how the final product of group activity is to be assessed by the examiner for students final grade.
- 9.14 The percentage contribution from group tasks must be reasonable in terms of the objectives of the task.
- 9.15 The assessment tasks for group work must clearly specify what level of cooperation and collaboration is acceptable for each task and what may be regarded as academic misconduct.

9.2 Supplementary Assessment

Refer to UASR, Revised 2017, pg. 50

9.3 Modified Assessment

Refer to UASR, Revised 2017, pg. 51

9.4 Examination

Refer to the Examination Policy.

10.0 Assessment Design

10.1 For assessment to be relevant, it must be

10.1.1 designed to accurately evaluate the learning outcomes that students have attained up to the point at which the task is completed.

10.1.2 presented in a manner which is easy for students to understand and do what is expected of them.

10.1.3 must be designed in ways that do not encourage or promote any form of academic dishonesty including plagiarism and collusion.

10.2 Standards Based Assessment

10.2.1 Assessment must be standards based and provide evidence of the level of achievement with respect to learning outcomes and graduate attributes.

10.2.2 Standards should typically be defined in the context of the discipline, course or level of the unit.

10.2.3 Standards (including threshold or pass standards) should be benchmarked against comparable disciplinary and / or professional standards within the University and beyond.

10.3 Weighting of Assessment Tasks

10.3.1 Each assessment component should be assigned a weighting in terms of the percentage of the total marks in the subject as per the current and the approved guidelines.

10.3.2 The weighting must be based on objectives, contents, learning and teaching activities and learning outcomes covered by individual assessments.

10.3.3 Unless approved by the head of school, no individual assessment task should have a weighting of more than 50 percent of its total assessment in a course.

10.4 Marking of Assessment Tasks

All teachers marking assessments must ensure that

10.4.1 they use the approved (agreed and documented) marking criteria to assist in fair and equitable treatment of students.

10.4.2 they apply the same marking standard to demonstrate equity of marking.

10.4.3 marking criteria aligns with the criteria given to students in the course descriptor.

10.5 Moderation of Assessments

This is necessary to reduce the differences in marking assessments by different teachers. For moderation processes and procedures, refer to Moderation Policy.

10.6 Requirements to achieve a pass

- 10.6.1 The requirements to pass a course including minimum requirement in the final examination must be clearly stated in the course descriptor.
- 10.6.2 Summative and Formative assessments will contribute to final grades.
- 10.6.3 For Competency Based Training, results shall be specified in terms of competencies obtained.

11.0 Student Workload

The Dean / Head of Department / School must ensure that all internal assessments (coursework component) are completed before the last week of lectures. The Departments / Schools at the Colleges should ensure that the spread of the assessment load is fair to students taking into consideration common combination of courses for a programme.

12.0 Feedback to Students

The feedback and comments to students indicate how the student has performed against the assessment criteria.

- 12.1 The feedback on students work may be given in the form of written comments, oral comments, rubrics or marking guides with important details of students' performance against the criteria and/or general feedback, that outlines typical mistakes or areas in which students do well depending on the nature of the assessment tasks.
- 12.2 A timely feedback on academic performances of students in internal assessments during the semester must be provided to the students.
- 12.3 All assessment must be returned with feedback as soon as possible but no later than three weeks after the due date of the assessment (Feedback timeframe maybe less than three weeks for summer or winter classes).
- 12.4 The feedback for internal assessment must convey the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the task, and include grades/marks and comments about the student's performance on each criterion.
- 12.5 The Dean must ensure that the Course Coordinators/ Examiners provide appointment times for students and are available for consultation after return of results on each assessment component so that students can communicate any problems regarding the assessment marking / grading and subsequently be able to access support services

available at the University.

- 12.6 The summary for marks/ grades for all internal assessments (coursework marks) should be made available to students no later than last day of lectures.
- 12.7 The Course Coordinators / Examiners must not make known the result details of the final assessment until the results are released and feedback should only be given once results are released.
- 12.8 A student may query about an assessment component prior to the publication of results by making an application in writing to the relevant Dean.
- 12.9 The College/ Course Coordinators must inform students about processes for accessing their assessment materials which the student submitted during the respective academic term in the case where they have not received and for access to final examination script, refer to the UASR, Revised , 2017 , pg. 48.
- 12.10 A student may request Course Coordinators / Examiners to provide a detailed account of their marks for a course, including the marks awarded to each assessment component and the calculation used to determine the final mark / grade for the course by writing to the Dean .

13.0 Change(s) to Assessment Tasks

- 13.1 Minor changes to the assessment tasks after a Course Descriptor has been distributed will only be allowed with the written authorization of the Dean or their delegate in consultation with the students and the message to be communicated to the students via student email.
- 13.2 Major changes would normally not be made to the assessment tasks after the commencement of a course. Any major changes to the assessment tasks for a course should be approved by the College Academic Board.

14.0 Attendance and Participation Requirements

- 14.1 Marks are not awarded for attendance unless specified in the course descriptor. However, compulsory or minimum levels of attendance may be prescribed for any professional experience or community experience program or any practical, laboratory or skill-based classes in which attendance is essential to accomplishment of the learning outcomes of the course.
- 14.2 In circumstances where compulsory or minimum levels of attendance are approved, the attendance requirements must be explicitly specified in the course descriptor, stating the reasons why attendance is required, the penalties of not meeting those requirements and the procedures to be taken on should a student fail to attend any necessary class as a result of illness and/or personal circumstances outside their ability to control.
- 14.3 The attendance records for all classes where a compulsory or minimum attendance level is prescribed must be kept by the Course Coordinator.

15.0 Submission

- 15.1 Submission requirements for assessment tasks must be clearly communicated to the students via the Course Descriptor.
- 15.2 Students should not resubmit an assessment task in order to improve the result in that assessment task after formal submission.
- 15.3 For any late submission of assessment tasks, penalties may apply which requires to be clearly communicated with the students at the beginning of the course.

16.0 Exclusion from Assessment by the Registrar

The Registrar may direct that a student be excluded from attempting any component of assessment or that the results obtained by the student be withheld if the student

- 16.1 has not paid all fees or charges owed to the University.
- 16.2 has not paid all fines or penalties imposed on them.
- 16.3 has failed to comply with any requirement of the University under its regulation, policies and procedures.

The registrar must inform the relevant Dean of any directions as in 16.1-16.3 above in writing.

17.0 Personal Circumstances Affecting Assessment

At times the ability of the student to complete assessment or meet assessment deadlines may be genuinely and significantly affected by factors beyond their control. In such cases, an application for special consideration may be submitted by the affected student as per the UASR guidelines, pg. 45-46.

18.0 Appeals

Any appeal against an assessment decision will be dealt with in accordance with the UASR (2017), pg. 47-49.

19.0 Academic Staff Professional Development in the Area of Assessment

The Dean / Head of Department should ensure that all academic staff in the School acquire experience in principles and design of assessment before the commencement of teaching duties. Those who lack such experience should be recommended to attend a professional development programme / training organized by the Centre for Learning and Teaching Enhancement, under the Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor – Learning and Teaching. The Centre for Learning and Teaching Enhancement shall organize sessions to help staff become familiar with the guidelines of assessment processes.

20.0 Quality Assurance

Quality assurance in assessment ensures an organized approach to assessment that is fair and transparent to the learner. It keeps expectations at the appropriate levels and provides clear and measurable standards for both Educators and Learners. Through this process, there is a consistent, reliable and valid assessment decisions and that the integrity of the assessment and reporting of student achievement against the performance standards for a subject are maintained.

For quality assurance of assessments, there must be

20.1 Internal and external moderation and benchmarking of assessment.

20.2 Review at every stage of the assessment cycle and ongoing consultation with students, teachers and the experts.

20.3 External examining arrangements.

21.0 University Grading System

The Fiji National University utilizes the University Grading System (Refer to Appendix 2) to determine whether each student has passed or failed a course, and the grade and mark to be awarded.

22.0 College Protocols

Colleges may develop college-level protocols on assessment to further define expectations relevant to professional accreditation or disciplinary practices or to clarify normal operational parameters.

Any such College assessment protocols must be:

17.1 consistent with the University Assessment Policy and Procedures

17.2 communicated to students prior to the commencement of the study period in which the course is being undertaken and must remain in place for the study period in which the course is being offered.

23.0 Policy Custodian

Pro Vice Chancellor – Learning and Teaching

24.0 Responsible Officer

Deputy Manager Monitoring and Compliance

25.0 Approving Authority

Senate

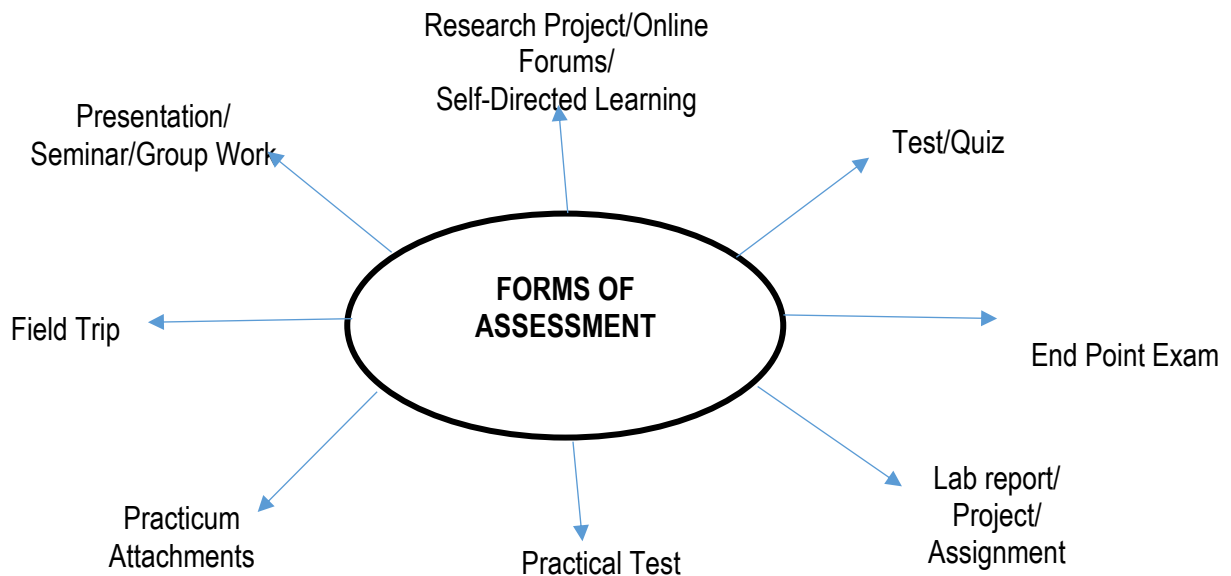
Effective Date : _____

Review Date : _____

26.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Assessment Procedures

1.0 Fig 1 – Diagram showing common forms of assessment



2.0 All Assessments

The following procedures apply to the major assessment components used at the Fiji National University. Any assessments not indicated in these procedures must be issued in the Course Descriptor in class or on Moodle and be as per the assessment components for the course that was endorsed by the Senate.

- 2.1 At the start of each academic term, the Course Descriptor for each course must outline the forms and methods of student assessment and progression.
- 2.2 The conditions to be met to pass a course must be clearly specified and the workload associated with assessment requirements for each level must be the same for all colleges.
- 2.3 The requirements for assessments apply to all courses whether or not they have exams.
- 2.4 All assessments for examinable courses must be set before the last week of lectures.

3.0 Assessment Procedures

	Assignments	Tests	Labs	F/Trips	Research Projects	Group Work
Assessment Outline/Marking Guide	To be given on Moodle well in advance					
Submission of Assessment	Through Moodle unless otherwise specified. By due date as late submissions will incur penalties.					
Marking of Assessment	As per approved marking guide and must be fair and transparent.					
Recording/Publishing of Assessment Marks	Promptly on Moodle					
Returning of Marked Assessment	As soon as marking is completed but not later than three weeks of the test date.					
Enquiring with Course Coordinator if feedback is not received	Up to four weeks after the due/test date (Before the last day of lectures)					
Querying Assessment Mark with Course Coordinator	Within two weeks of receiving marks					
Missed Assessment for valid Reason	Inform Course Coordinator immediately					
Accepted Plagiarism Level	20% or less					
Other important matters to note	Assessment rubric that will be used to mark the assignment must be provided in Moodle.	Tests can include Multiple-choice questions depending on the nature of the assessment.	Lab attendance to be Kept Students must attend 75% of lab sessions OHS requirement for labs to be signed and followed	Must be maximum 1week long and during Mid Semester Break OHS requirements to be met, signed and followed	Assessment rubric that will be used to mark the research project must be provided in Moodle.	Group task must be justified Marks to be given as per contribution by individual students Guidelines to be followed on Summative assessment for Group Work.

Appendix 2: University Grading System

The following table represents the University final grade descriptors for a course of study. They represent the overall achievement of the student in that course.

Grade	Marks	Description	Grade Points
A+	90-100	High Distinction	4.33-5.00
A	85-89	Distinction	4.00-4.27
A-	80-84	Distinction	3.73-3.93
B+	75-79	High Credit	3.33-3.60
B	70-74	Credit	3.00-3.27
B-	65-69	Credit	2.67-2.93
C+	60-64	Pass	2.33-2.60
C	55-59	Pass	2.00-2.27
C-	50-54	Pass	1.67-1.93
D+	45-49	Fail	1.33-1.60
D	40-44	Fail	1.00-1.27
D-	35-39	Fail	0.67-0.93
E	Below 35	Fail	0
DNQ	Did Not Qualify: Student received over 50% of total marks but did not meet other specified conditions for a pass	Fail	0
CT		Credit Transfer	0
NV		Null & Void for Dishonest Practice	0
I		Result withheld/Incomplete assessment	0
X		Continuing course	0
DNC		Did Not Complete	0
CP		Compassionate Pass	0
Aeg		Aegrotat Pass	0
PT		Pass Terminating	0
P		Pass	0
NP		Not Passed	0
Comp		Competent	0
NComp		Not Competent	0