

TITLE: **Assessment Policy (Higher Education)**

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PREPARED BY: Dr Meeuwis Boelen

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PURPOSE: To outline NMIT’s approach to assessment in higher education and the principles underpinning this approach, and to identify those responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented.

1. PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment encompasses the implementation of assessable activities and is designed to:

- a) engage students in learning.
- b) provide feedback on student learning for both students and staff.
- c) measure students' preparedness for further study or professional accreditation.
- d) rank students, relative to one another, for the purposes of competitive scholarships or other opportunities.
- e) provide feedback on teaching for staff.
- f) define and protect academic standards.

2. PRINCIPLES

- a) Assessment shall be equitable, objective and auditable.
- b) Assessment shall be aligned to specified learning outcomes, including graduate attributes and the generic skills they encompass.
- c) Students will be fully informed of assessment criteria, their relationship to learning outcomes and the performance expectations on which grading is based, normally through the Subject Guide¹.
- d) Subject and course schedules of assessment will have inter-related sequences of tasks.
- e) When setting assessment tasks, consideration shall 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 subject (see 4) and also the workload demands on staff.
- f) Assessment tasks shall be designed to provide both a valid and a reliable measure of student achievement.
- g) Approaches to assessment shall meet the needs of a diverse student population and will provide them with an appropriate opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes. NMIT shall ensure that students with identified disabilities or needs have that opportunity by assisting staff where necessary and practicable to adjust assessment tasks ([A/SV/D/7/005](#)).
- h) NMIT will deal fairly and efficiently with issues of student misconduct in assessment processes through its Student Disciplinary Policy ([NMIT/IR/11](#)), and will deal fairly and efficiently with grievances concerning assessment through its Student Grievance Policy ([A/SV/D/7/007](#)).
- i) All assessment tasks counting towards 30% or more of the total assessment for the subject, and all hurdle requirements, will be moderated prior to setting the task. ([P/HE/D/4/090](#)).

¹ The subject guide, also known as the subject syllabus, is...

“... the written information about each unit or subject that will be made available to students no later than the first week of the academic timetable. The information will outline unit or subject objectives, workload expectations, assessment procedures, attendance requirements, reading requirements, laboratory involvement and other requirements of the student.” [source AVCC Guidelines]

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- j) Effective feedback should be an integral component of the normal teaching and learning process. Students will be informed of the nature, extent and timing of feedback they can expect for each assessment task. Feedback is to be provided with sufficient time for students to rectify misconceptions before their next assessment task is due.
- A single grade, with no other information, is not considered to be feedback. Conversely, written comments are not an essential feature of diagnostic feedback. Even without explanatory comments, differential scoring across a range of specified criteria may be highly diagnostic and so constitutes feedback (e.g. the use of detailed rubrics)
 - Rubrics attempt to make explicit the various levels of attainment recognised by the assessors, against each assessment criterion. They often take the form of a two-way table of criteria and grades, with each cell containing an explanatory description. Rubrics are sometimes used to facilitate consistency in grading. They may also be used to provide feedback to students.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a) Students will take responsibility for using the assessment process to guide their learning and shall comply with the ethical and procedural rules of the Institute when undertaking assessment tasks.
- b) Academic staff will set, moderate and mark the assessment components, within the parameters set in the Subject Outline.
- c) The Head of Program will lead an ongoing review of assessment strategies of the subjects
- d) The Degree Committee will monitor appropriateness of assessment strategies within the course.
- e) The Academic Head Higher Education will lead the ongoing review of assessment strategies at the level of the Degree Committee and Higher Education Academic Committee.

4. ASSESSMENT LOAD

- a) Normally, there will be multiple assessment tasks within a subject that, normally, include both formative and summative assessment tasks.
 - **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 compared with the standard required, and it assists them in achieving that standard.
 - **Summative assessment** involves the making of judgements about student learning against explicit criteria and standards usually towards the end of a subject. These judgements are translated into grades. Summative judgements are used to accredit learners at the end of a subject or course.

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- b) The following guidelines assist with the equitable distribution of assessment load. The load will be similar between year-levels, although the complexity of the tasks is expected to increase with year-levels.

<i>If the entire assessment consisted of</i>	<i>the amount would be:</i>
Essay, report, review, illustrated text	4,000 words
Journal	8,000 words
Examination	4 - 5 hours
Individual presentation	80 minutes
Member of group presentation	40 minutes

5. HURDLES

- a) If hurdles (conditions for passing a subject other than the overall mark) are to be applied, they must be stated in the Subject Outline and the Subject Guide.
- b) Normally, attendance at lectures is not compulsory whereas attendance at other scheduled classes may be expected. Notwithstanding these expectations, if attendance is conditional for passing the subject, this must be stated in the Subject Outline and Subject Guide.
- c) A student who has obtained 50% or more in a subject but who has failed to meet a hurdle requirement shall be offered supplementary assessment (code SAH) in order to meet this requirement, unless it is impractical to provide this assessment. Upon successful completion of the supplementary assessment task, the original mark will stand ([P/HE/D/4/052](#)).

6. SUPPLEMENTARY ASSESSMENT

It is accepted that no instrument is capable to assess a student's achievement with absolute accuracy. Therefore, if a student's final mark is close to 50%, the student may be offered a supplementary assessment task:

- a) A student shall be granted supplementary assessment (code SA) in any subject for which a mark of 48% (47.50%) or more has been obtained.
- b) The student may be granted supplementary assessment (code SA) in a failed subject for which a mark of 45-47% (44.50%) or more has been obtained. The decision will be made by the Chief Examiners Meeting and take into consideration the student's academic record and the Course Coordinator's recommendation.
- c) If the student passes the supplementary assessment task, the final mark awarded will be 50 (code PS).
- d) If the student declines the offer or fails the supplementary assessment task, their original mark will stand and the student will have failed the subject (code N).
- e) Students shall be given a minimum of one week's notice for supplementary examination, including details of the assessment.
- f) In normal circumstances, supplementary assessment will be held at the start of the next semester as indicated in the higher education academic calendar.
- g) The supplementary assessment task should be comparable in standard with the initial assessment for a subject, or at least a major segment of it.

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- h) A supplementary assessment may also be granted as a result of a dispute resolution, as an outcome of an Application for Special Consideration [P/HE/F/4/040](#), or on the recommendation of an Academic Progress Panel [P/HE/D/4/060](#)

7. SPECIAL ASSESSMENT

- a) The Chief Examiners Meeting may grant a special assessment task in response to a student's written request for Special Consideration.
- b) Upon completion of the special assessment task, total marks and grade for the subject will be calculated (i.e. the student can attain full marks for the subject).
- c) The special assessment task should be comparable in standard with the initial assessment for a subject, or at least a major segment of it.
- d) A special assessment may also be granted on the recommendation of an Academic Progress Panel [P/HE/D/4/060](#) or as a result of dispute resolution.

8. REPEAT ASSESSMENT

The default course of action is that a student who has failed a subject will have to re-enrol in the subject. In some situations this may be of little educational benefit, expensive for the student in fees and disruptive for the student's course progression. Therefore, the Chief Examiners Meeting may offer the student the opportunity to repeat the assessment tasks of the failed subject, without the student needing to re-enrol or to attend classes. The central consideration is that any case presented for granting repeat assessment must demonstrate that this course of action will be educationally beneficial to the student and will not compromise the academic standards of the course:

- a) A student may be granted repeat assessment for 1 failed subject annually, provided that they gained an average 60% for the 4 most recent subjects they attempted (48 credit points, including the failed subject).
- b) In considering a case for repeat assessment, the Chief Examiners Meeting will be guided by the recommendation from the Course Coordinator and will require the support from the Head of Program (or the Chair if the Course Coordinator also is the Head of Program). The recommendation will be argued on how granting repeat assessment will benefit the student's learning without compromising the standards of the course.
- c) The repeat assessment task(s) will be comparable in nature and standard to at least 70% of the normal assessment tasks of the subject. The task(s) will be set by the Subject Coordinator in consultation with the Head of Program, and will be moderated by the Academic Head Higher Education.
- d) If the student passes the repeat assessment task(s), the final mark awarded will be 50 (code PS).
- e) If the student declines the offer or fails the repeat assessment task(s), their original mark will stand and the student will have failed the subject (code N).
- f) Normally, the repeat assessment task(s) will be held at (or will be due by) the start of the next semester as indicated in the higher education academic calendar.
- g) The Faculty may charge fees for the repeat assessment, based on cost-recovery for staff time and materials.
- h) The student is not necessarily entitled to additional tutoring during their preparation for the repeat assessment.
- i) A repeat assessment can also be granted on the recommendation of an Academic Progress Panel [P/HE/D/4/060](#) or as a result of dispute resolution.

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9. REPEAT FAIL

- a) When a student has failed a subject twice, they will be called to appear at an Academic Progress Panel, to discuss their enrolment in the course, as outlined in [P/HE/D/4/060](#).
- b) The range of options available to the Academic Progress Panel include, but is not limited to, advising the student to discontinue the course, to take academic leave, or to accept conditional enrolment in the course.