

## 5.5.2 Assessment and Grading

### Operating Policy and Procedures

#### 1. **Policy**

Assessments for all subjects must address the course objectives and provide an appropriate mechanism to assess student learning and understanding.

#### 2. **Purpose**

To ensure assessment for NCPS's higher education programs is conducted in a fair and consistent manner and that all assessment outcomes are reliable and valid.

#### 3. **Responsibility**

The Academic Council is responsible for ratifying this policy. The Manager of Study Programs is responsible for review of, and compliance with, this policy.

#### 4. **Guidelines and Procedures**

##### 4.1 **Board of Examiners**

The purpose of the Board of Examiners is to review the progress of all students, examine result trends across all subjects, consider applications for Special Consideration which apply to all exams sat during the general examination period or an entire trimester's work, identify students at risk, and make recommendations to the Academic Review Panel.

The Board of Examiners convenes three times a year following the compilation of final results for all subjects at the conclusion of each trimester.

##### 4.2 **Assessment**

Assessment is integral to the learning process and all NCPS higher education programs include a suite of carefully designed formative and summative assessment tasks to ensure students are provided with fair and appropriate opportunities to demonstrate their learning. Assessment outcomes also indicate direction for future improvement and clearly outline the rationale for the lecturer's evaluation of a student's work.

4.2.1 All approaches to assessment are subject to NCPS policies for continuous improvement, academic integrity, fairness and reliability.

4.2.2 Assessment of a subject shall be based on more than one assessment point in time and more than one assessment method while ensuring that the amount of work required is appropriate to the credit points value of the subject. No one component or assessment method should account for more than 70% of the final mark. Subject chairs design tasks at an undergraduate level that are broadly equivalent to a 5000-word essay or a combination of other assessments that would equal the same.

##### 4.3 **Validity**

To ensure validity, assessment items are developed through a team approach. Assessment development teams should include a content matter expert, a senior academic staff member and the subject chair as a minimum.

4.3.1 All changes to assessment are presented to the Professional Educator Team. If

accepted, revised tools and/or approaches must be ratified by the Academic Council.

4.3.2 A variety of assessment approaches are encouraged to accommodate a variety of student learning preferences. They may include, but not be limited to: essays, practical assignments, court reports, class presentations, homework submitted in tutorials, class participation, and examinations.

4.3.3 Students are advised of all assessment requirements and tasks for each subject at the beginning of each trimester in the subject guide and in class.

4.3.4 Assessment tools must be revised in conjunction with any substantial review of course content. All changes must be ratified by the Academic Council.

#### 4.4 **Reliability**

To ensure the reliability of assessment outcomes, each subject must include a minimum of two separate assessment tasks.

4.4.1 Assessment tasks must include a range of approaches, for example, an assignment and an exam, or a portfolio submission and an exam.

4.4.2 Both formative and summative assessment should be incorporated to facilitate timely feedback to students to assist their learning and development.

4.4.3 The distribution of results from each assessment item must be reviewed for anomalies following each assessment period prior to the release of assessment results to students. Results are reviewed by the Board of Examiners for analysis to determine the strength of reliability. If the distribution of results deviates substantially from the norm for one particular student cohort, required actions are discussed and a plan of action agreed upon. If a trend of skewed results persists for more than two cohorts of students and cannot be explained, a recommendation to review the delivery and assessment strategies for the relevant subject is forwarded to the subject chair.

#### 4.5 **Resubmission**

Students may be permitted to resubmit work in certain limited circumstances. This will usually result from a successful Special Consideration request, but individual lecturers may also permit resubmissions in rare instances. For example, a student who normally performs well may produce a poor piece of work, which the lecturer feels is uncharacteristic. The lecturer may ask for the work to be resubmitted. Resubmissions such as these are at the discretion of the lecturers, are dealt with on a case by case basis, and may not be requested by students. Results are withheld until the resubmitted work is marked.

4.5.1 Resubmissions do not apply only to failed work, but to all work assessed.

#### 5.1 **Special Consideration** - *please refer to policy 5.6.4 Special Considerations*

#### 5.2 **Marking**

NCPS uses criteria-based assessment which is the process of judging and grading student achievement by comparing the quality of the work with a set of specified criteria that are related to the desired learning outcomes for the subject. These criteria-based judgements are in principle made independently for each student rather than by comparison with the quality of work with other students in the cohort, i.e. norm-referenced assessment.

5.2.1 Each grade is assigned as a measure of the extent to which the course learning outcomes have been achieved.

5.2.2 Markers look for the student's ability to analyse a topic in depth by researching widely and demonstrating this using appropriate written skills, but also the ability of a student to test their own ideas as well as analyse the ideas of others. In particular, markers look for:

- Understanding of the question or topic;
- Analytical abilities;
- Original thought;
- Excellent written skills;
- Appropriate structure;
- Coherence and logical progress;
- Correct referencing.

5.2.3 All markers will provide written feedback on all submitted work, provided that work has been submitted in accordance with College policies and by the due date. A completed written assessment report will be attached to each assignment.

5.2.4 Some subjects have one academic staff member marking the assessment tasks and some have two, depending on the nature of the subject and the availability of markers. Where there are two markers, marking is shared equally.

5.2.5 Annually, all staff members are required to attend a "Marking Workshop" to discuss marking standards, re-examine current marking criteria to ensure ongoing applicability and to review a sample of marking from each member. The aim of this practice is to ensure a consistent approach to marking across all College markers. Refer to *policy 5.9.9 Academic Staff Development*.

5.2.6 Random sampling of marking may occur during the teaching period of any subject.

5.2.7 Second marking is conducted on all high distinction and failed written assignments. Examinations will only be second marked should a student's overall grade for a subject fall between 45-49%.

### 5.3 **Grading**

This policy outlines the definitions and requirements pertaining to fail, pass, credit, Distinction and High Distinction. Please refer to policies *5.5.4 Grading Scale* and *5.6.7 Grading Review*.

### 5.4 **Failure**

Any piece of work which receives less than 50% of the available marks is deemed by the marker as having failed to meet the minimum requirements of the assessment task and is therefore failed.

5.4.1 Failing a particular piece of work does not mean that the subject is automatically failed.

5.4.2 Any written assignment (not examinations) which has been failed will be second marked by the designated second examiner for the subject prior to the submission of results to student administration. The second marking process is to be consultative wherever possible, with the second marker's comments and recommendations informing the original marker's final decision as to the actual grade recorded.

### 5.5 **Did Not Sit Results - please refer to policy 5.6.12 Did Not Sit Result**

All assessment pieces in all subjects must be attempted. Those students who do not

comply with this requirement risk receiving DNS (Did Not Sit) results.

5.5.1 A DNS result on a transcript means that:

- One or more major assessment pieces was not submitted and Special Consideration was not sought, or was sought but not approved; or
- A major assessment piece was submitted more than 7 days after the due date and was not accepted and therefore constituted a non-submission, and Special Consideration was not applied for, or was applied for but not approved; or
- The student withdrew from the subject or course or took leave of absence after the end of week 8 in the trimester.

5.5.2 If a DNS result is recorded during the trimester, the student will be notified in writing. If a DNS is recorded in all enrolled subjects, the student will also receive their transcript at the time they become a DNS.

5.5.3 Did Not Sit is an academic penalty, and only one will be permitted per subject.

5.5.4 A student who receives three or more DNS results in any academic year will be deemed 'at risk' of failing to meet academic progress requirements. The Academic Review Panel may then consider options with which a student must comply in order to be able to progress their studies.

## 5.6 Moderation

All marking and assessment outcomes are subject to moderation activities to ensure consistency.

5.6.1

Teaching staff, in their first teaching period, will participate in moderation to commence their professional development program and to quality assure consistency of grading and feedback throughout the College. The teaching member will be guided through the grading systems and criteria and will have access to past student essays and assignments in their subject and related subjects, if required. This will allow the teaching member to have an overview of previous marking standards for their subject. The Dean/Head of College, or delegate, will mentor the new teaching member in the marking process both before and during the assessment period.

## 5.7 Internal Moderation

- Moderation occurs across all programs and is undertaken by the Board of Examiners who report outcomes to the College's Academic Council. The Board compares the current cohort's grades against previous periods of teaching to ensure there are no unexplained variables with them.
- The Board of Examiners (Subject Co-ordinators and the Dean/Head of College) will also review periodically a sample of marking from each subject. The sample will consist of an assessment piece from each grading range and will be reviewed against the grading criteria.
- Second marking of all high distinction and failed assessments is undertaken by an independent marker with the subject knowledge; and
- Subjects will often have two markers (each marker is responsible for grading one different piece of a student's work) which allows for marking to be objective.

## 5.8 External Moderation

External moderation activities may occur, as deemed necessary. External moderation may occur in the following, as required:

- Three marked assessments from each class undergoing moderation will be chosen at random;
- A moderation panel will be convened to review the assessments and a report will be provided to the educator of the moderated subject;
- An overall report will be provided for review by the Board of Examiners and the Academic Council. The objective is to identify the issues that require further discussion or additional professional development for the teaching staff; and
- Should inappropriate grading and/or marking by a marker be identified, the marker will be moderated again in their next teaching period. A mentor will then be appointed to assist the marker/teaching member with the marking process. The teaching member's grading and feedback will be approved by the mentor prior to assessments being returned to the students.

## 6. Authority

Authorised by the Dean/Head of College.

## 7. Approval

Initially approved by the Higher Education Board (now the Academic Council) on 14 December 2005.

## 8. Amendments

Date	Modified by	Sections amended/added	Approved by Academic Council (if required)
05/06/09	Christine Ashton	Format changed to new template and new logo added.	Minor Change
09/09/09	Christine Ashton	Added section 5.11 – External Moderation processes with other Navitas Providers	Minor Change
09/11/09	Christine Ashton	Change of name and logo	Minor change
01/02/10	Jodie Reeve	4.7.6 Adjustment to sentence structure	Minor Change
30/03/10	Christine Ashton	Change HEB to Academic Council (new governance name)	Minor change
23/08/11	Matthew Thurgood (Acting Manager of Study Programs)	Change in titles: Registrar to Manager of Study Programs; General Manager to Dean/Head of College.  Removal of sections 4.6 – 5.3; now in 5.5.x Examinations policy  Section 5.8.1 adjusted to reflect amendments to Policy 5.6.12 re. application of DNS  Date for Review: 01/08/2012	Minor change  Major change  Minor Change
18/11/11	Matthew Thurgood	Title of policy changed from	Minor change in

		<p>'Assessment and Marking' to 'Assessment and Grading'.</p> <p>4.1 and 5.3 – reference to conceded passes removed.</p> <p>5.4.2 amended/reworded – second marking process to exclude examinations.</p> <p>5.2.7 amended – restricting of second marking of examinations</p>	<p>response to feedback from Chair, Academic Council, 9/11/11.</p> <p>Minor change, as above.</p> <p>Minor change, as above.</p> <p>Major change (AC 01/12/11).</p>
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