

Assessment and Marking Policy

Responsible officer: Executive Dean
Accountable officer: Dean, Operations
Approval authority: Academic Board
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Purpose

The Assessment and Marking Policy is intended to set out the standards, principles and guidelines concerning the assessment and marking of students' learning within Holmes Institute's higher education courses.

Scope

The Policy applies to all Holmes Institute staff, decision-making bodies and students enrolled in programs at Holmes Institute including at partner institutions.

1. Defining Assessment

1.1 An assessment is defined as any process used to appraise a student's knowledge, understanding, ability or skills related to a unit or course the student is enrolled in.

1.2 These processes serve purposes, including the following:

- a) The advancement of a student's learning
- b) The evaluation of a student's knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills, and
- c) The identification of a level of attainment, usually in the form of a mark or result or grade that establishes the extent to which a student has met the required academic standards set by Holmes Institute, and any external bodies such as professional registration authorities.

1.3 An Assessment may be formative, diagnostic, synoptic or summative in its primary purpose:

- a) A formative assessment is designed to assist students to learn more effectively, for example, through the provision of feedback on a student's performance and advice as to how it can be improved or maintained;
- b) A diagnostic assessment is designed to identify the student's strengths, and any potential gaps, in the knowledge, understanding and skills expected for

commencement or continuation in a unit or course. It is designed to identify any matters that may affect a student's capacity to undertake a unit or course successfully;

c) A synoptic assessment is designed to evaluate students' capacity to integrate and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding gained in one part of a unit or course to learning in other parts of the unit or course or across the units or course as a whole;

d) A summative assessment is designed to indicate the extent of a student's success in achieving specified learning outcomes for a unit or course. It contributes to a student's final grade in a unit.

2. Assessment standards

2.1 The Academic Board and its relevant committees will:

a) Develop and implement effective operational policy or procedures for the design, approval, monitoring and review of assessments;

b) Ensure that the assessment strategies and academic standards set for each unit are appropriate for the level of the course and meet all requirements and standards specified by relevant professional and statutory bodies;

c) Ensure that assessment promotes effective learning while maintaining academic standards and that student performance is judged only against those standards;

d) Ensure assessments comply with the principles of fairness, equity, validity, reliability, flexibility, authenticity and sufficiency;

e) Reviews assessment-related policies, procedures and practices periodically to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and are being consistently applied. The reviews will incorporate student feedback obtained through a variety of means as well as faculty feedback;

f) Provide all faculty with opportunities for professional development in assessment.

2.2 The Executive Dean and Dean, Operations ensure that:

a) All persons involved in assessment in a unit or course, including any student peer assessors, are competent to undertake the assigned role and responsibility, and

b) Faculty, students and external moderators are made aware of Holmes Institute policies, procedures and guidelines that pertain to assessments. This includes information about the methods of assessment at Holmes Institute.

2.3 Students are advised of assessment outcomes as quickly as possible and within reasonable timeframes.

2.4 Unless required by an external professional, statutory or regulatory body, or otherwise clearly justifiable on pedagogical or other grounds, the contribution of any single item of summative assessment to a student's overall grade in a unit will not exceed more than a half of the total value of all summative assessment for the unit.

2.5 Final assessment results are validated by the Board of Examiners.

3. Assessment principles

3.1 The following principles inform how assessments at Holmes Institute are designed and managed:

3.1 Student assessment contributes to student learning

a) Assessment is designed to promote effective student learning in pursuit of specified learning outcomes and graduate attributes. All assessments must be able to enable judgements as to whether, and to what extent, students are achieving or have achieved the specified learning outcomes for a unit and/ or course.

b) All units will include a formative assessment task that incorporates the provision of effective feedback on how to improve academic performance.

3.2 Assessment involves timely feedback to students Student assessment is spread across the teaching period to enable students to benefit from assessment feedback in undertaking subsequent learning tasks. Students can expect assessment results and written feedback/ comments about their performance in relation to the assessment criteria within 14 days of the due date of the assessment. Class tests and examination scripts are **not** returned to students.

3.3 Assessment involves feedback to faculty on their performance

Appraisal of students' knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills can provide valuable insights into curriculum design, delivery methods and assessment processes. For this reason, assessment is regarded as a form of feedback on teaching that can be used to facilitate improvements in teaching as well as in learning.

3.4 Assessment contributes to maintaining academic standards

Assessment will include elements that are justifiable on pedagogical grounds, or by virtue of being an accreditation or professional registration requirement.

3.5 Assessments are constructively aligned

The assessment of student learning will encompass and reinforce connections between graduate attributes and specified course and unit learning outcomes.

3.6 Assessment methods are explicitly aligned with unit learning outcomes, course content and required performance standards

Assessment tasks must be designed to allow a determination to be made regarding how well a student has attained a unit and/ or course learning outcome. Students will be explicitly advised of assessment processes and related academic performance standards.

3.7 Assessment is diverse in form and type

For students to pursue and demonstrate achievement of a wide range of specified learning outcomes of appropriate standards, a diversity of forms and types of assessment between and within units, including components that are formative and summative in purpose.

3.8 Forms and types of assessment are suited to their purpose

The forms and types of assessment used are suitable for assessing the specified unit learning outcomes and are assessed fairly and with academic rigor.

3.9 Assessment weightings and levels of achievement are explicit

The mechanisms adopted for assigning weightings to, and assigning levels of achievement are fair and explicit.

3.10 Summative assessments are moderated and, where warranted, reviewed

Summative assessment outcomes will be moderated to ensure that the outcomes are fair and reliable and that assessment criteria have been applied consistently. Where there is evidence to suggest that the assessment criteria have not been applied consistently across a student cohort, the specific assessments will be reviewed.

3.11 Assessment is conducted in English

3.12 Students are entitled to dispute or lodge a grievance about assessment

A student is entitled to dispute, or lodge a grievance about a summative assessment result within 14 days of results being published. For further information about lodging a grievance refer to the Complaints and Appeal Policy.

3.13 Students are made aware of assessment details and implications

- a) Students will be informed about the form, amount, weightings and timing of different assessment tasks, including the criteria and standards under which students' performance in particular learning tasks will be judged.
- b) Students will be advised of, and encouraged to comply with obligations, procedures and requirements pertaining to assessment. This includes assignment

submission deadlines, details about maintaining academic integrity and information about making requests for assignment extensions (where a student is experiencing severe circumstances that may adversely affect their performance in assessment).

c) Students will also be advised of the implications and possible consequences of failure to comply with the assessment conventions, obligations, procedures and requirements set out above.

d) Students with a declared disability will be advised of reasonable adjustment options available to them.

e) Students will also be advised of official procedures for progressing a grievance in relation to an assessment.

4. Records management

Examination scripts and other forms of summative assessment are held for the mandated script retention period and appeal period for review by students.

5. Assessment Marking

Holmes Institute ensures student assessments are marked in a timely and equitable manner and that relevant feedback is provided to students.

5.1 All student assessments are marked by qualified faculty using marking guides provided by the relevant unit coordinator. Where sessional academics are employed to mark student assessments, the unit coordinator or delegate will mentor the sessional academics and draw a sample of each sessional academic's marking to ensure consistency in the marking.

5.2 The responsibility of the marking for a unit ultimately lies with the unit coordinator.

5.3 Moderation of student assessments and results is undertaken by the unit coordinator in liaison with other faculty teaching the subject and generally occurs in Degree Committee meetings. External moderation of the validity of assessments and their marking is also undertaken through external feedback from benchmarking with Holmes partners.

5.4 Final grades are ratified by the Board of Examiners before final grade release.