

Assessment Policy for Vocational and Higher Education

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1. Introduction

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching system and an important aspect of maintaining academic standards. It measures the achievement of learning outcomes and formally certifies student achievements for external audiences.

Assessment at Eton University is linked to specific learning outcomes and based on clearly articulated criteria that help students understand the characteristics of high quality work. It supports student-centered approaches to learning. In keeping with the University's strongly applied focus to teaching and learning, each vertical endorses relevant diverse forms of assessment primarily drawing on real life practice.

The University has an established set of principles that guide learning and teaching within the organization.

2. Definitions

Assessment: the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether learning outcomes have been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard or level of achievement required within a subject.

Learning Outcomes: are the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge or skills a student has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

Summative Assessment: evaluates the quality of students' learning and involves assigning a grade or numerical result based on how effectively students have addressed learning outcomes.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all vocational courses and higher education courses excluding higher degree research courses. All staff and students must comply with this policy whenever they are engaged in any aspect of the assessment process.

4. Principles

Assessments must:

- be undertaken with honesty and integrity by staff and students and allow fair judgements about student performance

- be assessed by appropriately qualified assessors, with grades applied consistently in accordance with the specified grading criteria
- be equitable, and cater for any disadvantages to a student that result from the student's disability, special needs or unforeseen circumstances
- be aligned with subject learning outcomes
- encourage and reinforce learning through the provision of meaningful and timely feedback
- be intellectually challenging to the appropriate RQF level, engaging and relevant
- measure achievement by referencing pre-determined and clearly articulated criteria.

In addition, this policy reflects the following principles:

- The University provides students sufficient and timely information about assessments.
- assessment practices and processes are continuously monitored for quality assurance and improvement purposes.

5. Assessment design

Assessment is designed to develop student learning, to make and communicate judgements about student learning relative to stated learning outcomes and to monitor student learning as a measure of teaching effectiveness. Assessments are to be relevant to the workplace where appropriate and consultation with industry should form part of this process.

5.1 Assessment in Vocational and HE Courses

Following are the guidelines for assessment design at Eton University:

Assessment in vocational and higher education will be designed on the principle of constructive alignment:

- All subjects will demonstrate alignment of the curriculum, intended learning outcomes, teaching methods and assessment tasks
- Assessments will provide opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes for the subject, and together for the course
- Additionally, assessments will demonstrate the acquisition of key graduate attributes.

Assessment will align with the appropriate RQF level:

- Qualities of performance will be used to describe the intended learning outcomes, providing detailed, explicit and transparent criteria against which students will be assessed
- A distinction will be made between grades awarded for the acquisition of declarative knowledge and the higher order skills required to demonstrate functioning knowledge
- Course management, including moderation, will ensure consistent assessment
- The academic standards intended to be achieved, and those standards actually achieved, will be benchmarked against similar accredited courses offered by other providers.

Assessments will be mapped to ensure they engage students without overburdening them:

- The weighting of individual tasks will reflect the relative importance of the learning outcomes as well as the size, timing, and level of difficulty of the task
- Variety in types of assessment will allow a range of different learning outcomes to be assessed, and group assessment will be carefully planned, structured and managed.

Data on assessment performance will be maintained, monitored and acted on:

- Comparative data will be collected on student performance in a course by entry pathway and mode of study
- Data collected will include progression, course completion and grade distribution.

The Program Director (or delegate) will provide the appropriate support and instruction to learning facilitators (lecturers) regarding the design, implementation and marking of assessments.

6. Feedback and grading

Constructive feedback and grading allows students to monitor their progress and determine where improvements can be made to enhance their learning. Feedback and grades will be provided usually within four to six weeks of assignment submission.

Final subject grades are provisional until results are ratified by the Examination Committee.

7. Failing the exam

A student who has failed the exam first time will be offered an opportunity to re-submit the exam once free of charge. The student will be required to re-sit the exam during the second examination period, which is normally being held 6-8 weeks after the first examination period.

If a student fails the same exam(s) for the second time, there will be a charge in the amount of \$50 (per exam) applicable to every subsequent exam submission.

8. Rescheduling exams

Students are expected to submit all exams as scheduled. At the time of program registration, students are provided with the tentative examination schedules, which are officially confirmed one month prior to the examination due date. Therefore, students are expected to have reviewed and be aware of the examination schedule for all modules they have enrolled in.

The examination period is intensive, and it is not uncommon for students to be required to submit multiple assignments in one day, or to have exams on successive days. Students are expected to plan for the due dates of assignments assigned during the semester and to properly manage the time allotted for take-home examinations.

Eton University policy states that exams will not be postponed for situations occurring during the semester that cause a student to lose study time. If a student experiences such a situation, he or she is encouraged to discuss the matter, as soon as possible, with the Student Advisor in order to inquire regarding the options available to the student. If properly documented, these options may include a reduction of modules assigned per quarter (not valid for the current quarter but only for the upcoming quarters) or postponement of study. Students experiencing such situations during the semester should notify the Student Advisor Office, in writing via email, no later than two weeks from the commencement of the next quarter.

Adjustments to a student's exam schedule will only be made if a student is experiencing an extraordinary personal matter or emergency situation which presents an unavoidable conflict with the exam (see section 10 more details).

9. Overdue assessments and exams

An assessment or exam is 'overdue' when it is not submitted by the due date or by the agreed extension date (see section 10 for assessment modification arrangements available to students with unexpected or extenuating circumstances).

9.1. Subsequent examination attempts for 'assessment no-show' students

If a student does not submit the assessment on time, this will be considered equal to taking the exam and receiving an 'F' (fail) grade, which will be recorded on the provisional transcript until the exam is passed. Once the exam has been passed, the final transcript will not reflect the provisional fail grade.

The student who has not attended the first exam intake will have the opportunity to attend the second examination intake, which is normally held 6 to 8 weeks after the first examination period. The second examination intake will be considered as student's second attempt to submit an assignment and it will be free of charge. However, if a student does not attend the second exam intake or fails the exam, the student will be required to pay \$50 (per exam) for the third examination intake and another \$50 for any subsequent examination intake, if applicable.

10. Unexpected or extenuating circumstances (special consideration)

Eton University acknowledges that students may be academically disadvantaged when unexpected or extenuating circumstances impact on their performance or their ability to complete their assessment tasks. In such circumstances a student may be eligible for a modified arrangement, such as assessment deadline extension or examination deferral.

To be granted a modified arrangement, the student must contact his Academic advisor immediately and submit a completed Application for Assessment Special Consideration form.

Unexpected or extenuating circumstances are those which were outside the control of the student and/or for which there was no opportunity to prepare in advance.

Unexpected or extenuating circumstances include:

- Medical circumstances: an unexpected illness, a recurrence of a chronic illness or an accident

Supporting documentation must take the form of an original certificate or letter on letterhead from a registered treating medical practitioner, registered health practitioner or approved specialist, depending on the nature of the condition

- Compassionate circumstances: hardship or trauma such as the death or serious illness of a close family member, severe disruption to domestic arrangements, being a victim of crime or an accident

Supporting documentation may take the form of an original medical certificate or letter on letterhead from a registered treating medical practitioner, registered health practitioner or approved specialist, depending on the nature of the condition; a letter from a person qualified to

assess and support the application (e.g. clergy providing grief counselling); or a certificate from a funeral director or death notice.

Supporting documentation will not be accepted from a relative or personal friend of the student, or friend of the student's family.

- Special circumstances: religious observance or obligations, formal legal commitments, military service, service with a recognized emergency management service, representing a state or home nation at a significant sporting or cultural event or unforeseen and significant employment-related circumstances such as a move interstate at short notice

Supporting documentation can include: a certified call to Defense Force service, a description of the emergency attended for State Emergency Service or Country/Rural Fire Service personnel, an original letter confirming changed employment circumstances, an original letter confirming commitments for athletes and performing artists, or a copy of an accident report.

Supporting documentation will not be accepted from a relative or personal friend of the student, or Friend of the student's family.

10.1 Assessment deadline extension for Special Consideration Applicants

If a student has been affected by unexpected or extenuating circumstances and has yet to submit their assessment, they may be eligible for an extension.

- The Academic Manager decides on extension applications.
- Extensions will provide a reasonable time, given the nature of the circumstances, for the student to complete the task without giving the student an unfair advantage over other students. A reasonable time will not extend beyond 8 weeks except in exceptional circumstances. Applications requiring more than 8 weeks' extension will be referred to the Program Director for a decision.
- Extension applications must be submitted at least seven working days prior to the assessment, unless the evidence of unexpected or extenuating circumstances provided indicates this would not have been possible.

Students found eligible to postpone their examination deadline due to special circumstances will be required to attend the second examination intake, which is normally being held 6-8 weeks after the first, regular intake. Exams submitted during that period will be considered as student's first attempt in submitting the exam. If the student fails this exam, he/she will be able to re-submit the exam during the third examination intake, free of charge. However, if a student fails to pass the exam for the second time, there will be a charge in the amount of \$50 (per exam) for every subsequent re-submission.

