



TIIS
THE INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES

Student Assessment Policy and Procedure

1. Overview

The Institute of International Studies (“the Institute”) has designed this policy to ensure that all student assessment tasks, materials and marking rubrics are appropriately designed to determine the extent to which students have met the learning and skills outcome requirements within a subject of study and to assist teaching staff to make decisions about the performance of individual students within a subject of study.

2. Rationale for Assessment

The rationale for assessment is to:

- Promote, enhance, and improve the quality of student learning through feedback that is clear, informative, timely, constructive and relevant to the needs of the student;
- Measure and confirm the standard of student performance and achievement in relation to a subject’s defined learning objectives;
- Acknowledge student effort and achievement with an appropriate grade;
- Provide relevant information in order to continuously evaluate and improve the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

3. Forms of Assessment

Some assessment is formative; it is specifically intended to assist students to identify weaknesses in their understanding, so that they may improve their understanding and enhance their learning. Other assessment is summative; its objective is primarily to pass judgment on the quality of a student’s learning, generally in terms of assigned marks and grades. Furthermore, critical reflection on the outcomes of assessment tasks, both formative and summative, can inform lecturers and students, not only about the quality of student learning but also about the effectiveness of teaching. A practice of continuous assessment and supplementary examinations shall be implemented.

Given the above, a subject will normally have:

- three items of assessment¹;
- no assessment task weighted more than 50% of the total mark;
- assessment tasks that are formative, summative, and/or a mixture of both;
- invigilated exams contributing up to 50% of the total mark (required in those subjects with external accreditation);
- group assessment tasks limited to 30% of the total mark; and
- group assessment tasks must include an individual component².

The forms of assessment used for each subject will be clearly delineated in the *Subject Outline* available to students.

Forms of assessment may include, as appropriate:

- **Invigilated written assessments** - in the form of short answer questions, numerically based questions, limited use of multiple-choice questions (no multiple-choice questions in the final exam), essays, and case studies. Assessments may be open book or closed book. Open book exams allow students to refer to sources of external information. The type and number of sources allowed will vary between subjects and must be included in the assessment brief for the final exam.
- **Written assignments** - in the form of essays, literature reviews, reports, work logs, portfolios, reflective journals, research reports, case studies etc. Students should be made aware of the

¹ Some items of assessment may include more than one component.

² Where group work is deemed essential to the design of a subject within a course (e.g., a capstone subject), the Program Coordinator may authorise group work in that subject to exceed 30% of the total mark.

limited gain and high risk of using so called Contract writers ('cheaters'), plagiarism, and/or doing or accepting ghost writing for assignments.

- **Seminars/presentations** - normally based around formal discussion groups where students will be delegated or choose topics for research and present their findings at subsequent seminars.
- **Practical assignments** - students may be required to complete a series of practical assignments designed to test students' abilities under 'real world' conditions.
- **E-based assignments** – students may be required to respond to simulations, design strategies, develop modelling scenarios, prepare forecasts, develop applications etc.
- **In-class Assessments** - assessment items that facilitate student attendance and participation in class (such as regular in-class quizzes) are encouraged, however these assessment items should:
 - Relate to specific, measurable assessment tasks and should not reward mere attendance or be based solely on student participation.
 - Provide ongoing feedback to students
 - Not exceed 15% of the subject's overall assessment
 - Allow students who miss an assessment item, as a result of approved adverse circumstances, the opportunity to re-sit the assessment event or not be otherwise disadvantaged by those adverse circumstances.

4. Notification of Assessment

A fundamental aspect of developing a subject is the specification of the prescribed assessment tasks in a way that relates them directly to the subject objectives (including expected learning outcomes), the course structure, the teaching methods to be used, and the learning strategies to be fostered. The details of all assessment tasks will be stated clearly in the *Subject Outline* and include a statement of the objectives of the subject; its assessment plan, including weightings allocated to each assessable component and related submission dates; deadlines, sanctions, and penalties.

5. Timing and Weight of Assessments

Students are expected to achieve the objectives of a subject progressively throughout the trimester. They will be set tasks during the study period that allows their progress to be evaluated against established criteria.

Assessment tasks will be designed carefully, first, to keep in proportion student time commitment and the weight of the assessment task in the overall assessment, and second, to reflect, as far as possible, the importance of each task in determining the effectiveness of students having met the subject objectives. This might mean that an important task, such as a final examination, is weighted more heavily. Care will be taken to avoid the imposition of a heavy imbalance of assessment load toward the second half of the study period. Assessment should reflect both the level of the subject and the credit points assigned.

Typically, one or more assessment tasks will be set, submitted, marked and returned to students by the mid-point of a subject. Although students need regular feedback on their progress, set assessment tasks should be kept to the minimum that is enough to enable students to make judgements about their progress. Due dates for assessment tasks will be well separated in time to provide students periods for reflective learning that are free from the pressure engendered by a looming deadline.

In some disciplines, students are expected to practise skill development continuously. To evaluate students' ability to perform such on-going tasks, consideration will be given to strategies for self-assessment. In this way, students can obtain evidence concerning their level of understanding of the work, while avoiding the stress of frequent formal appraisal by an examiner.

Apart from examination scripts, all assessed work will be returned to the student, preferably in a class context where the student has the right to query the assessment result for clarification either then or later. Typically, all marked assignments will be returned to students within two weeks.

Subject Outlines will advise students at the beginning of a subject how all assessment results are to be combined to produce an overall mark for the subject. In particular, the subject outline will make clear:

- the weight of each task in contributing to the overall mark;
- the formulas or rules used to determine the overall mark;
- minimum standards that are applied to specific assessment tasks, and the consequences if such standards are not met (including failure to submit tasks);
- rules regarding penalties applied to late submissions; and
- precise details of what is expected in terms of presentation of work for assessment.

Emphasis will be placed on appropriate referencing conventions and requirements, on the degree of cooperation permitted between students, and on what constitutes academic dishonesty and the consequences of committing it as outlined in the *Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy and Procedure*.

6. Submission of Assessment Items

Students are required to submit assessment items at the time and date specified in the *Subject Outline*. Assessment items submitted after the due date will be subject to a penalty unless the student has been given prior approval in writing for an extension of time to submit that item.

Assessments should be submitted in the form specified in the *Subject Outline*. Where practical, assessments must be subjected to plagiarism detection software such as *Turnitin*. In all assignments, students should be rewarded for providing/integrating informed opinions (citing expert opinions) and penalised for giving unsupported (and/or plagiarised) opinions.

Submission of assessment should accommodate the different modes of study a student may choose while ensuring equivalence. The following should be ensured when designing and implementing assessment.

- **Invigilated written assessment** - all invigilated assessments such as exams and presentations should be invigilated across all options for submission. Students attempting an exam online will be invigilated via Zoom (or similar) and must use the Safe Exam Browser (SEB) to complete the exam if the exam is a closed book exam. Students attempting a closed book exam on campus will also do so using a device and SEB.
- **Written assignments** – All written assessments will be submitted via the learning management system (Moodle) and Turnitin, regardless of mode of study.
- **Seminars/presentations** - live presentations/seminars must be live for all students. Students presenting online will present using Zoom (or similar). Students presenting on campus can present on campus and will have their presentation livestreamed for online students to view and respond.
- **Practical assignments** – practical assessments for off campus students will be, if live, conducted using Zoom (or similar). Students will need to share their screen or use their video to complete the assessment. On campus students will complete the assessment on-site and will have their presentation livestreamed to off campus students.

- **E-based assignments** – Asynchronous e-based assessments will be submitted via Moodle and/or Turnitin regardless of the mode of study. Where assessments are live, students will submit via Zoom (or similar). Students will need to share their screen or use their video to complete the assessment. On campus students will complete the assessment in class and will have their presentation livestreamed to off campus students.
- In-class Assessments – **like practical assignments, in-class assessments will be live and conducted using Zoom (or similar). Students will need to share their screen or use their video to complete the in-class assessment. On campus students will complete the in-class assessment on-site.**

7. Penalties for Late Submission

An assessment item submitted after the assessment due date, without an approved extension or without approved mitigating circumstance, will be penalised. The standard penalty is the reduction of the mark allocated to the assessment item by 10% of the total mark applicable for the assessment item, for each day or part day that the item is late. Assessment items submitted more than ten days after the assessment due date will be awarded zero marks.

Extensions to assignment deadlines based on mitigating circumstances will be at the discretion of the Program Coordinator and should be granted in writing. Mitigating circumstances are situations outside of the student's control that are likely to have had a significant adverse effect on a student's work or ability to work.

8. Special Consideration

Students whose ability to submit or attend an assessment item is affected by sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond their control, may be eligible for special consideration. No consideration is given when the condition or event is unrelated to the student's performance in a component of the assessment, or when it is considered not to be serious.

Students must apply in writing to the Program Coordinator for special consideration within three days of the due date of the assessment item or exam.

When considering the application for special consideration, the Program Coordinator will consider one or more of the following:

- the student's performance in other assessment tasks in the subject;
- the severity of the event;
- the student's academic standing in other subjects and in the course; and
- any history of previous applications for special consideration, especially where they indicate a chronic problem.

If an application for special consideration is accepted, any one of the following outcomes may be appropriate:

- no action is taken;
- additional assessment is undertaken. Additional assessment may take a different form from the original assessment. If a student is granted additional assessment, the original assessment may be ignored at the discretion of the Program Coordinator. Consequently, a revised mark based on additional assessment may be greater or less than the original mark;
- marks obtained for the completed assessment tasks are pro-rated to achieve a final percentage result;
- the deadline for assessment is extended;

- the student can discontinue from the subject without failure. This is unlikely to occur after an examination or final assessment has taken place.

9. Limitation to Deferred Examination

Students who are eligible for a deferred examination can only defer the examination once.

10. Assessment Feedback

The Institute will ensure that students are provided with feedback from markers within two weeks of the due date of the assessment excluding examinations. The feedback will be of sufficient depth to enable students to understand the reasons for their assessment outcome.

11. Reasonable Adjustment

Students with special needs may request reasonable adjustment to an assessment task to accommodate their specific needs. Adjustments to assessment must balance basic issues of equity (all students) with fairness (e.g. consider the special characteristics/attributes of the requesting student).

Any adjustments made must be 'reasonable' so that they do not impose an unjustifiable hardship upon the Institute nor unfairly treat the student with special needs nor provide an unreasonable advantage.

A request for reasonable adjustment is made by the student in writing to the Lecturer for the subject affected, or by a Student Support staff member on their behalf. The granting of reasonable adjustment for a student should not be considered as precedence for future student/s—each case should stand or fail on its own merits. Reasonable adjustments must be communicated to and approved by the Program Coordinator—such adjustments may involve varying the procedures for conducting an assessment, for example:

- Allowing additional time for completion of an assessment;
- Extending an assessment deadline/s;
- Varying an assessment's question and response modalities;
- Providing or allowing additional resources in examinations.

12. Requirements for Successful Completion of a Subject

Students must achieve at least 50% of the total marks for the subject to pass the subject—alternate requirements are listed in section 14 of this policy with the Codes NGP, CG, and CPL.

13. Supplementary Examinations

13.1 In the event of a student failing a subject with a score in the range of 45%-49%:

Where a student has completed all major assessment tasks of a subject and achieves a score of 45-49%, the Program Coordinator may recommend that s/he be offered the option of a supplementary examination with a score limited to 50% (P*). If the student fails the supplementary exam or does not attempt it, they will receive a FO grade.

13.2 Other Applications for Supplementary Assessment:

Students not achieving the above supplementary examination benchmark grade will only be allowed to sit a supplementary examination under extraordinary circumstance that are approved by a majority of the members of an Appeals Committee formed by the Dean.

14. Moderation

Moderation is the process of ensuring that assessment validly and reliably measures achievement of expected learning outcomes in a subject. The Institute quality assures the assessment process by moderating grades as well as moderating assessment items.

14.1 Pre-assessment Moderation

Pre-assessment moderation validates the appropriateness, fairness, clarity, accuracy and standard of assessment tasks, materials and marking rubrics before they are used for assessment.

New or revised assessment tasks, materials and marking rubrics will be subject to pre-assessment moderation conducted by the subject moderator before they are used to ensure;

- that they are appropriately aligned to the polished learning outcomes and assessment requirements listed in the subject outline;
- that they align to subject learning outcomes and content;
- that they provide consistent results;
- that they are flexible enough to cater for the needs of different learners;
- that they actually work in practice;
- that assessment content and instructions are clearly, comprehensibly and accurately presented;
- that the academic challenge they present the student is consistent with the level of the subject;
- where feasible, assessment tasks within and between subjects are integrated; and
- all relevant resources required for the assessment task are available.

Pre-assessment moderation will occur before a subject is first delivered and whenever a subject is modified.

14.2 Post-assessment Moderation

The marking of final examination scripts or major final assignments for subjects without final examination is subject to post-assessment moderation for each subject offering in a teaching period to ensure consistent and accurate assessment decisions.

See Appendix 1 for the moderation guidelines.

14.3 External Moderation

Every two (2) years the Program Coordinator will arrange for selected subjects (10%) to be externally moderated (i.e. by an independent moderator) to broaden the scope and reliability of the moderation process. External moderators will be sourced from other higher education providers, which may be one of the Institute's benchmarking partners.

The external subject moderator will compile a post-assessment moderation report of their findings and recommendations and present it to the Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator will give consideration to any necessary actions arising from the external moderator's feedback being incorporated into the subject in the subsequent study period.

15. Grades*

During each subject, students will be provided with an evaluation of their individual performance with reference to the criteria for each assessment in accordance with the following guidelines:

| Grade | Definition |
|---|--|
| High Distinction (outstanding performance) Code: HD Mark range: $\geq 85\%$ | Outstanding work which exhibits sophisticated understanding and critical synthesis, analysis, and evaluation of the subject matter. While the work utilizes opinions of others, judgements about the value of the subject matter are made and drawn together in an organized whole. Gaps in the subject matter might also be identified and the implications discussed. |
| Distinction (very-high performance) Code: D Mark range: 75-84% | Substantial work of high quality, which demonstrates a clear understanding of the subject matter, in which the relationship between the constituent elements is identified clearly and discussed with some level of critical analysis. The work also applies abstract ideas in concrete situations. |
| Credit (high level of performance) Code: C Mark range: 65-74% | Sound and competent work, which demonstrates a reasonable but incomplete grasp of the subject matter. Recall and paraphrasing of the work of others with little integration. Some basic level of critical analysis is evident. |
| Pass (competent performance) Code: P Mark range: 50-64% | Work that demonstrates a satisfactory engagement with the subject matter such that the student is said to have a general understanding of the area of knowledge. |
| Non-graded Pass Code: NGP | Completion of an assessed task on a pass/fail basis. |
| Credit on Extreme Compassionate Grounds Code: CG | Credit granted for extreme compassionate grounds approved by the Academic Board ² . |
| Credit Granted for Prior Learning Code: CPL | Credit has been applied for and granted for prior learning. |
| Result Withheld Incomplete Code: RWI | Result to be finalised. This may be due to an ongoing student misconduct investigation, a pending deferred examination result (e.g., offered due to illness or other unavoidable misfortune on the exam day) or due to a pending supplementary exam result (e.g., offered for students achieving a mark of 45-49%). RWI converts to an FN if not resolved to a grade in one trimester or renewed. ³ |
| Result Withheld Administrative Code: RWA | Student must resolve an issue with TIIS Administration before the grade is released. |
| Withdrew without Failure Code: WO | Withdrew from the subject before census date or after the census date with special circumstances. |
| Fail (Outright) Code: FO Mark range: $< 50\%$ | Attempted all or most of the assessments but did not meet key learning objective/s of the subject. |
| Fail (Non-submission) Code: FN Mark range: $\leq 20\%$ | Did not submit more than 20% of the total value of assessments |
| Withdrew with Failure Code: WF | Withdrew from the subject after the census date. |

² It is envisaged that Credit on Extreme Compassionate Grounds would be rarely awarded and only in the most extreme of cases such as a student's death or total and permanent incapacity. Awarding of such a grade would also require approval by the TIIS Academic Board.

³ Deferred exams differ from supplementary exams in that the former are offered to students who miss a final exam due to illness or other unavoidable misfortune and the latter are offered to students with a grade in the range of 45-49% (40%-49% during Covid). NB: a supplementary exam converts the RWI to 50% (P*) if the student passes the supplementary exam or to FO if they fail or do not write the supplementary exam.

16. Publication of Results

All subject results must be reviewed and properly approved before publication. The Teaching and Learning Committee will nominate three of its members (but not any student representative) to sit at the end of each study period as the Board of Examiners to approve results prior to publication. At least one of the members will be an independent member of the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Once results have been approved, the Registrar and Dean will ensure that the approved mark and grade is recorded in the student database against the relevant subject and students notified of their results via their registered Institute email address.

17. Change of Grades

The process for approval and release of changes to grades is as follows:

- Program Coordinator will use the grade change form to request approval from the Dean.
- Dean may recommend to approve or decline the change of grades request.
- After the decision to approve or decline, the Program Coordinator will:
 - a) Initiate a change of grade process to change the grade as directed; and
 - b) The student must be informed of the grade change before the grade is updated within three (3) working days of the approval.
- Dean will provide a report to the Board of Examiners on the grade changes approved.

18. Appeals and Review of an Assessment Decision

A student may request a review of an assessment decision. A request for a review may relate to the decision regarding an individual assessment item or a final subject grade.

Students should first approach the Lecturer, where appropriate, to discuss their concerns about the assessment decision. Where the issue regarding the assessment decision is unable to be resolved at this level, a request for a review may be made in writing on the prescribed form and lodged with the Dean within five working days of formal notification of the assessment result.

The grounds upon which the student may request a review of an assessment decision are:

- that the student believes that an error has occurred in the calculation of the grade; and /or
- a demonstration that the assessment decision is inconsistent with the published assessment requirements or assessment criteria.

Students should note that each review against an assessment decision is determined on its own merits without reference to other applications.

The Dean will normally respond to the request for a review of an assessment decision within ten working days and may confirm or vary the original decision. All decisions relating to reviews of assessment decisions are sent to the Dean who compiles an annual report for review by the Teaching and Learning Committee. Students are reminded that a remark may cause the associate mark to: a) increase; b) decrease; or remain unchanged.

A request for a re-mark will incur a fee which will be refunded if the associated mark is increased. For the fees, refer to the TIIS Fee Schedule.

Requests for reviews and/or remarks of assessment items are normally limited in the following circumstances:

- In-trimester assessments must occur within one (1) year of the Trimester in which the subject was taught,
- Final exams (including deferred final exams) must occur within one (1) year of the Trimester in which the subject was taught, and

- Supplementary exams are not allowed except by appeal—while a supplementary exam may (as a result of a successful appeal) be remarked, under no circumstances will the results of supplementary examinations be reviewed with the student.

If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of an assessment decision, they may use the Institute’s grievance handling procedures.

19. Related documents

Subject Outline

Student Academic Integrity Policy

Student Progression and Exclusion Policy

Student Grievance Handling Policy

20. Version History

| Version | Approved by | Approval Date | Details |
|---------|------------------------|------------------|--|
| 1.0 | Academic Board | 24 March 2016 | Document creation – Final Draft |
| 2.0 | Academic Board | 18 April 2019 | Minor Revisions |
| 2.1 | Academic Board | 20 March 2020 | Minor Revisions |
| 2.2 | Academic Board | 24 March 2021 | Minor Revisions |
| 2.3 | Academic Board (Chair) | 18 May 2022 | Minor Revisions |
| 2.4 | Academic Board (Chair) | 28 February 2023 | Minor Revisions |
| 3.0 | Academic Board | 15 June 2023 | Major Revisions – (1) added item 9 - Limitation to deferred exam, (2) added item 14 - Moderation, (3) added Appendix 1 – Moderation Guidelines, and (4) minor editing. |
| 4.0 | Academic Board | 7 December 2023 | (1) Added new section – change of grades (item 17), (2) changed the appeal timeframe for in-trimester assessments to be similar as the appeal timeframe for final exam, and (3) minor editing. |

Document owner: Dean

Appendix 1: Moderation Guidelines

Every offering of TIIS undergraduate and postgraduate subjects will undergo moderation as per Section 8.2 of TIIS Quality Assurance Framework and TIIS Student Assessment Policy and Procedure. Moderation is a process of ensuring that all assessments are valid and reliable.

The Head of Program/Program Coordinator is accountable for:

- The appointment of subject moderator for each subject based on knowledge of the subject under review.
- The samples of assessment/scripts to be provided to subject moderator.
- The moderation outcomes for all subjects under review.
- Where there are inconsistencies between the lecturer and moderator, the Head of Program/Program Coordinator:
 - Organises a moderation meeting with the lecturer and moderator to discuss the variances.
 - Applies moderation adjustments for variances as outlined in section 4.
 - Makes the final decision on all remarked assessment/scripts after moderator have reviewed the remarked assessments/scripts is to their satisfaction.
- The reporting of outcomes of moderation activity to the Teaching and Learning Committee.

1. Guidance on sampling method

TIIS's sampling approach is to employ a mixed of random, block and stratified sampling methods.

- Head of Program/Program Coordinator identifies assessment/scripts for moderation from students' progressive results.
- The sample size for moderation is to select 10% of students who have performed in each of the substantive grades awarded (random and stratified sampling). For example, if 40 of 100 students (40%) have been awarded a C grade for their progressive performances, 10% of 40 students or 4 students will be randomly selected as the sample for moderation.
- Within each passing grade sample, Head of Program/Program Coordinator selects the assessments/scripts closest to the grade below (block sampling). E.g., Distinction is 75-84%, assessments/scripts with scores of 73-74% will be selected.
- Within the FO grade samples, Head of Program/Program Coordinator selects the assessments/scripts with the highest marks (block sampling). E.g., FO is <50%, assessments/scripts with scores of 48-49% will be selected.

2. Guidance on evidencing the sample selected

To evidence the sample selected, the Head of Program/Program Coordinator selects the sample, and indicates which scripts are selected for moderation for each marker cohort. The sample must be de-identified of student information such as names and TIIS student ID.

3. Guidance on applying moderation adjustments

NO BLANKET PERCENTAGE OR MARKS ADJUSTMENT TO ALL SCRIPTS ARE ALLOWED.

If moderation of the selected sample identifies inconsistencies against the marking criteria of:

- >5% of available marks in each question or section and in 50% or more of all assessments/scripts: to remark the question/s in all assessments/scripts in the marker

cohort.

The moderation sample size must not be expanded unless the subject moderator and/or Head of Program/Program Coordinator believes additional samples will provide new information about the consistency of marking against the marking criteria.

4. Guidance on evidencing moderation and moderation adjustments

There are two equally important aspects to evidencing moderation and moderation adjustments:

1. *Evidence that the selected sample are moderated:*
For each assessment/script selected, enough information (e.g., student name(s) and student number(s) with associated de-identifier for cross-referencing, assessment of marking quality, marks awarded by marker and moderator) to facilitate a reperformance of the moderation by an alternate if required.
2. *Evidence that any moderation adjustment mark is reflected on scripts:*
Any adjustments to marks because of the moderation process must be adjusted on each affected assessment/script. The adjusted marks must be consistently recorded internally across the various records i.e., exam scripts, assessments, and gradebook (Moodle).

References

- NA. (2021). *Updated Moderation Guide*. Charles Sturt University
 NA. (2019). *Guidance on moderation*. The University of Edinburgh
 NA. (2012). *Moderation of assessments*. University of Southern Queensland
 NA. (2010). *Processes for moderating results*. University of Tasmania

Version History

| Date | Approval | Notes |
|--------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 11 May 2023 | - | Document initiation |
| 01 June 2023 | Teaching and Learning Committee | New for Student Assessment Policy and Procedure |
| 15 June 2023 | Academic Board | Incorporated as Appendix 1 in Student Assessment Policy and Procedure |