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La Trobe Melbourne

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# ASSESSMENT POLICY

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## 1.0 Overview

Assessment is the process of forming a judgment about the quality and extent of student achievement or performance, and therefore a judgment about the learning itself. Assessment shapes the learning that takes place, that is, what students learn and how they learn it, and should reflect closely the purposes and aims of the subject. This policy applies to all students enrolled in the Diploma, Foundation Studies and non-award courses offered at La Trobe Melbourne.

### 1.1 Aim of Assessment

The aims of assessment include:

- Improving the quality of the curriculum (subjects and courses);
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching process and facilitating continuous improvement;
- Improving and promoting subsequent learning through feedback that is clear, informative, timely and relevant;
- Promoting student engagement and understanding to encourage a desire for lifelong learning;
- Formally certifying achievements for external audiences; and
- Accountability to the University, accrediting bodies, employers and the wider community.

Assessment methods may take a variety of forms: the key criterion for choice among methods should be appropriateness to the learning outcomes. Assessment should be criteria based rather than norm referenced, and may include individual or collaborative achievement or both. The requirements for learner success should be made clear, and the overall strategy should be to develop in students the ability to evaluate the quality of their own work in order to equip them to function as professionals with a commitment to life-long learning.

Assessment practices within La Trobe Melbourne are based on the general principles of criteria based assessment. These are that the desired learning outcomes for a subject are clearly specified; assessment tasks are designed to indicate progress towards the desired learning outcomes; and the assessment grade is a measure of the extent to which the learning outcomes have been achieved. The standard of performance that is required for the award of a particular grade is a judgment that is based on the professional expertise of the various staff who contribute to the assessment process and is informed by experience with accepted standards, including, where appropriate, standards in other institutions. There is no pre-determined distribution of grades as the outcome of assessing a group of students.

### 1.2 Assessment Requirements

Student learning is gradual and cumulative, with qualitative changes taking place throughout the process. For this reason, the assessment requirements for a subject should enable the teaching staff to engage in both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment is designed to provide students with feedback and does not contribute to the final mark and grade. Summative assessment does contribute to the final mark and grade. Some forms of summative assessment may also be formative. The academic staff member responsible for a subject exercises their professional judgment in using a variety of methods that are relevant, valid, fair and appropriate to the aims and objectives of the subject.

### **1.3 Approval of Assessment Requirements and Assessment Tasks**

The assessment requirements and assessment tasks for a subject are documented in the submission for approval of the Subject Outline. In approving the Subject Outline, either the La Trobe University Coordinator for Diploma level subjects or the La Trobe Melbourne Academic Director for Foundation Studies subjects will consider the relationship between the assessment methods and the learning outcomes expected for the subject.

The range of assessment tasks to be performed by students and the expected learning outcomes for the subject will be specified in the Subject Outline and should be discussed with students at appropriate times throughout the trimester.

### **1.4 Hurdle Requirements**

#### **1.4.1 Definition**

A hurdle requirement within a subject is a compulsory piece or part of a subject that must be met in order for a student to be eligible to receive a 'pass' grade.

Students may be asked to carry out tasks, in class or out, and be provided with feedback as part of the ongoing teaching/learning process. Such activities only constitute a hurdle requirement if a penalty will be imposed for not completing them or reaching the required level of proficiency, that is, the student will fail the subject if they do not complete the activity or reach the required level.

#### **1.4.2 Principles**

As with all assessment requirements and assessed tasks, hurdle requirements should:

- a) Clearly be related to the objectives/learning outcomes of the subject;
- b) Consider equity issues and students' varying circumstances.

#### **1.4.3 Types of Hurdle Requirements**

There are a variety of assessment hurdles, conditions for passing a subject other than the overall mark, which may be built into the assessment of the learning outcomes of the subject, including:

- A requirement to achieve a minimum mark for a particular assessment task and a total of more than 50 marks overall in order to pass a subject. For example, students may be required to gain a minimum of 40% on a final examination in order to pass a subject. If a student fails to gain 40% in the final examination they will fail the subject, no matter how small a proportion of the overall mark it comprises.
- A requirement to attend a minimum number of laboratory sessions and submit a lab report and have a total of more than 50 marks overall in order to pass a subject.
- A requirement to submit all assessment tasks and a total of more than 50 marks overall in order to pass a subject. For example, students may be required to at

least attempt all assessment items such as an oral presentation, an essay and a final examination, in order to pass a subject.

#### **1.4.4 Communication of Hurdle Requirements**

Where students are required to pass all assessment items, or a particular assessment item, in order to pass a subject, this must be clearly specified in the Subject Outline distributed in week 1 of trimester.

Attendance cannot be required in order to pass a subject without either the approval of the La Trobe University Coordinator for Diploma level subjects or the La Trobe Melbourne Academic Director for Foundation Studies level subjects approval. Where approval has been given this must be clearly set out in the Subject Outline distributed in week 1 of trimester.

### **1.5 Assessment Advice to Students**

All teaching staff within La Trobe Melbourne are required to provide students with the approved Subject Outline which states the assessment requirements for the subject, including the due dates of assessment items and relevant characteristics such as word lengths for essays and duration for examinations. The Subject Outline must state the criteria against which individual assessment items are judged and their relative weighting. The Subject Outline must also indicate the way in which individual assessment items are combined to give an overall grade.

The Subject Outline must be provided to students in the first week of classes and is made available via the subject's LMS site. All teaching staff members should ensure that students are advised of the location of the Subject Outlines at the commencement of the subject.

Where a student enrolls in a subject after the commencement of teaching or for whatever reason is not present when students are given information concerning the assessment requirements of the subject, it is the student's responsibility to find out the information from their teacher.

### **1.6 Changes to Assessment Requirements**

Proposals to alter the assessment requirements of a subject should be made by the relevant La Trobe Melbourne Academic Coordinator by lodging a revised Subject Outline to either the La Trobe University Coordinator for Diploma level subjects or the La Trobe Melbourne Academic Director for Foundation Studies level subjects. Proposals for the alteration of assessment should be lodged before the next planned offering of the subject.

The La Trobe University Coordinator or the La Trobe Melbourne Academic Director will then determine whether the proposed change to the assessment requirements is consistent with the originally approved assessment requirements and its relationship to learning outcomes and its overall demands on the students.

Changes to assessment requirements will not normally be considered during a trimester, however, in exceptional circumstances, the La Trobe University Coordinator or the La Trobe Melbourne Academic Director may approve a variation of detail in the assessment requirements of a subject, providing the relationship between the assessment methods and the learning outcomes expected for the subject are maintained. If change to the published assessment requirements occurs during the course of a trimester students will be notified in written and/or electronic form of the change.

## **1.7 Submission of Assessment Items**

The method of submission of an assessment item will be communicated in the instructions of the assessment.

### **1.7.1 Paper Based Submission**

All assignments submitted on paper must include a fully completed and signed La Trobe Melbourne Assignment Cover Sheet and be handed to the lecturer of the subject in which the student is enrolled by the specified time on the due date indicated in the Subject Outline unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher.

A La Trobe Melbourne Assignment Cover Sheet must also be completed and signed by all students involved in completing group assignments.

The assignment cover sheet which contains important information about privacy, plagiarism and collusion, must be carefully read before signing and is available via the student portal.

All assignments should have the Subject code and name and the student name and student ID number on each page, including those submitted electronically.

It is the responsibility of each student to keep an electronic and paper copy of his/her assignment until it is marked and returned by the teacher.

The submission of bulky assignments including models should be submitted as advised by the La Trobe Melbourne teacher. Assignment cover sheets must also be completed, signed and attached to these assignments.

### **1.7.2 Electronic Submission**

To submit an assignment electronically students must use the LMS. In some cases, teachers may request the assignment is emailed.

Assignments submitted electronically must be in a file format acceptable by the LMS.

When submitting assignments using the LMS, students are acknowledging that they have read, understood and accepted La Trobe Melbourne's policy on academic misconduct, and that they are fully aware of the consequences of cheating and plagiarism, including a mark of zero (0) or a reduced mark for this subject or other relevant penalties.

### **1.7.3 Plagiarism Detection System**

In many subjects, La Trobe Melbourne will also use a plagiarism detection system to electronically scan assessment submitted by students. This tool allows teachers to compare assessment items of students in order to identify instances where work has been copied from another source without appropriate referencing

Students will be advised via their subject outline, through their course notes or by their lecturer that they are required to submit their assessment via this mechanism.

#### **1.7.4 Late Submission**

Failure to submit an item of assessment by the due date without an application for extension of time from the appropriate subject teacher may incur a penalty.

#### **1.7.5 Penalties for Late Submission**

Assessment submitted after the due date may be penalised 5% of the TOTAL marks available for assessment (not the grade awarded to the student) for each day the assessment is late.

Assessment submitted more than five days late will be awarded a mark of zero (0)

Weekends and public holidays are not countered in the determination of the penalty for late submission.

### **1.8 Collection/Return of Assessment Items**

Assignments are normally available for collection in class within fourteen (14) days of the due date for submission of the assessment item as this provides an opportunity for feedback.

Students who are unable to collect assignments at this time should contact their lecturer directly to organise alternative collection arrangements. Assignments cannot be collected by anyone other than the author without written authorisation.

All uncollected assignments will be destroyed at the end of week two of the following trimester.

All marked assignments should be kept until a final grade is awarded for the subject.

### **1.9 Extensions of Time for Assessment Items**

Before the due date a student may submit a written request to their teacher for an extension of time for the submission of an assessment item on the grounds of serious illness, accident, disability, bereavement or other exceptional circumstances. Applications must be accompanied by valid supporting documentation.

### **1.10 Appeals Against Outcome**

Students who feel that their case for extension has been unjustly considered by their teacher may appeal the decision under the provisions of the Student Academic Grievance Policy.

### **1.11 Deferred Assessment**

A student may apply for deferred assessment if they were prevented from undertaking an assessment item, such as an examination, test, quiz, seminar presentation, or other assessment items scheduled for a particular date, on the grounds of serious illness, accident, disability, bereavement, or other exceptional circumstances.

Please refer to the La Trobe Melbourne Special Consideration and Deferred Assessment Policy for further information.

## **1.12 Supplementary Assessment**

Supplementary Assessments are not offered by La Trobe Melbourne under normal conditions.

## **1.13 Assessment Results**

### **1.13.1 Teacher Responsibilities**

During the trimester, individual teachers to communicate their evaluations of individual assessment items to students with reference to the criteria against which performance has been assessed. All teachers are expected to communicate the marks awarded for assessment items completed within trimester to students who are enrolled in their class within fourteen (14) days of student submission using the on-line grades system in the LMS.

### **1.13.2 Student Responsibilities**

Students of La Trobe Melbourne will be able to access their results for within trimester assessment items through the LMS within fourteen (14) days of due date for the assessment item.

It is a student's responsibility to monitor their academic performance throughout the trimester and seek assistance from relevant La Trobe Melbourne staff. La Trobe Melbourne may provide a warning to students whose marks within a trimester are such that the student is at risk of receiving a failing grade if their academic performance fails to improve.

## **2.0 Special Consideration**

See Special Consideration and Deferred Assessment Policy.

## **3.0 Deferred Assessment**

See Special Consideration and Deferred Assessment Policy

## **4.0 Moderation of Assessment**

La Trobe Melbourne undertakes internal and external moderation processes as a quality assurance mechanism to ensure validity and reliability of expected learning outcomes, assessment tasks, marking criteria and final grades.

Internal moderation is designed to ensure that teaching staff within subjects are making consistent and accurate assessment decisions in accordance with the criteria defined for the assessment item.

La Trobe Melbourne also undertakes extensive external moderation with La Trobe University to verify the validity of assessment instruments and reliability of assessment decisions.

As an overriding principle, La Trobe Melbourne Academic Coordinators liaise regularly with their La Trobe University counterparts to ensure that La Trobe Melbourne remains abreast of subject



developments and changes in curriculum and learning and teaching practices and to ensure consistency of practice with design, application and marking of assessment.

Moderation can also include feedback provided by other review avenues such as the Student Evaluation of subjects, and subject reviews undertaken by the relevant Course Committees.

## **4.1 Internal Moderation of Assessment**

As part of the internal moderation of assessment, each Subject Coordinator ensures that a solutions guide and/or marking schema is developed that will allow the teaching team to clarify assessment requirements and ensure consistency of expectations. Solutions and marking schema also provide a mechanism against which external moderators can review marking practices undertaken by La Trobe Melbourne staff.

During each trimester, the teaching team for each subject meet to discuss the assessment tasks and the marking schema. The team also provides feedback on the schema where requirements are unclear or there is potential for a discrepancy around expectations.

### **4.1.1 Internal Moderation of Marking**

Where there are multiple markers involved in the marking of assessment items within a subject, internal moderation of both formative and summative assessment will occur prior to the publishing of marks. Moderation allows for scrutiny of all marks generated by the marking team in order to verify the appropriateness of the marking and also to bring a second judgement, particularly in relation to very good or very poor performance. Internal moderation may take the form of:

- Detailed and agreed upon marking criteria;
- Detailed and agreed upon exam solutions;
- Cross or shared marking between classes;
- Double marking of at least all fails and double marking of a sample of other grades; and/or
- Any other suitable method that allows for the moderation of marks awarded within a team situation.

In team teaching situations, the La Trobe Melbourne Academic Coordinator is initially responsible for examining the distribution of marks awarded by each of the markers. This process identifies where teachers are awarding marks outside of the average or general trend within in the subject. Where an Academic Coordinator identifies a problem with a particular marker, they should discuss the situation with the relevant teaching staff member. Where the Academic Coordinator discovers discrepancies without a valid explanation, they will consult the Academic Director to discuss the options that may be available.

## **4.2 External Moderation of Subject Outlines**

La Trobe Melbourne Diploma subjects largely mirror equivalent subjects designed and delivered at La Trobe University and are therefore subject to curriculum design (content, assessment and delivery) principles as applied within the relevant College or School at La Trobe University. The reliability of assessment practices detailed within La Trobe Melbourne subject outlines, as moderated by La Trobe University Course Coordinators is reviewed against relevant discipline and industry standards and expectations.

Foundation Studies subjects may be chosen to be benchmarked against other Navitas Colleges.

Assessment practices at La Trobe Melbourne are also moderated by the relevant La Trobe Melbourne Course Committee. The committee is provided with summaries of the learning outcomes, content, and assessment schedules and reviews of pass/fail rates and methods of moderation.

#### **4.2.1 External Moderation of Final Examination Papers**

Prior to the implementation of final diploma examinations each trimester, La Trobe Melbourne Academic Coordinators send copies of proposed final examination papers to the relevant La Trobe University Course Coordinator. La Trobe University Course Coordinators undertake moderation of the examination paper and confirm the validity and reliability of the assessment instrument. Alternately, La Trobe Melbourne are given a final examination paper and recommendations for change are communicated to the relevant La Trobe University subject Coordinator.

#### **4.2.2 External Moderation of Final Examination Scripts**

Each trimester, a minimum of a 10% sample of examination scripts across the spread of grades for two courses from each Diploma delivered in that trimester is provided to the relevant La Trobe University Course Coordinator. These examination scripts are moderated to ensure comparability of marking standards between La Trobe Melbourne and La Trobe University, and consistency within La Trobe Melbourne.

This process involves a second marker from La Trobe University examining and verifying the marks of the original marker. Given that the second marker was not associated with the original marking of the examination, this process ensures consistency and fairness with the marking scheme both across lecturers within a course at La Trobe Melbourne and in comparison to standards applied at La Trobe University.

La Trobe University Course Coordinators will liaise with the College Academic Coordinator to effect any necessary remarking of examination scripts or adjustment of grades to be awarded, prior to the release of grades, as a result of the moderation process.

#### **4.2.3 External Moderation of Internal Assessments**

La Trobe University may additionally request moderation of internal assessment items.

### **4.3 Benchmarking of Final Examination Scripts**

Each trimester a minimum of a 10% sample of final diploma examination scripts across all grades for the courses not moderated in that trimester is provided to the relevant La Trobe University Course Coordinator. These examination scripts are benchmarked to ensure comparability of marking standards between La Trobe Melbourne and La Trobe University, and consistency within La Trobe Melbourne.

La Trobe University Course Coordinators provide feedback to the La Trobe Melbourne Academic Coordinator. The Academic Coordinator liaises with Course Coordinators to discuss possible modifications to assessment practices for future trimesters.

#### **4.4 External Moderation of End of Trimester Grades**

Prior to the release of results each trimester, the La Trobe Melbourne Academic Review Committee meets to moderate final grades. The Committee membership includes both the Academic Director and Academic Coordinators.

Moderation of final trimester results involves the review of grades distributions to ensure final grades reflect the level of validity and reliability of assessment practices implemented within each course throughout the duration of the trimester.

The Academic Review Committee, as part of the moderation process, will undertake an evaluation of the spread of grades in order to assess whether the assessment tasks and interpretation of marking schema have been appropriate. As a result of this evaluation, the Academic Review Committee may amend grade distributions where anomalies are identified.

<b>Policy Title</b>	Assessment Policy	
<b>Policy Owners</b>	Academic Director (FSDP)	
<b>Contact Persons</b>	Jacqueline Tulk	
<b>Key Stakeholders</b>	Academic Staff Students	
<b>Approval Body</b>	Joint Management Committee	<b>Agenda item 5 Approved on 7 September 2010</b>
	LTM Executive Committee	13 May 2015
	LTM Academic Board	7 April 2017
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>		
<b>Related Policies</b>	Review of Marks Policy Course Progression Policy Examinations Policy Student Code of Conduct Policy Special Consideration and Deferred Assessment Policy	
<b>Related Guidelines</b>		
<b>File information</b>	<b>File number</b>	<b>Version number</b> V1.1
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<b>AMENDMENT HISTORY</b>		
<b>Revision Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>
2/5/17	1.1	4.2.2 Added ' <u>a minimum</u> ' to a 10% sample. Added 4.2.3 External Moderation of Internal Assessments 4.3 Added ' <u>a minimum</u> ' to a 10% sample.