

Assessment Policy

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1 Policy Statement

Nan Tien Institute (NTI) takes an outcomes-standards based approach to teaching and learning and aims to provide quality teaching and learning opportunities at all times. Learning outcomes are criterion-referenced and are related to what successful students can do as a result of the learning experience. Learning outcomes are clearly stated, demonstrable, achievable, and measurable, and assessments are designed to meet these criteria. Academic standards and the rigor of courses are central to all assessment schemes and processes. Student assessment is a complex activity with a variety of purposes and many stakeholders, including students, academic staff, NTI and accreditation authorities. Assessment provides results which are communicated to stakeholders to show the nature and depth of student learning.

1.1 At NTI, Assessment is:

- an integral part of the teaching practice designed to enhance and shape student learning
- an opportunity for students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes.
- a way to provide feedback to students on their learning
- the basis by which academic achievement is judged and certified.

1.2 The objectives of this policy are to:

- Articulate an integrated set of values, processes and procedures for student assessment at NTI
- Provide guidance in the design and implementation of assessment tasks, marking and moderation of student work, and the review of assessment;
- Identify roles and responsibilities in the implementation of this policy, and
- Identify further resources for enhancing assessment literacy among all academic staff of NTI

2 Principles

- Assessment tasks must address the aims and learning outcomes of the subject and the course. They are structured to show progressive development of the capacity of the independent learning and synthesis by students throughout the course.
- Assessment tasks are challenging, well-structured and diverse to cater for different academic abilities and learning styles and ensure all students can achieve their full potential
- Assessment is supported by a culture of academic integrity that is actively fostered at all levels of NTI
- NTI acknowledges the critical role of the academic's professional judgement and expertise in all aspects of the assessment process, and particularly in making judgements about student work.
- NTI is committed to supporting and fostering the assessment process through moderation, peer review and benchmarking, so staff and students can be confident that decisions and judgements are compatible with discipline and professional standards and comparable to those of good higher education practice nationally and internationally.

3 Governance

NTI's Dean of Studies, in conjunction with Heads of Program and individual Subject Coordinators, is responsible for the implementation this policy to ensure that NTI's assessment activities are efficient, fair, transparent, rigorous, and appropriate. This responsibility includes addressing identified problems and opportunities for improvement, and the provision of professional development for new staff of staff requiring additional support with their assessment practice. This policy is maintained by the Education and Examination Committee.

4 Assessment Design

NTI encourages the adoption of assessment practices that are based on research-based evidence of pedagogical effectiveness and contemporary best practice. This means that assessments are:

- rigorous and transparent and designed to foster meaningful, higher-order learning skills of analysis, synthesis, evaluation, reflection, and contemplation.
- implemented using principles of standard- based assessment.
- designed using a collaborative, whole-of-course approach using a diverse range of assessment methods to encourage the achievement of course learning outcomes in an appropriate developmental sequence throughout the course.

4.1 Assessment mapping

Assessment-mapping is undertaken at a course level to ensure:

- there is a planned and sequenced approach to the achievement of the course outcomes.
- student workloads are equitable throughout the subject and course, with regards to appropriate timing and weighting of assessment tasks.
- demonstrated contribution of each subject towards students' acquisition of program learning outcomes and key attributes such as critical thinking, development of an argument, academic writing, reflection, communication and information literacy.

4.2 Developing assessment tasks

- Subject learning outcomes are mapped to assessment tasks within individual subjects within a course. Assessment tasks must be aligned with the subject learning objectives to measure student performance effectively and efficiently. Teaching and learning activities in a subject should also be aligned to actively support assessment tasks.
- Not all learning objectives have to be individually assessed; a single assessment tasks may be designed to enable the sampling of multiple objectives.
- Wherever possible, assessment tasks should provide students with authentic, scenario-based challenges, and offered opportunities to choose from assessment topics that reflect their own experiences.
- Subject Coordinators should be alert to opportunities in the design of assessment tasks that discourage or make plagiarism more difficult to achieve

4.3 Number and type of assessments

When determining the type and number of assessments within a subject, consideration will be given to whether the subject is delivered online or face-to-face, postgraduate vs. undergraduate level, and, the length of the subject (i.e. 5 or 10-weeks). NTI encourages a variety of assessment types, to be matched to content and reflective of subject learning outcomes.

4.4 Communication of assessment requirements

At the commencement of a subject, details of all assessment tasks including marking criteria and performance standards are made available to students via the subject Learning & Assessment Guide. These details will be consistent with information contained in the approved Subject Outline, and include:

- assessment type.
- task requirements.
- word or size limits.
- due dates, by time, date and week
- weighting.
- marking guides/rubrics outlining expectations about the individual criteria used for assessment.
- mapping to learning outcomes; and
- any other specific submission requirements.

Clear direction on submissions processes including submission site, time frame, acknowledgement of receipt and feedback on academic progress arrangements should also be included when communicating assessment instruction to students.

4.5 Formative assessment and feedback

Subject assessment design should ensure that students are provided with sufficient opportunities for formative feedback on progress towards desired learning outcomes during the teaching period. Formative and summative assessments are integrated into tasks completed over the study period. Continuous assessment provides both formative feedback on progress and summative evaluation (e.g. Marks) that contribute to an overall grade. Subject Coordinators will ensure that:

- There is sufficient spacing between assessment tasks to ensure that students gain feedback from one task before attempting the next related assessment.
- Large assessments such as projects with a weighting greater than 60% are disaggregated into smaller submissions with feedback points during the study period; and
- Standardised marking sheets or rubrics are provided to students to provide feedback on performance against each criterion.

4.6 Changes to assessments

Changes to assessment may be undertaken prior to the commencement of the subject if those changes are in accordance with the assessment principles within this policy and the approved subject outline. Changes prior to subject commencement are approved by the Education Committee.

4.7 Extensions

Student requests for extensions may be granted by the Subject Coordinator, Head of Program or Dean of Studies on the basis of serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances. Please refer to the Student Academic Consideration Policy.

5 Assessment Integrity

NTI is committed to quality assurance through planning, implementation, monitoring and continuous improvement of all its courses and assessment procedures and consistent with any course review. To ensure assessment integrity, all assessments at NTI will be:

- reviewed regularly for effectiveness in meeting desired learning outcomes and delivering quality education.
- reviewed by a Head of Program before being approved and made available to students. Peer review may also occur as part of NTI's quality assurance procedures.

Monitoring and review activities associated with assessment quality include:

- Review of student feedback on assessment tasks at the conclusion of the subject;
- Review of assessment issues arising from various sources of data and feedback including teacher feedback, student feedback, and course performance reports
- The review and scrutiny by the Education Committee and Academic Board, and
- Benchmarking, external moderation and peer review processes

5.1 Academic standards and benchmarking

NTI's assessment tasks and grading standards are benchmarked to that of comparable higher education providers through external moderation processes. These external assessment moderation processes will occur in tandem with internal benchmarking and peer review activities. Any benchmarking and review activities, including external moderation processes, along with any resulting actions should be recorded and reported as part of subject and course reviews.

Assessment tasks should be periodically reviewed and externally benchmarked as part of a course review that gives particular attention to:

- Alignment of tasks with subject learning outcomes and program learning outcomes..
- Appropriate level of skill and knowledge.
- Appropriateness of overall assessment load, both within subject and course.
- Ensuring criteria and standards are clear and appropriate, and
- Instructions to students that are clear, complete, and unambiguous

Benchmarking and peer review activities may include any of the following as appropriate:

- Comparison of the nature and degree of difficulty of assessment tasks in equivalent unit subjects within NTI and from other higher education providers;
- Comparison of criteria and performance standards relative to equivalent assessment tasks;
- Comparison of overall assessment load in an equivalent subject;
- Review by an external assessor who provides formal feedback.

5.2 Confidentiality and Security

NTI are committed to ensuring that the principles of privacy, confidentiality and security are maintained throughout the administration of student assessment. Particular care should be employed in relation to:

- The security of examination papers and scripts both in hardcopy and digital formats;
- The confidentiality of assessment results;
- The prior permission of the student for any reproduction or usage or assessment material beyond normal marking processes, and
- Access to grade and authority to disclose grades to students

6 Assessment Marking & Grading

Individual assessments are marked according to the guidance and expectations outlined in the Learning & Assessment Guide, using the weighing schedule outlined within the guide. Assessment grades may be moderated to ensure the appropriateness of tasks, consistency in marking, and the maintenance of standards. All assessment grades for a subject are combined to form the final subject grade.

NTI has a set of generic grade descriptors that apply to all assessment tasks. Grade descriptors provide a standard for the various levels of student performance and how the corresponding grade will be awarded (e.g. HD, D, CR, P, F, TF).

6.1 Marking and grading of coursework

Robust marking and grading practices are essential to the maintenance of academic standards at NTI

6.1.1 Standards- based assessment

- NTI uses standards-based assessment. This requires that assessment of student achievement is measured against externally verified criteria and standards. Such criteria and standards should be referenced, wherever possible, to accepted academic and professional standards, evident in other similar courses of study nationally and internationally.
- Criteria and standards of performance must be explicitly articulated and made available to all students at the commencement of the study period for each assessment task. Criteria and standards should also be discussed with students and integrated into subject teaching

and learning activities; so that students can understand the standards of academic performance against those standards. Such discussion may occur in the classroom, in online or other computer-mediated forums, or it may be explained within a subject learning and assessment guide.

- Standards-based assessment is incompatible with norm-reference assessment schemes. No pre-determined or ideal distribution of grades can be applied across a student cohort. It is not expected that individual subject coordinators will adjust student's grades to comply with pre-determined distributions. Marks and grades awarded to students are to be based solely on merit in relation to prescribed academic standards.

6.1.2 Making judgements and grading

- It is accepted that academic's professional expertise is central to the process of making judgements about the quality of student work. Because knowledge constantly evolves and expands, this expertise needs to be periodically reinforced by personal and expert peer review, benchmarking and continuing professional development
- All staff, including casual and sessional staff, engaged in the marking of assessments tasks, should be properly orientated to student assessment at NTI, and undertake professional development on the topics of marking, grading and providing feedback on assessed performance to students. Inexperienced markers should be closely monitored and mentored by the Subject Coordinator or Head of Program in relation to their interpretation of criteria, and their developing expertise as reliable and consistent markers of assessment tasks. The Subject Coordinator and Head of Program have responsibility for the derivation and reporting of all student grades at the end of a study period.

6.1.3 Moderation of grades

- Subject Coordinators should ensure that there are robust moderation processes in place

6.2 Marking and grading of research projects

The following principles apply for the submission, examination and grading of research projects:

6.2.1 Submission of research projects for examination

- Students must submit their research project to their supervisors together with a draft Turnitin report.
- If the Turnitin report meets with NTIs' requirements and in the opinion of the supervisor the research project is ready for examination, the supervisor will certify that the research project is worthy of examination
- Following certificate by the supervisor, the student can upload the research project in the online portal NTiLearn.
- If the supervisor believes that the research project is not yet of sufficient quality to submit and is not willing to certify the research project is worthy of examination, the supervisor is required to discuss with the Head of Program, or Dean and provide a written statement on why the submission is not supported. The student must be informed by the supervisor in writing.
- If the student still wishes to submit the research project for examination, the student may refer the matter to the Dean for consideration with a written statement
- The Dean may seek advice from an independent academic who has knowledge of the research field, but not a potential examiner.
- Based on the advice and the information provided, the Dean will decide whether to allow the research project to be submitted for examination. The decision will be communicated in writing to the student, Head of Program and supervisor.

6.2.2 Marking research projects

- Each research project will be assessed by two (2) examiners, at least one of whom will be an external academic expert. If an external examiner cannot be found, the Head of Program must seek the approval of the Dean to appoint another internal examiner.
- The Head of Program may serve as an examiner. The final grade and mark will be determined by the Head of Program based on the examiners' reports and following consultation with the supervisor. Where the examiners' reports differ by more than one grade, the Head of Program may appoint a third examiner to review the reports and provide a further assessment.
- Where revisions are required by the supervisor, the student must make any revisions requested and resubmit within six (6) weeks. The student and supervisor may request to the Head of Program for an extension to this period under exceptional circumstances.
- If the revised research project is not submitted by the stipulated period, the student will be awarded a Technical Fail. The student will be allowed to re-register for the research project within two (2) years.

6.3 Plagiarism

If, through the process of grading assessment, student plagiarism is detected, NTI staff will follow procedures as outlined in the Student Misconduct Policy. This policy outlines the roles, procedures and responsibilities associated with instances of plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

7 Assessment Feedback

Feedback on assessment must be conducted in such a way to support the learning process. Feedback on assessment tasks enables students to monitor their progress, diagnose and rectify problems, make decisions about where to focus their efforts, and generally to be active participants in their learning.

7.1 Timeframes for individual assessment marking

- Students are expected to complete their assessment by the due dates specified in the Learning & Assessment Guide for the subject.
- Non-final marked assessment tasks should be returned to students within 10 working days of submission. This will enable students to have the benefit of individualised feedback before undertaking further assessment in a subject.
- If marking is delayed, students should be notified via NTiLearn or NTI student email address, and appropriate allowance made in returning their assessed tasks.

7.2 Late submissions and penalties

The Subject Coordinator will apply a penalty of 2% of the maximum marks for the assignment per working day for a late assignment in cases where there is no written approval for an extension.

7.3 Providing assessment feedback to students

Heads of Programs and Subject Coordinators should ensure that:

- Feedback on assessment tasks relates to the stated learning objectives, marking criteria and

- performance standards for a unit subject;
- Assessment schedules for subjects provide sufficient time for students to benefit from feedback on one assessment task before completing and submitting the next task;
- The feedback provided in a subject is monitored for consistency and quality;
- Students are aware of the mechanism that they can request additional feedback on their performance
- Academic staff required to perform marking functions are mentored in relation to the provision of quality feedback

7.4 Final grades for subjects

Final marks in a subject are determined by no later than two (2) months after the end of the subject. At that time, any unresolved grades will be recorded as Fail (F) unless approval for extensions are confirmed in writing by the Dean of Studies. Final mark release may be impacted by extension or other circumstances and should be considered within the guidelines of the Academic Consideration Policy.

8 Appeals & Re-Marking

A student has a right to appeal against the mark of an assignment and/or examination, or against the grade of a subject.

Grounds for appeal:

- Failure to assess work in accordance with specified criteria;
- Evidence of bias by a marker;
- Technical marking or collating error;
- Failure to manage requests for academic consideration in accordance with the policy,
- Failure to adhere to the rules applicable to the course

8.1 Informal resolution procedure

Where a student is dissatisfied with the assessment of an assignment and/or an examination result the student should approach the Subject Coordinator in the first instance and as soon as possible to discuss and/or request a review of that assessment. It is the normal expectation that such a review would resolve most appeals against assessment within a particular subject. All student complaints or requests for remarking must be made individually. Group complaints or petitions will not be accepted.

8.2 Formal appeals procedure

8.2.1 Head of Program

If the student remains dissatisfied with the discussion with the Subject Coordinator, or if the student is uncomfortable approaching the Subject Coordinator, the student may make a formal appeal in writing to the Head of Program.

- All academic appeals must be made individually and in writing by using the Academic Appeal Form.
- Students are required to clearly identify the result they are appealing against and the grounds for their appeal.
- Academic appeals must be lodged within twenty (20) working days of receipt of the assignment mark/subject grade. The Dean may extend the deadline for lodging an appeal in exceptional circumstances.
- The Head of Program will determine whether the appeal is denied or upheld, and notify the student

of the appeal outcome within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal.

- If the appeal cannot be resolved within the specified timeframe, the Head of Program will inform the student and give the student an alternative timeframe.

8.2.2 Dean of Studies

- If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal as determined by the Head of Program or if the Head of Program is the person who completed the marking against which the appeal is presented, the student may escalate the appeal in writing to the Dean of Studies.
- Students are required to clearly state the grounds for their appeal.
- Appeals to the Dean of Studies must be lodged within twenty (20) working days of receipt of the appeal outcome by the Head of Program, or within twenty (20) working days of the receipt of the assignment mark/subject grade if the appeal is presented against marking completed by the Head of Program.
- The Dean of Studies will determine whether the appeal is denied or upheld, and notify the student of the appeal outcome within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal.
- If the appeal cannot be resolved within the specified timeframe, the Dean of Studies will inform the student and give the student an alternative timeframe.

8.3 External arbitration review procedure

If the student remains dissatisfied with the decision by the Dean, the student may appeal in writing to NTI's Independent Arbiter. In considering such an appeal, the Independent Arbiter will discuss the case with the Dean. The Independent Arbiter will report the finding of the appeal to the student in writing with a copy for the student file.

8.4 Regrading

As part of the appeal the Dean may require the assessment to be remarked.

9 Accessibility & Inclusivity

9.1 Inclusive and equitable assessment

Some assessment modes or designs may unfairly privilege or disadvantage students. All reasonable efforts should be made by subject coordinators to ensure that assessment tasks are designed to be relevant and inclusive, and to avoid bias or other intended negative outcomes.

Particular account should be paid to student diversity, including international student cohorts, students from non-English speaking backgrounds, students with disabilities and Indigenous students. Assessment tasks may need to be modified due to the logistics or special requirements of specific cohorts. In such cases, substituted tasks should remain demonstrably equivalent in nature and degree of difficulty, and still satisfy the same learning objectives and graduate attributes. Reasonable adjustment in assessment methods should be made available to accommodate students with a recognised disability or impairment.

10 Roles & Responsibilities

The following guidance is provided to staff and students in relation to roles and responsibilities

associated with implementation of this Assessment policy:

10.1 Students have a responsibility to:

- Engage closely with published assessment requirements, put their best efforts into assessment and actively respond to feedback provided on tasks;
- Be aware of and abide by the provisions of student Academic Integrity, and
- Retain, where possible, copies of all submitted assessment tasks until the end of a study period.

10.2 Subject Coordinators will ensure that:

- Assessment design and implementation is undertaken with close reference to this policy;
- Assessment requirements for a unit subject are discussed and understood by all members of staff involved in the teaching and assessment, including sessional and casual teachers;
- Guidance, mentoring and close supervision of inexperienced markers is provided;
- Appropriate moderation processes are undertaken for all relevant assessment tasks;
- All requirements of the Academic Board are met;
- All reporting and review processes are undertaken and, where necessary, acted upon, and
- All discretionary decisions and judgments are undertaken in accordance with principles of fairness, consistency and transparency.

10.3 Heads of Programs will

- Encourage a whole-of-course approach to assessment that enables graduate attributes to be incrementally embedded throughout the course;
- Liaise closely with Subject Coordinators in relation to quality and consistency of assessment practices and processes, with particular attention to moderation and review activities, assessment load and appropriateness of tasks;
- Maintain oversight of academic standards in the course and promote opportunities for internal and external benchmarking of assessment wherever possible;
- Facilitate and promote opportunities for professional development on assessment issues for all staff, with a particular focus on new or inexperienced assessors;
- Review and report on course assessment outcomes, and act on problems, as appropriate;
- Be familiar with the Academic Policy of the Academic Board and in particular this
- Assessment policy;
- Provide advice and mentorship on good assessment practice as required, and
- Advise the Academic Board of any quality assurance issues in relation to student assessment and recommend appropriate policy and procedural change as necessary.

10.4 The Dean is to ensure that:

- Monitoring mechanisms are in place to ensure that assessment activities within NTI are efficient, fair, transparent, rigorous and appropriate and that such mechanisms are routinely implemented, reviewed and reported on as required;
- All new staff including sessional and casual marking staff are to be routinely inducted into assessment processes and practices of NTI and that ongoing professional development opportunities on assessment issues are available to all staff;
- Subject Coordinators are supported to implement the Assessment Policy and oversee the

embedding and ongoing maintenance of graduate attributes in subjects through wholeof course assessment;

- All responsibilities relating to international collaborations are fulfilled, including appropriate assessment, moderation, maintenance of standards and professional development requirements;
- Staff are sufficiently resourced and supported to fulfil their roles and responsibilities under this policy, and
- Up-to-date assessment resources that can be readily accessed by all staff are maintained.

10.5 Role of the Education & Examination Committee.

The education and examination committee(EEC) will consider the grades recommended by the Subject Coordinators for each student. Prior to accepting, amending or rejecting grades, the EEC will ensure quality in assessment practices in accordance with this policy. To expedite this review, Subject Coordinators must ensure that all available grades are submitted in the required format through electronic means by the notified date. Subject Coordinators may be asked to attend the relevant EEC meeting to respond to any queries of the Board along with any proposed amendments to final grades. The EEC will review grade distributions.

10.6 Role of the Academic Board.

The Academic Board may investigate the handling of issues such as students-at-risk, students with language difficulties, unforeseen assessment events, moderation activities, benchmarking of standards and attrition rates. The Academic Board will monitor the conduct and quality of assessment practices within NTI and its compliance with Academic Board policies and NTI's procedures and mechanisms; The board will foster discussion regarding the rigor and standards of assessment tasks and grading activities.

11 Grade Descriptors

Subjects are classified as either Pass/ Fail or Grade/ Mark. For Pass/Fail subjects, there is no mark recorded. For Grade/ Mark subjects, the mark is from the scale 0-100.

GRADE	MARK	EQUIVALENT DESCRIPTOR
HD	85-100	High Distinction- performance which meets all subject objectives in such an exceptional way and with such marked excellence that it deserves the highest level of recognition
D	75-84	Distinction – performance which clearly deserves a very high level of recognition as an excellent achievement in the subject
Cr	65-74	Credit- performance which is substantially better than would normally be expected of competent students in the subject

P	60-64	Pass- performance which satisfies subject objectives
F	0-49	Fail- performance which does not meet subject objectives
TF	49	Technical Fail- performance which does not fulfil all criteria of the subject outline with the mark recorded as 49 even the cumulative mark for the subject is above 50

- Students must meet all criteria set out on the subject outline to receive a passing grade (e.g. all assignments must be submitted). Students who do not fulfil all requirements will be awarded a Technical Fail (TF) with the grade recorded as 49 even if the cumulative mark is above 50.
- A semester weighted average (SWA) is a calculation of a student's average percentage mark for all Grade/ Mark subjects in which the student is enrolled in any one study period
- A course weighted average (CWA) is a calculation of a student's average percentage mark for all Grade/Mark unit subjects for all subjects in a course.
- NTI does not use or calculate Grade Point Average (GPA).

Attachments

Academic Appeal Form