ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK

Policy and Guidelines

This policy applies to all the coursework degrees at undergraduate and postgraduate level within the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences
GOVERNING DOCUMENTS
UWA Guidelines on Assessment

(In accordance with Academic Council R158/95, 278, 95, 72/04)

Responsibility for implementation
Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning
Course Directors
Unit Coordinators

Status: New

Key Stakeholders
Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning
Course Directors
Unit Coordinators
Faculty Office

Approval Body
Faculty Board
Meeting date: December 14th 2011
Approved: December 21st 2011

Endorsement Body
Meeting number:
Meeting date:
Agenda item:

Date Effective: January 1st 2012

Owner: Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences
Author: Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee

Contact: Associate Dean, Email: sandra.carr@uwa.edu.au

Related Documents
Special considerations policy
UWA appeals processes
Charter of student rights and responsibilities
Faculty Policy on Professional Behaviour of Students (In development)
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>UWA Principles of assessment</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Types of assessment</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Governance of assessment</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>General guidelines</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Setting the assessment</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Written assessment</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Clinical assessment</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Moderation</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Remediation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Archiving the results of examination</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Using assessment data for research</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Assistance available in matters related to assessment</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendices**

I. A Blueprint template  
II. List of assessments with domains  
III. Types of objective test items  
IV. Cover page for written assignments  
V. Standard setting  
VI. External review structure  
VII. Flow charts for appeals processes.  
VIII. Glossary of terms
UWA Principles of Assessment

Assessment of student learning is an important educational enterprise of the University, and is guided by specific policies and Guidelines for Practice. These policies and guidelines are informed by the following three broad principles, which UWA supports and facilitates:

1. The primary function of assessment is educational.
2. Effective assessment tasks and activities are well designed and equitable.
3. High quality assessment is transparent, defensible and assured.

The principles can be elaborated further, as follows:

1. **The primary function of assessment is educational.** As such,

   a. **good assessment is developmental.** allowing the student to progressively develop and then demonstrate their learning in an increasingly sophisticated way. Good assessment design and processes over a course of study support students in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills as they progress through their program of study. The design and processes also support and encourage students to become progressively more independent in their learning.

   b. **high quality feedback is a central aspect of assessment.** Such feedback to students is accessible, clear, timely and constructive and enables them to improve. Effective feedback procedures ensure that students are active participants in the feedback process through mechanisms such as self and peer assessment, or through activities requiring students to act on the feedback provided.

   c. **active engagement by students in assessment processes is facilitated.** Assessment is a primary vehicle to engage students in their studies, and well-designed assessment providing some opportunities to explore aspects of their studies that most interest them promotes engagement. It also encourages discussion with student peers and teachers, and can support self and peer assessment.

2. **Effective assessment tasks and activities are well designed and equitable.** As such,

   a. **effective assessment design is valid and well-aligned to stated learning outcomes.** The use of clear processes to validate the alignment between learning outcomes and assessment also underpins effective assessment.

   b. **effective assessment is relevant.** It reflects the importance of disciplinary traditions and also creates opportunities for students to develop the range of skills identified in the UWA Education Principles.

   c. **effective assessment is equitable.** Effective assessment practices and procedures make learning possible for all students, without discriminating between students individually or as a group. A range of assessment methods
allows differences in students’ capabilities in demonstrating their learning achievements to be reflected.

3. **High quality assessment is transparent, defensible and assured.** As such
   a. **assessment information at UWA is public, explicit and accessible.**
      Information concerning assessment expectations for students and staff is publicly available in accessible formats.

   b. **University leaders and managers actively engage with assessment practice and its continuous improvement.** In particular, the University is committed to ensuring that there are effective moderation procedures that are regularly reviewed and about which the university community is aware.

   c. **grading approaches are based upon reliable academic standards.** High quality assessment entails the application of standards appropriate to a discipline or school to a student’s academic performance. Moderation processes in a discipline or school attesting to the consistency of these standards ensure that a high measure of agreement is maintained between assessors. External periodic review of the standards through a process such as the Group of Eight’s Quality Verification System, also verifies consistency.
Types of Assessment

There are two main types of assessment used in the Faculty

**Formative Assessment**
*Assessment for learning*

Formative assessment is the use of assessment to judge the capacities or competences of a student with the aim of promoting further learning of the learner being assessed. It occurs regularly throughout the academic year to guide students’ learning, allow for practice of summative assessments, allow for wider learning outcomes to be achieved and for remediation to occur in a timely manner prior to the summative assessment events.

All units must provide formative assessment activities for students. While students are encouraged to complete formative assessment activities, it is not barrier assessment and remains an optional activity for students.

**Summative Assessment**
*Assessment of learning*

Formative Assessment is assessment *for learning* and Summative Assessment is assessment *of learning*. Teachers use summative assessment to discover what students have learned. It is always a formal process and it is used to see if learners have acquired the skills, knowledge, behaviour or understanding that the unit set out to provide. Summative assessment comprises a series of assessments spread across the unit and contributes towards the final grade of the student. It gives an overall picture of performance.

No single summative assessment component should contain a weighting of more than 60% or less than 10% in units which include more than four weeks of teaching. Objective test item assessments should not be weighted more than 50% for any unit in the Faculty.

**Barriers**
The components of summative assessment which a student has to satisfactorily pass as per laid down criteria are barriers to progression. These may include but not limited to competency based assessment where students have to demonstrate that they have attained required level of competency.
Governance of Assessment

Any significant changes in assessment within units need to be ratified by the relevant Course level Curriculum Committee. It is this body, which provides educational governance, leadership and direction in relation to all matters associated with the curriculum, including learning outcomes, content, teaching and learning methods, assessment, disciplinary contributions and aims to ensure optimal integration within and across years where appropriate. Within the context of assessment the Course level Curriculum Committee will:

- Ensure the quality and coordination of assessment within and across the units and years in accordance with Faculty Assessment and Feedback Policy and Guidelines, by regular review of course assessment blueprints, evaluation information, Sub-Committee reports and assessment results including Board of Examiner Reports.

All courses must have sub-committees assigned by the Course Director with the following responsibilities related to assessment.

- Address issues within different year (s); to define and advise on teaching, learning, assessment and evaluation issues to the relevant curriculum committee/working group with a view towards horizontal and vertical integration.
- Implement policy and inform unit coordinators and key staff as directed by the Course level Curriculum Committee.
- Determine learning outcomes and establish integration between outcomes, teaching, assessment and remediation.
- Review assessment methodology, content, quality and coordination on a yearly basis within and across units in accordance with the Faculty Assessment and Feedback Policy and provide a report to the Course level Curriculum Committee.
- Review and ensure assessment components are kept accurate in student guidebooks.

The sub-committees report to the relevant Course level Curriculum Committee chaired by the course coordinator that oversees implementation of curricula.
General Guidelines

1. Each student receives a unit guide before the unit begins. The unit guide should include:
   a. specific learning outcomes.
   b. an assessment mechanism statement outlining assessment requirements and all formative and summative assessment tasks in the unit with their respective weighting.
   c. a clear indication of where scaling will occur.
   d. a mechanism to ensure moderation of assessment.
   e. types of feedback that will be provided to the students.
   f. penalties for late submission where required, processes and grounds for the granting of extensions, and the requirement for mandatory class attendance.
   g. if resit is allowed for any component of assessment and under what conditions a resit will be granted.
   h. if an opportunity for supplementary assessment is available in the unit.

2. It should be stated in the unit guide explicitly that it is sometimes inevitable to make certain changes and in that case the students will be notified via official student email and/or announcement through the learning management system within the first two weeks of the start of the said unit.

3. Criterion-referenced assessment is the preferred method of assessment because it provides students with clear information on the standards of work, which attracts a particular mark or grade. It also implies that final grading depends on each student’s learning and competencies, regardless of the performance of other students in the cohort.

4. Weighting of individual summative assessment components (including barriers) should reflect the relative importance of the learning outcomes and the time allocated to teaching. For any unit that has a six point value and runs for a standard semester it is expected that the amount of written assessment expected of students is normally around 6,000 words (or equivalent). The following assessments may be considered equivalent to 1,000 words written assignments for the guidance. For example a unit can have a two hour written assessment at the end of a unit + two oral presentations and two ten minutes clinical assessments during a standard semester.
   a. 1 hour written assessment
   b. 20 minute individual oral presentation
   c. 10 minute/member group presentation
   d. 10 minute clinical/OSCE assessment
   e. 2,000 word unstructured reflective journal

5. A variety of formative assessment tasks are to be included in a unit with the potential for diagnosis of unsatisfactory progress and remedial action before summative tasks are undertaken.

6. The summative assessment should comprise of more than one assessment and no assessment should have a weighting of more than 60% and less than 10%. An exception to this rule is any unit that runs for four weeks or less.

7. The length of summative written, practical/competency exams may vary according to the level and nature of the unit. See item 4
8. The general UWA guidelines and best practices on assessment should be followed as failure to comply may result in loss of appeals on technical grounds.

9. Negative marking in objective test items is not to be used, although it is acceptable in Modified Essay Questions (MEQs) and Performance based Assessments where dangerous answers are given and fatal errors are made provided students were advised prior to the event.

10. Students are required to pass all barrier assessments, including clinical/workplace attachment obligations in order to progress to the next year of the course, or, in the case of the final year, to graduate.

11. Marking guides for assessments such as case discussions, assignments, oral presentations, and portfolios must be available to students and markers prior to the summative assessment event.

12. When releasing marks of the assessments the anonymity of students should be preserved.

### Setting the Assessments

1. Do not transmit exam questions or papers by email, particularly when they are being distributed amongst academic staff for comment, unless protected by a password.

2. All documents used for examination purposes should be stored on a secure server and always be password protected.

3. For the pre-examination review distribute exam questions among the group for discussion. These papers are later shredded.

4. Exam papers should not be sent via the internal mail; they should be hand delivered or placed on a CD-ROM and destroyed after use or stored in a secure place.

5. A Pre-BOE meeting of unit coordinators and teachers of particular units should ideally be held to discuss the results of examinations and other assessment. Any moderation of marks, or adjustment should occur before the final results are submitted to the Examinations Office except in cases considered for special consideration.

6. Grades used are to conform to the University grading scheme but Units which assess competency and skills mastery may choose to use Pass/Fail if approved by the relevant Course level Curriculum Committee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Distinction (HD)</td>
<td>80 – 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction (D)</td>
<td>70 – 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Pass (CR)</td>
<td>60 – 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass (P)</td>
<td>50 – 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungraded Pass (UP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail (N+)</td>
<td>45 – 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail (N)</td>
<td>0 – 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungraded Fail (UF)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed Component (FC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Grading for prizes and awards should be viewed as a separate, but not unrelated activity from summative assessment undertaken for the purposes of determining progression.

8. For the purposes of equity, reassessment methods (resits or supplementary) should be in a similar format to those in which the student performed poorly. But if this is not possible because of logistical problems (e.g. practical and performance based examinations) it is not necessary for supplementary examination to
replicate the original summative event, and the coordinator can make a professional judgment as to appropriate content for the supplementary examination.
Written Assessments

1. Written examination should range from a minimum of two hours to a maximum of three hours for all the examinations administered centrally by the Examination office. A ten minutes reading time is to be provided except in timed examination.

2. A sample examination should be provided on the web for formative purposes for written assessments, with model answers available at the beginning of the unit. This exam should mirror the exam format for the written summative assessment.

3. Avoid repeating assessment items in written examinations e.g. objective test items and essay questions etc. Each exam should have at least 20% new items and not more than 20% should be used from immediate past examination.

4. There should be no choices in written examination to discourage selective study

5. The objective type of test items should not constitute more than 50% of the summative assessment

6. Multiple Choice Questions (One Best Type) are to be written with four options in summative assessments.

7. Simple True False type of objective test items can only be used for formative assessments.

8. Model Exam answers must be developed by the Exam Committee/ Item writer at the time of submission of the item/examination paper.

9. To remove elements of bias where feasible the assessments should be scored anonymously, or by two markers independently. In cases where there is a disagreement of more than 25% between two independent markers a third examiner who will be the Head of school or his/her delegate will mark the paper according to the model answer provided by the item writer. The mark given by the third examiner will stand final.

10. Students must include a declaration with all written assignments submitted electronically or in hard copy that the work is their own and that they have read and understood the UWA policy on academic conduct available at [http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/page/72852](http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/page/72852)

11. For all the written assignments, students must retain a copy of their assignment.

12. For all late submissions of the assignments without an approval of extension or special considerations, the following penalties are suggested, and are to be applied at the discretion of the unit coordinator;

5% marks deducted per day for the first five days (including weekend) after which the assigned work is not accepted. In case it is a barrier exam the student will be required to complete another equitable task or assignment and cannot achieve more than 50% if the task is passed. In cases, where assignments are graded Pass/Fail, failure to submit the assignment in time will disallow the student to appear in the end of the term/year examination and progressing to next level of the course or to graduate in the case where it is the final year of the course.

In cases where the assignment is graded as Pass/Fail, student will fail that component or in cases where it is a barrier assessment will fail the unit.

13. Written assignments involving collection of data must be planned and carried out with appropriate consideration of the University’s ethical and legal responsibility to protect human participants.
Clinical Assessment

1. The following set of skills is deemed to be essential in the clinical setting, and is used as the basis for designing clinical assessment in the course:
   - Laboratory skills
   - Process or Learning skills
   - Patient management skills
   - Practical procedural skills
   - Communication skills
   - Information management skills
   - Professional skills
   - Clinical Reasoning skills

2. Skills can be essential, practiced or desired. In courses with clinical components, students are provided with lists of core clinical skills with the level of ability required being indicated against each skill listed. Students refer to these lists to monitor their acquisition.

3. Where end of rotation/clinical placements assessments are used standardized forms must be used across the units so uniformity is ensured in the assessment of skills common to all disciplines.

4. Clinical skills and knowledge are assessed using a range of summative and formative assessment methods, but primarily through a series of observed case presentations, case discussions, practical OSCE exams, theory exams and through Problem Based Learning and Case Based Learning tutorials. In addition, clinical and patient management performance in various units can be videotaped, reported upon in written and rater form or reflected upon by students.

5. Every course within the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences should employ a method for standard setting in their structured clinical examinations and provide students with the details of the selected standard setting method used. This will provide a defensible position for Pass/Fail decisions

6. Some clinical skills are also assessed in Defined Skills Training Programs such as the Student Pelvic Examination Clinic (SPEC), Resuscitation workshop, Suturing workshop, Intravenous Therapy, Urinary Catheterization, and the videotaping of inter-personal and inter-professional communication skills. Such assessments are measured against specific pre-determined standards which the students are fully informed about.
Moderation of Assessment

There are multiple ways to ensure quality of assessment. A six step model for evaluation of assessment is presented (Fig.1). This needs to be followed by sub-committee or as decided by the Course level Curriculum Group with assistance from the Assessment coordinator (as and when required).

![Figure 1: Six-step evaluation of assessment](image)

**Step one: Review of Blueprints to;**
- ensure that a diverse range of assessment tools are used
- confirm that weightings allocated to each tool are appropriate
- decide the timing of each assessment.
- standardise the tools where similar forms are used.
- consider where appropriate the assessment can taking the form of a learning experience or a formative exercise keeping in view the feasibility of the tools used.

**Step two: Pre examination reviews**
Moderation will take the form of external validation by peers where appropriate by looking at the quality of assessment. This may be done at a school level in an informal way and where the unit coordinator requires assistance, Assessment coordinator is available. In all integrated examination, a working party reviews examinations.

**Step three: Post examination item analyses**
The third level of moderation will investigate the quality of individual questions or items that make the assessment with item analysis including difficulty and discrimination indices. Inspection of the responses and scores in both clinical/practical and written tests will give an indication of the student learning within different domains.

**Step four: Quality of assessment at year level**
Establishing the validity and calculating the reliability of the assessment. By comparing it through the learning outcomes and the blueprint, the content validity can be established. For the assessments that require a numerical score the Cronbach’s alpha can be measured to examine the extent to which that particular assessment provides a consistent measure of what it is assessing. Similarly how performance on different items is correlated with one another will provide some evidence against validity. Once in a course cycle, an external examiner may be invited to be present at a sample of assessments in order to observe the organisation and fairness and confirm the face validity of assessments.

**Step five: Student feedback**
Student feedback is a standing item on all Course level Curriculum Committees where they can raise any issues / suggestions related to assessment and are usually acted upon immediately if required.
Additionally the data generated from year level evaluation, Student Unit Reflective Feedback (SURF) and open ended comments related to assessment must be included in the annual report for the purpose of triangulation and further action by the relevant committees.

**Step six: Comparison across cohorts**

Once this process of moderation is implemented it will enable the relevant committees to review any shift in trends that may have occurred during the course of years. Similarly the annual reports of evaluation across multiple cohorts of students will also enable us to compare the performances longitudinally. This will provide an idea of the predictive validity of our assessments. The Course Curriculum Committee will review the data in order to explore;

- If the students learn or develop more if they participate in a course or program compared to the students who did not participate?
- Are there any relationships between student assessment and relevant program indicators?
- Do students change over time?
- Do students meet our expectations?

**Feedback**

1. Timely and transparent feedback to students is to be provided on all returnable items (e.g. assignments) of assessment within four weeks of deadline for submission. This need not follow summative examination at the end of a unit as the purpose of assessment is then certification that learning outcomes have been achieved by the students.

2. In cases where reassessment is required or a student is asked to repeat the year, the said student is allowed to see the examination papers and to discuss areas where they need improvement.

3. The students should be advised through unit guide what feedback mechanisms are included in the unit however it is essential that for all assessment components all students are informed of the Class average and range of marks so they know of their performance in relation to their colleagues.

**Remediation**

1. Remediation in essential generic skills and knowledge should be offered to poorly performing students as early in the unit/course as possible and their progress is to be monitored.

2. Students needing remediation are to be identified early and meet regularly with the Academic Year Coordinator, Unit Coordinator and Associate Dean (Student Affairs) if necessary.

3. All supplementary examinations must provide opportunities for remediation. A course level curriculum committee earlier in the year for all students or Board of examiners may make remediation compulsory for a particular student in case of resit.

4. A variety of remediation approaches is encouraged. This may include supervised clinical work, written assignments, independent study as and when required.
Archiving Examination Results

The most recent document that should be used to sentence examination records is the UWA Records Disposal Authority RD2008061 which is available at http://intranet.uwa.edu.au/archives/_data/page/38711/UWA_RDA_RD_2008061_.PDF

The minimum recommended retention periods for Examinations and score sheets are covered under Section 18 Student Administration.

One can not legally destroy University records without prior approval from the University Archivist. The request to destroy records is via the submission of a Records Destruction Certificate form is available at http://www.archives.uwa.edu.au/forms.

Using Assessment Data for Research

The data available from assessment provides meaningful information about the teaching and learning process at the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences. A clear process has been outlined in the section on moderation on how the data can be used to inform the relevant stakeholders regarding the quality of assessment. The data related to each unit is the property of unit coordinator for that unit. The approval from concerned unit coordinator is required for any research to be conducted.

In case of integrated examinations the approval from concerned school / year committee/ Curriculum Committee may be required for any research to be conducted.

Any such research projects may be exempted from approval of UWA Human Research Ethics Committee provided information is gathered in a way that subjects (student/examiner etc.) are not identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
Assistance available for matters related to assessment

Advice on assessment tools
Education Centre has been organising Unit Coordinator’s Study Day where all unit coordinators are invited to come. One of the sessions during Study Day is devoted to Assessment Policy and Processes which provide information on what support and advice is available through Education Centre and salient features of assessment policy.

Reports on reliability and validity of assessment.
All Course level Curriculum Committees are encouraged to use the expertise of the assessment coordinator and look at the reliability and validity of assessment conducted through each year horizontally.

Provision of education resources
- There is an online Resource Promoting Reliable Assessment in Student – centred Environments (PRAiSE) available for the Faculty to access through Learning Management System. This resource contains online modules, readings, links to websites related to assessment and collection of standardized forms for various tools of assessments.
- Regular series of workshops on assessment at University main campus and through Education Centre are regular feature of the activities in each semester.
- A regular column on an issue or publications related to assessment is included in each issue of Education Centre’s newsletter.
INDEX

B
Barriers · 6
Bias · 10
Blueprints · 13

C
Changes in assessment · 7
Clinical Assessment · 11
Criterion-referenced assessment · 8
Cronbach alpha · See Reliability

E
Email · 9
Equity · 9
External examiner · 13

F
Feedback · 4, 8, 9, 14
Formative · 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13
Formative assessment · 6

G
Governance · 7
Grades · 9

I
Item analyses · 13

L
Late submissions · 10

M
Marking guides · 9
Model Exam answers · 10
Moderation · 5, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15
Multiple Choice Questions · 10

N
Negative marking · 9

O
Objective type · 10

P
Plagiarism · 10
Pre examination reviews · 13
Principles · 4

R
Reliability · See Cronbach alpha
Remediation · 3, 14

S
Sample examination · 10
Standard setting · 11
Standardized forms · 11
Summative · 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15

T
Types of Assessment
Formative · 6
Summative-6

U
Unit guide · 8

W
Weighting · 8
Written assignments · 3, 8, 10