

## **A9 - ASSESSMENT POLICY**

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### **1 PURPOSE**

This policy outlines BBI – The Australian Institute of Theological Education (BBI) approach to, and principles which guide, assessment of student learning and feedback.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

BBI is committed to quality learning and teaching, as reflected in its primarily educational mission. This policy has been implemented in order to ensure high quality assessment design, management, and feedback in order to provide the best possible learning experience for students in the context of assessment. BBI also recognises that assessment raises issues of academic integrity and equity, and these factors are accounted for in the policy. In terms of the design and delivery of BBI units, this policy is to be read alongside BBI's *Quality Assurance Guidelines for Unit Design and Delivery*.

### **3 SCOPE**

This policy applies to all coursework units offered by or on behalf of BBI.

### **4 DEFINITIONS**

N/A

### **5 POLICY**

#### **Part 1 – Assessment Policy**

##### *Principles of Assessment*

Assessment is a vital part of the learning process, influencing student formation and development, and impacting what students learn and how students learn. At BBI, assessment shall be designed to support learning, and is considered to be the process whereby learning outcomes are determined, feedback is given to students on their progress, and grades are awarded. Thus, assessment ensures that any grade awarded directly reflects the student's performance and that the student has met subject and program requirements in an approved manner.

When designing assessment for higher education, three objectives should be considered to ensure that all assessment:

- a. Guides and encourages effective approaches to learning;
- b. Validly and reliably measures expected learning outcomes, in particular the higher-order learning that characterises higher education; and
- c. Defines and protects academic standards

In terms of assessment, the following policy applies:

1. Assessment should encourage students to apply their knowledge and skills in an analytical and critical manner;

2. Assessment should be used for formative and summative purposes;
3. Assessment in a subject should involve more than one type of task. Types of assessment should be linked to the learning outcomes of a subject and course including outcomes for the development of graduate attributes;
4. Assessment should be designed to measure students' achievements against pre-determined and clearly articulated criteria. Subject outlines shall map assessment to objectives and graduate attributes;
5. Feedback should be informative and constructive and, so long as work is submitted by the due date, provided in time to be useful in subsequent assessment in the subject;
6. Assessment should be demonstrably fair and every reasonable effort should be made to ensure that it does not discriminate on grounds which are irrelevant to the achievement of the subject objectives;
7. Assessment should be valid and reliable;
8. Grading processes should be transparent and reflect the extent to which the student has achieved the assessable objectives stated for the subject;
9. Students and staff should be aware of the policies and procedures related to academic misconduct (refer to no. 21 below);
10. Assessment should involve reasonable workloads for both staff and students suitable to the credit points allocated to a unit and the nature of the discipline. The requirements of each individual assessment task in a subject should also be consistent with the proportion of marks allocated to that task. At AQF Levels 8 and 9, the following workload formula should be utilised to calculate assessment lengths, such as word limits, timing limits, and length limits for quizzes:
  - a. A 10 credit point unit with 100% of its assessment as written assessment will require students to write a minimum of 5,000 words and a maximum of 6,000 words (excluding referencing, bibliography, and title pages).
  - b. The length of oral presentations is to be calculated against the requisite word limit in a) above, with 10% of the total loading for a unit to be 10 minutes in length. Where oral presentations are used, the percentage weighting should be subtracted from the overall amount of words that students are required to write. Oral presentations should not constitute more than 20% of a total mark.
  - c. The length of quizzes is to be 20 questions per 10% of the unit assessment. Quizzes should not constitute more than 20% of a total mark.
11. All assessment processes and procedures should conform to both ethical and moral standards;
12. Communication of Assessment Requirements:
  - a. Unit Outlines shall be the main form of communication concerning assessment and determination of grades in a subject. They are distributed to all students at the beginning of each semester in accordance with the Course and Unit Coordination Policy.
  - b. Any minimum assessment requirements necessary to pass a unit must be specified in the Unit Outline.
  - c. Students are not required to pass each individual assessment task in order to pass a subject unless specified in the subject outline.

13. Group work should be worth no more than 30 percent of the total assessment in a subject, unless specific learning outcomes for the subject require team work. If learning outcomes require group assessment, then no more than 50 percent is permissible unless approved by the Academic Dean.
14. Submission of Assessment Tasks
  - a. All assessment tasks are submitted to BBI electronically, utilising the relevant systems within Blackboard
  - b. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they submit assessments correctly. Unit outlines shall contain the instructions on how, where, and when assessment tasks are to be submitted.
  - c. With every assessment task submitted, students are required to declare that their work is their own.
15. Assessment tasks are retained by BBI for at least two years and are appropriately removed and destroyed after this time.
16. Students who submit assessments after the due date and time without an approved extension of time will be penalised 10% of the maximum total mark of the submission for up to five days. After the fifth day their submission will automatically receive zero.
17. Assessments should be marked within three weeks of submission or before the next assessment is due.
18. BBI values academic integrity, and recognises that plagiarism is a serious academic offense which undermines such integrity. On enrolment, students will be required to complete a short induction on academic integrity. To protect against plagiarism, BBI will utilise software (such as Turnitin) and conducts professional development sessions for Faculty. Where plagiarism is discovered it is dealt with according to the following procedure:
  - a. Allegations of plagiarism will be referred to the Unit Coordinator.
  - b. The Unit Coordinator determines whether there is sufficient evidence of plagiarism. Where there is, the Unit Coordinator determines whether this is minor or major plagiarism.
    - i. If the plagiarism is minor, the student is given a warning in the feedback on their assessment, and marks are deducted for poor referencing.
  - c. If the plagiarism is major, the student will be asked to contact the Unit Coordinator to explain the case. The Unit Coordinator will also contact the Academic Dean to determine whether there has been any history of plagiarism. The Unit Coordinator will then decide to apply one of the following outcomes:
    - i. Where the student has misunderstood referencing requirements and has no history of plagiarism, they be allowed to review and resubmit the assessment for a capped mark of 50% of the maximum original mark available.
    - ii. Where the student has deliberately plagiarised and has no history of plagiarism, the submission will receive an automatic zero.
    - iii. Where the student has deliberately plagiarised and has a history of plagiarism, the submission will receive zero and the student will be referred to the Academic Dean.

- d. The Academic Dean keeps a confidential record of all referred instances of plagiarism.
  - e. Where a student is referred to the Academic Dean more than once, the Academic Dean organises a time to meet with the student to discuss the case. One of three outcomes is chosen:
    - i. The student fails the unit immediately with no additional comment on their transcript. They are given the opportunity to continue their studies on the understanding that any subsequent instances of plagiarism will result in immediate withdrawal from their course.
    - ii. The student fails the unit immediately and a note is recorded on their transcript regarding the plagiarism. They are given the opportunity to continue their studies on the understanding that any subsequent instances of plagiarism will result in immediate withdrawal from their course.
    - iii. The student fails the unit immediately and is withdrawn from their course.
  - f. The Academic Board receives reports after each Semester regarding plagiarism cases, and determines whether the current plagiarism prevention systems are sufficient, or whether further intervention is required.
19. Students have the right to request an explanation of grades allocated for work completed. Initially, students should discuss any concerns with the person who marked the work. If the student is still dissatisfied and feels there are grounds for requesting that an assignment be re-marked, they should initially informally discuss the matter with the Unit Coordinator. If the matter is not resolved at this time, the student should write to the Unit Coordinator requesting a re-mark. Where the Unit Coordinator is also the marker, the student may write to the Course Coordinator. Where the Course Coordinator is the Unit Coordinator and the marker, the student may write to the Academic Dean. This request will only be considered when:
- a. the student has discussed the mark or grade awarded for the assessment task with the original marker;
  - b. the student makes a request in writing within ten days of the marked/graded assignment being initially made available to the student (where delays in communication from the original marker have made this impossible, an extension on this timeframe is allowable);
  - c. the student understands that the re-marked result will be the officially recorded result for that assessment item, thus, the appeal may result in a lower mark or grade being awarded for the assessment task;
  - d. notwithstanding the above, the student has no automatic right to a remark. The Course Coordinator or Academic Dean may determine that the student has no grounds to a review;
  - e. any further appeals of decision made by the Course Coordinator or Academic Dean should be directed to the Chair of the Academic Board.

The Course Coordinator will then determine who should conduct the re-mark, and would typically choose another Faculty member within the same Unit or with

sufficient expertise. Once the re-mark takes place, the feedback is communicated to the student and the re-marker's grade is made final.

Where there is a substantial difference between the re-marker's grade and the original grade, the Course Coordinator refers to the Moderation of Grades and Assessments Policy and works with the Academic Dean to determine whether further intervention is needed.

20. BBI utilises the following grading scale, in line with rubrics developed and approved by the Academic Standard Subcommittee, in the awarding of grades for its units.

| Range of Marks | Grade                 | Description   |
|----------------|-----------------------|---|
| 85-100         | High Distinction (HD) | Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic ability; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.               |
| 75-84          | Distinction (D)       | Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.   |
| 65-74          | Credit (C)            | Very Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic ability; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.        |
| 50-64          | Pass (P)              | Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic ability; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of most assessment objectives. |
| 0-49           | Fail (FF)             | Failure to satisfactorily achieve assessment objectives or compulsory course requirements. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.  |

\*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

21. Grade Point Average (GPA) – all BBI students will receive a GPA which is calculated by looking at the student's total performance score divided by total credit points. GPA is calculated to one decimal point. GPA uses a 7 point grading scale.

| BBI – The Australian Institute of Theological Education<br>Grading Information |  | Grade Point Average (GPA) Value (*) |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Grade  | Marking Criteria / Explanation                 | GPA Value per course                |
| High Distinction - HD  | A mark between 85 and 100                      | 7                                   |
| Distinction - D  | A mark between 75 and 84                       | 6                                   |
| Credit - C   | A mark between 65 and 74                       | 5                                   |
| Pass - P   | A mark between 50 and 64                       | 4                                   |
| Fail - FF  | A mark between 0 and 49                        | 0                                   |
| Credit Granted - CRGR  | Credit granted for previous studies undertaken | N/A                                 |
| Withdrawn - WW   | Withdrawal from unit without academic penalty  | N/A                                 |

|                                     |   |     |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----|
| Recognition of Prior Learning - RPL | Credit granted for learning outside of formal education | N/A |
| Exempt - E                          | Exempt from studying that unit                          | N/A |

## 6 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

N/A

## 7 KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Quality Assurance Guidelines for Unit Design and Delivery
- Academic Honesty Policy
- Academic Standards Sub-committee – Terms of Reference
- Grading Policy
- Grade Appeal Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy

## 8 NOTES

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Contact Officer                  | Academic Dean   |
| Implementation Officer/s         | Academic Dean   |
| Approval Authority / Authorities | Academic Board / Audit and Risk Committee / Board   |
| Date Approved                    | 16/10/15  |
| Date of Commencement             | 1/7/16  |
| Date for Review                  | 24 MONTHS AFTER COMMENCEMENT  |
| Amendment History                | 06/03/17 – Amended to include GPA calculation guidelines at 5.22.<br>12/09/17 – Amended to remove section 16 (assessment Extensions), this section has been replaced by a new policy (A11). |
| Key Stakeholders                 | Faculty & Sessional Academics / Students  |