



IONA COLLEGE
TRINITY

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Assessment Policy and Procedure

Approved by the Academic Board on 16 June 2022

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Purpose | 2 |
| 2. Scope | 2 |
| 3. Policy | 2 |
| 3.1 Principles | 2 |
| 3.2 Composition of assessment..... | 3 |
| 4. Procedures | 3 |
| 4.1 Information to students | 3 |
| 4.2 Submission of assessment..... | 4 |
| 4.3 Late submission of written assessment..... | 4 |
| 4.4 In-class assessments | 4 |
| 4.5 Grounds for extension of submissions for written and in-class assessments..... | 4 |
| 4.6 Supplementary/Deferred Assessment | 5 |
| 4.7 Special Consideration..... | 5 |
| 4.8 Assessment results and feedback | 6 |
| 4.9 Quality assurance of assessment..... | 7 |
| 4.10 Publication of results | 7 |
| 4.11 Review of assessment decision..... | 7 |
| 5. Accountabilities..... | 7 |
| 6. Definitions..... | 7 |
| 7. Version history | 8 |
| 8. Additional Information | 8 |
| Appendix One – Composition and format of assessment | 10 |
| Appendix Two – Grade Schedule | 12 |

1. Purpose

This Policy sets out how Iona Trinity College of Higher Education (**the College**) will assess students' comprehension of unit content in order to ensure that when they complete, students have achieved the designated unit and course learning outcomes.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All enrolled students
- Academic staff involved in the design, delivery and administration of courses offered by the College, and
- All formal assessment activities.

3. Policy

3.1 Principles

The College will ensure that assessment methods:

- Explicitly link to and assist students in achieving and demonstrating the learning outcomes for the course and the unit upon completion
- Are designed to ensure students' learning and comprehension progresses from first year understanding through to completion with attainment of skills to think analytically and critically, and with the ability to integrate their learnings to a range of arguments and perspectives
- Are reviewed regularly for effectiveness in meeting desired learning outcomes
- Are based on contemporary practices in teaching and learning and in the relevant disciplines
- Satisfy relevant professional accreditation requirements
- Are appropriate to the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) descriptors for the relevant qualification type of the course. For example, assessments methods for students enrolled in a Bachelor (AQF level 7) level course will be designed to encourage students to think critically and in an independent manner
- Use a variety of tasks to measure different learning outcomes as specified in the Unit Outline
- Challenge students to deeper learning and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their full capacity through research and exploration of the literature and developments in current thinking
- Use valid criteria and standards to enable differentiation of students' levels of achievement, and
- Ensure the integrity of the courses that the College delivers.

Completed assessments will be moderated to ensure appropriateness of tasks and consistency in marking in accordance with the *Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedure*.

A diagnostic assessment item will be scheduled early in each unit to assist in the identification of any student skills and knowledge deficits as outlined in the *Academic Progression Policy and Procedure*.

Students will be provided with timely feedback on all assessment tasks to aid in their academic progress.

Academic staff will be supported in maintaining their understanding of current assessment practices in the higher education sector and the relevant discipline.

3.2 Composition of assessment

The College will ensure an appropriate mix of:

- Formative assessment: specifically intended to assist students identify weaknesses in their understanding, so that they may improve their understanding and enhance their learning, and
- Summative assessment: primarily to pass judgment on the quality of a student's learning, generally in terms of assigned marks and grades.

Each unit will include a minimum of two assessment items.

Where a formal examination is included as a final assessment in a unit the examination should not be more than three (3) hours long and constitute no more than 50 - 60 per cent of the overall grade for the unit.

Group assessment can constitute no more than 40 per cent of the assessment in any unit, except for project-based units.

The possible formats for individual assessment items are outlined in Appendix One to this Policy.

4. Procedures

4.1 Information to students

Information about assessment for each unit is included in Unit Outlines, which will be distributed to students in their first lecture of the semester for the unit in which they are enrolled.

Detailed information about assessment items for each unit must include the value (in percentage) of the item and its weighting in relation to the total assessment (100 per cent) as well as the submission date for each assessment item.

The description of each assessment item must explain the objectives of assessment, outline the procedure for completion of the assessment and provide clear assessment criteria which will apply to the grading of student work expressed as a rubric. The preferred referencing system should be identified as well as the process for applying for extension and penalties for late submissions.

Where units include a group assessment, the Unit Outline must state the object of the assessment, i.e. whether and how much it will focus on outputs produced by the group (e.g. report) or on the process of the group work (e.g. collaboration) as well as;

- The performance criteria used for the assessment
- The assessors (in addition to the Lecturer, e.g. the student, group or class peers), and

- The distribution of the mark between group and individual performance (e.g. unique group mark, individual mark, group average, etc.).

Academic staff will discuss the assessment regime of a unit in the first week of classes and answer any student questions pertaining to assessment.

4.2 *Submission of assessment*

Students must attempt all assessments on time as scheduled in the Unit Outlines.

The assessment cut-off time is 5pm and any submission made after 5pm will be considered as a next-day submission.

All written assessments should be submitted online through the College's Learning Management System, by the due date and time, and include an originality report generated by the plagiarism detection software available on the College's Learning Management System.

In the case of unexpected difficulty in uploading assignments, the student must email the assignment as an attachment to the lecturer to demonstrate on-time submission.

4.3 *Late submission of written assessment*

To ensure that assessment of student learning is fair, transparent, and equitable, the following penalties for late submission will be consistently applied:

- Any assessment submitted after the due date without proper approval, will be considered as a late submission. Five (5) percent of the total value of the assessment will be deducted from the marked value for every day the assessment is late (including non-working days), and
- An assessment that is more than seven (7) calendar days' overdue will not be marked and will receive a zero mark.

4.4 *In-class assessments*

Where a student is absent from a class without valid grounds where an in-class assessment (quiz, test, presentation) is conducted, the student will receive a zero mark and/or may be awarded an Incomplete (IN) grade for the unit.

4.5 *Grounds for extension of submissions for written and in-class assessments*

Students can request an extension of a submission date for written and in-class assessment where they have valid grounds. Such requests must be sent to the Course Coordinator:

- On or before the submission date, and
- Include relevant supporting documents.

Grounds which may be considered valid for extension requests are:

- *Genuine Illness:* A medical certificate must be obtained from a registered medical doctor and must explain the nature of the condition suffered by the student and the period during which the condition affected the student's performance
- *Illness over Extended Period:* As above, a medical certificate must be obtained from a registered medical doctor and must specify the nature of the condition suffered by the student and the period during which the condition affected the student's performance

- *Genuine Misadventure:* In the case of misadventure (personal/family crisis or accident), the College should be notified immediately, and a testimonial submitted as soon as the student returns from a forced absence. The student may be requested to attend an interview to establish the validity of their claims as well as to submit documentary evidence of misadventure, such as medical or police reports.

Students will be notified within 5 working days of the result of their application for extension.

4.6 *Supplementary/Deferred Assessment*

Where a circumstance will prevent a student from sitting an examination, the student may apply for an alternative examination known as a Supplementary or Deferred Assessment. Requests for Supplementary or Deferred Assessment will only be granted in specific circumstances normally brought about by illness or misadventure.

The College must receive applications for Supplementary or Deferred Examination at least 48 hours before the scheduled examination date.

The students will be advised of the outcome of their application within ten (10) working days and a new submission/examination date will be agreed with the approval of the Course Coordinator.

4.7 *Special Consideration*

Eligibility

Students who experience circumstances beyond their control that inhibit their capacity to complete assessment tasks to the best of their potential may apply for Special Consideration.

Applications for special consideration can only be considered for events that:

- Are of short-term impact
- Are outside the control of the student
- Can be substantiated with appropriate evidence
- Have had a significant impact on the student's ability to complete an assessment task.

Applications for special consideration

Students can apply for special consideration by submitting a request to the Course Coordinator within three (3) working days of the scheduled date of the assessment task.

Applications must be accompanied by official and verifiable evidence, such as a medical certificate, death notice, or counsellor/psychologist statement, that addresses the eligibility criteria for special consideration and explains the impact of the adverse circumstances on the student.

Assessment of applications

The Course Coordinator will make a preliminary assessment of the student's application for special consideration. Students who are ineligible or are unable to provide sufficient evidence to support their application will be advised that their application has been unsuccessful, the reasons for it and other options that may be available where appropriate.

Applications that meet the criteria for special consideration will be referred to the relevant lecturer for determination.

Outcomes of special consideration applications

The lecturer will consider the following in determining an outcome for a special consideration application:

- The level of the impact of the particular circumstances on the student's ability to complete or perform the assessment task, and
- The timing of the circumstances and the timing of the assessment task.

Potential outcomes include:

- Extension of a due date
- Removal of a late penalty
- An alternative assessment task, or special examination, or
- A resubmission of the original task.

Except for the removal of a late submission penalty, where appropriate, adjustments to marks will not be made as a result of an application for special consideration.

Students will be advised of the outcome of their application by email and any appropriate changes will be made to students' records.

4.8 Assessment results and feedback

Marking

Marking must be conducted in a way that is consistent with the specified assessment criteria and standards for the task. A marking rubric/guide will be provided in all Unit Outlines to ensure that students have a clear understanding of the criteria used to judge their submissions and the standards of achievement per assessment task that demonstrate levels of achievement of the unit learning outcomes.

To ensure consistency of assessment results, a moderation process will be carried out by relevant academic staff appointed by the College in accordance with the *Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedure*.

Communicating assessment feedback

Students must receive feedback on their work in a timely manner to assist them in achieving the specified learning outcomes and improving the quality of their work in any subsequent assessment. For early diagnostic assessments, students will normally receive feedback within five (5) days. The maximum turn-around period for other assessment is two (2) weeks from the submission date, including any moderation process.

Feedback provided to students will identify and address individual strengths/needs in terms of satisfying the assessment rubric criteria that measure student achievement of unit learning outcomes.

Final grades

Grades indicate the level of student performance in a unit against specified criteria and standards. A final grade is awarded by the College and serves as a statement for students and the community that indicates student achievement of the learning objectives in the unit.

Grades are expressed as a percentage as well as a letter grade as outlined in Appendix Two to this Policy.

4.9 Quality assurance of assessment

The College observes the following principles in relation to providing quality-assured assessment:

- Quality assurance of assessment addresses every stage of the assessment cycle (design, implementation, moderation, and review) and considers feedback from staff and students in relation to assessment
- Assessment tasks must be subject to routine assessment moderation processes and review through consensus moderation practices, including peer review, to ensure that they reflect appropriate assessment design and grading, and
- As part of the College's quality assurance, professional development opportunities that are related to design, implementation and moderation of assessment will be provided to academic staff.

The College's processes for moderation are outlined in the *Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedure*.

4.10 Publication of results

No exam marks will be released until after the moderation process is complete and the grades have been by the Teaching and Learning Committee. Final grades will be made available to students through the Learning Management System.

Deferred/supplementary assessment exam grades must be finalised by the deferred/supplementary exam release date each semester.

4.11 Review of assessment decision

A student may request a review of an assessment decision in accordance with the College's *Assessment Review Policy and Procedure*.

5. Accountabilities

Students are expected to:

- Become familiar with the Unit Outlines for all their enrolled units, paying attention to the assessment details provided
- If unsure about any assessment element, ask for clarification from the Lecturer/Tutor at an appropriate time as early in the semester as possible
- Complete their work to the best of their ability and apply sound academic integrity practices in their study and in completing assessments
- Keep a copy of all submitted assessments and assessments returned with feedback for their personal records, and
- Check returned assessments and final grades as soon as possible in order that they will meet the necessary timeframes should they wish to seek a review of their results or grades (see *Assessment Review Policy and Procedure*).

6. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy and Procedure, the following terms are defined as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Assessment | The evaluation of any work submitted in order to determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether a student has met the requirements of the task How well the student has met the requirements and what grade a student is to be awarded in relation to that work |
| Assessment Task | Any piece of work assigned to students in a unit which is given a mark or grade that counts towards the final result for the unit |
| Deferred Assessment | An assessment task that, with the permission of the Course Coordinator and without academic penalty, a student sits or submits at a later date than the original sitting or submission date |
| Misadventure | An accident or other event of ill fortune, (e.g. a public transport breakdown on the way to an examination) |
| Serious Illness | An acute illness, whether physical or mental, causing sufficient distress to require treatment by a doctor or other registered health care professional |
| Special Consideration | A special concession in assessment, sought by a student claiming that his or her performance in an examination or in another assessment task was adversely affected by illness or another cause |
| Working Day | Any day other than Saturday or Sunday or a public holiday which is observed by the College |

7. Version history

| Version # | Changes | Approval Body | Approval Date |
|-----------|--|----------------|---------------|
| 1.0 | Original Version | Academic Board | 25/01/22 |
| 2.0 | Update to assessment tasks and their relevance to the College's courses Removal of word limit ranges for assessment tasks | Academic Board | 16/06/22 |

8. Additional Information

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| Policy Status | Approved |
| Policy Owner | Principal |
| Next Review Date | 3 years from Approval Date |
| Associated Internal Documents | Academic Progression Policy and Procedure |

Assessment Moderation Policy and Procedure

Assessment Review Policy and Procedure

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 Standards 1.3.3, 1.4.3 and 1.4.4

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 No relevant standard

Other Applicable Legislation and Instruments Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011

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Appendix One – Composition and format of assessment

The following are types of assessments activities that could apply to one of the College's course unit. Some assessment activities are specific to the discipline of the course (e.g. Exegesis as an assessment task is specific to a course in theology). Table 1, below, maps the assessment activities to the disciplines of the courses offered at the College, followed by an explanation of the assessment activity.

Table 1. Possible assessment activities

| Type of Assessment Activity | Explanation | Theology courses | Counselling courses |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------|---------------------|
| Case Study / Written Report | Encourages students to apply academic learning to real world scenarios. They vary in length and while they are not usually the same length as an essay, they must adhere to the same academic standards, including appropriate referencing and should demonstrate adequate research frequently indicated by a literature review. | ✓ | ✓ |
| End of Semester Exams / Final Exams | Are (usually) "closed book" exams that test knowledge acquired from the entire unit and may include multiple choice questions, essays, short answer questions, problem solving exercises and practical exercises. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Essays | The student is expected to be able to mount a reasonable argument that moves logically from an introduction to a conclusion that draws upon a range of writings and perspectives of the topic being studied. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Exegesis | Is the 'drawing out of meaning', making use of critical scholarship. It differs from eisegesis which represents the reader 'reading into their text' their own opinion. Through the use of exegesis, students understanding of the bible and the depth of this understanding can be assessed. Exegesis is normally accompanied by a short essay. | ✓ | |
| Group Work and/or Presentation | Enables a student to demonstrate an ability to work and interact with others as well as enhances their individual learning. Group presentations are usually accompanied by a written report of adequate length and appropriate format to demonstrate the research problem, the key literature pertaining to the issue as well as major findings and recommendations. Group assignments need to be designed to allow for measurement of individual | ✓ | ✓ |

| Type of Assessment Activity | Explanation | Theology courses | Counselling courses |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| | performance, in addition to group performance. This can be achieved by including tasks through which students can demonstrate individual attainment such as presentations, critical reports, reflective journals. | | |
| Hurdle Requirement | Ensures that a unit may not be passed unless a certain activity has been carried out or satisfactorily performed. Hurdle requirements may be included in the assessment of a unit if deemed appropriate and where passing the hurdle clearly demonstrates attainment of learning outcomes. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Practical Exercises | These can be conducted individually or in groups and address a practical element of a unit. They may employ various media in resolving a problem and frequently include a written report. Practical exercises allow students to demonstrate their applied skills associated with the abstract learning of their unit. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Role Play | Enables students to demonstrate the practical application of their knowledge in a simulated, live scenario. Students assume the role of the practitioner attending to the needs of a client and are assessed using a flexible yet precise set of criteria, with feedback provided at the end. | | ✓ |
| Textbook / Book Review | Provides students with the opportunity to articulate in a form of an essay or report their critical views on a prescribed textbook or journal article demonstrating their comprehension, evaluation and critical thinking skills. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Worksheets | At an introductory level, especially in a systematic and contextual theology, worksheets provide a range of choices for a student to become familiar with particular matters of Christian belief from a range of cultural and intellectual perspectives. | ✓ | |

Appendix Two – Grade Schedule

| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>Letter Grade</i> | <i>Interpretation</i> |
|-------------------|---------------------|--|
| 85 and above | HD | A student assigned a “High Distinction” grade, addresses the assessment task criteria to an excellent standard. Outstanding achievement of all the learning outcomes. Superior level of knowledge and skills displayed. |
| 75 – 84 | D | A student assigned a “Distinction” grade, addresses the assessment task criteria to a very high standard. Very good achievement of the learning outcomes. Very high level of knowledge and skills displayed. |
| 65 – 74 | C | A student assigned a “Credit” grade, addresses the assessment task criteria to a high standard. Good achievement of the learning outcomes. High level of knowledge and skills displayed. |
| 50 – 64 | P | A student assigned a “Pass” grade, addresses the assessment task criteria to a satisfactory standard. Satisfactory achievement of the learning outcomes. Adequate level of knowledge and skills displayed. |
| 0-49 | F | A grade of “Fail” may be awarded when a student fails to adequately address the assessment task criteria. Does not achieve the learning outcomes. Does not display an adequate level of knowledge and skills. |
| | IN | Incomplete assessment task is awarded by the Student Services Manager approved by the Executive Dean to those students under special consideration. When a student fails to attempt one or more assessment components of the unit as listed in the Unit Outline. |
| | DE | Deferred Assessment – denotes that a deferral has been granted to a formal examination or assessment via Special consideration. |
| | W | Withdrawn from course and/or unit – applies where a student withdraws from a course and/or unit after the census date but, no later than the last day to withdraw without academic penalty. |