STUDENT ASSESSMENT
POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Overview

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process of collecting relevant evidence and making informed judgements to evaluate student learning outcomes.

Astra Institute of Higher Education ("the Institute") has designed this policy to ensure that all student assessment tasks are appropriately designed to determine the extent to which students have met the learning outcomes within a unit and to assist teaching staff to make decisions about the performance of individual students within a unit.

2. Principles of assessment

Assessment is a central and integrated component of the teaching and learning process. Assessment is carried out for a range of purposes, including diagnostic, formative and summative. Assessment tasks are designed to assess generic skills, such as academic literacy, numeracy and information skills, graduate attributes, and Course and Unit Learning Outcomes.

The rationale for assessment at the Institute is to:

i.   promote, enhance, and improve the quality of student learning through feedback that is clear, informative, timely, constructive and relevant to the learning needs of the student;

ii. measure and assure the standard of student performance and achievement;

iii. reward student achievement with an appropriate mark and grade; and

iv. provide relevant information in order to continuously evaluate and improve the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

Assessment at the Institute is:

i.   authentic and relevant, including where possible real-world applications of relevant knowledge and skills;

ii. constructed validly and reliably to accurately reflect students' knowledge and skills;

iii. aligned with Course and Unit Learning Outcomes and the Institute's Graduate Attributes;

iv. appropriate for the level of the unit and aligns with the student's stage of development;

v.   assessed and assured against transparent criteria; and

vi.   enabling of students' ongoing development through the provision of feedback that is timely and constructive.

Critical reflection on the outcomes of assessment tasks can inform teachers and students, not only about the quality of student learning and achievement but also about the effectiveness of teaching.

3. Assessment procedure

3.1 Types of assessment

The Institute employs a diversity of assessment types and methods to address the needs, learning styles and abilities of all students as follows.

i.   Diagnostic assessment is a form of pre-assessment specifically intended to enable teachers to evaluate students' strengths, weaknesses, knowledge and skills in a particular domain of learning, e.g. academic English literacy, numeracy and information skills.

ii.   Formative assessment is specifically intended to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by students to improve their learning, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and measure students' engagement in the teaching and learning process. Formative assessment tasks can also help teachers and other support staff to recognise where students are struggling and address problems immediately.

Formative assessments are generally low stakes, which means that they have low (5% - 10%) or no weight assigned.

iii.   Summative assessment is intended to evaluate student learning by comparing 'high stakes' assessment tasks with higher weight against known specific standards evaluate and measure student achievement of learning outcomes. Summative assessment results are recorded as marks or grades that are then factored into a student's permanent academic record. Teachers also provide constructive and timely feedback on summative assessment tasks to help students improve their learning and achieve the required learning outcomes.

Students may be referred by academic staff to the Student Support Officer for additional academic and study support on the basis of their performance in, or for failure to complete, any early diagnostic or formative assessment task.

Individual assessment tasks are identified by a discipline appropriate genre, as provided in the ASTRA Assessment Genres list, which names, defines, and provides pedagogical context for the different assessment types employed at the Institute. The ASTRA Assessment Genres list is provided in Appendix 1.

3.2 Timing and weight of assessments

Students are expected to achieve the Unit Learning Outcomes in a unit progressively throughout the duration of the unit. They should be set tasks during the study period that allow their progress to be evaluated against established criteria.

Assessment tasks should be designed carefully, first, to keep in proportion student time commitment and the weight of the assessment task in the overall assessment, and second, to reflect, as far as possible, the importance of each task in determining the effectiveness of students' having met the unit learning outcomes. This might mean that an important task, such as a final assessment, is weighted heavily. Care should be taken to avoid the imposition of a heavy imbalance of assessment load toward the second half of the study period. Assessment should reflect both the level of the unit and the credit points assigned.

Normally, one or more assessment tasks should be set, submitted, marked and returned to students by the mid-point of a unit. Although students need regular feedback on their progress, set assessment tasks should be kept to the minimum that is sufficient to enable students to make judgements about their progress. Due dates for assessment tasks should be well separated in time so as to give students periods of time for reflective learning that are free from the pressure engendered by a looming deadline.

In some disciplines, students are expected to practise skill development continuously. To evaluate students' ability to perform such on-going tasks, consideration should be given to strategies for self-assessment. In this way, students can obtain evidence concerning their level of understanding of the work and skill development, while avoiding the stress of frequent formal appraisal by an assessor.

Apart from examination scripts, all assessed work should be returned to the student giving opportunity for the student to query the assessment result for clarification either then or at a later time. Teachers are encouraged to provide constructive and timely feedback to students on all assessment events including final examinations.

Normally, assessment in each unit will be comprised of:

i.   a minimum of two and no more than four assessment tasks; and

ii. an early formative assessment task within the first third of the study;

iii. a maximum weight of 50% for single assessment tasks; and

iv. a maximum weight of 30% for group assessment tasks.

Details of the assessment schedule for each unit including type and method of assessment, weight, and due date will be published in the Unit Outline for each unit.

The Unit Outline should also make clear to students that the aggregated mark for the unit of study will be moderated. Moderation may result, in some cases, in a variation of the final grade awarded to the student for the unit of study which is inconsistent with the individual marks awarded to the student for individual assessment tasks.

Variations to the assessment schedule in a unit after the start of the study period will only be permitted with the written authorisation of the Dean.

3.3 Submission of assessment tasks

Students are required to submit assessment tasks at the time and date specified in the Unit Outline. Assessment tasks submitted after the published due date will be subject to a penalty unless the student has been given prior approval in writing for an extension of time to submit the task.

Assessment tasks will normally be submitted electronically via the learning management system and the date and time the assessment is uploaded will be considered the date and time of submission.

3.4 Late submission of assessment tasks

An assessment task submitted after the published due date, without an approved extension or without approved mitigating circumstance, will be penalised. The standard penalty is the reduction of the mark allocated to the assessment task by 10% of the total mark applicable for the assessment task, for each working day or part day that the task is late. Assessment tasks submitted 10 working days or more after the published due date will be awarded zero marks.

3.5 Resubmission of assessment tasks

Where a student has completed all assessment tasks and marginally fails a unit of study (i.e. has achieved an overall score of 46-49%) the Course Coordinator may recommend that the student be offered the option of completing additional assessable work which, if completed at the prescribed standard, will result in the student passing the unit. The maximum mark and grade that can be awarded after an additional assessment is finalised is 50 Pass. (refer Section 6. Grades)

3.6 Feedback on assessment

Feedback is designed to:
   i.   justify to students how their mark and grade was calculated;
   ii.   identify and reward specific qualities in the student's work; and
   iii. motivate and guide students on how to improve their learning.

Constructive feedback on assessment tasks will normally be provided to students within 14 working days after the date that the assessment was submitted by the student. The timing of and completeness of feedback will provide students reasonable opportunity to incorporate into their learning prior to the submission of subsequent assessment tasks in the same unit.

A list of the different feedback types employed at the Institute, their definitions, rationale and guidelines for use is provided in Appendix 2.

3.7 Assessment extensions

Extensions to assessment deadlines based on mitigating circumstances shall be at the discretion of the teacher, and must be granted in writing. Mitigating circumstances are those outside of the student's control that have had an adverse effect on the student's work or ability to work.

Requests for and extension to assessment deadlines will not normally be accepted or approved if received within two working days of the

4. Special Consideration in assessment

Students whose ability to submit or undertake an assessment task is affected by sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond their control, may be eligible for Special Consideration in assessment.

Applications for Special Consideration is assessment must be made to the Course Coordinator using the Application for Special Consideration form with three working days of the published due date of the assessment task.

When considering the application for Special Consideration, the Course Coordinator will normally take into account one or more of the following:

i. the student's performance in other assessment tasks in the unit;

ii. the severity of the event;

iii. the student's academic standing in other units and in the course; and/or

iv. any history of previous applications for Special Consideration, especially where they indicate a chronic problem.

Special Consideration will not be given when the condition or event is unrelated to the student's performance in a component of the assessment, or when it is considered not to be serious or within the student's control.

If an application for Special Consideration is accepted, any one of the following outcomes may be appropriate:

i. no action is taken;

ii. additional assessment or a supplementary examination is undertaken. Additional assessment may take a different form from the original assessment. If a student is granted additional assessment, the original assessment may be ignored at the discretion of the Course Coordinator. Consequently, a revised mark based on additional assessment may be greater or less than the original mark;

iii.   marks obtained for the completed assessment tasks are pro-rated to achieve a final percentage result;

iv.   the deadline for assessment is extended;

v.   the student is allowed to discontinue from the unit of study without failure.

When reviewing applications for Special Consideration, particular attention will be given to:

i.   the student's progression and completion status;

ii.   students with equity considerations (e.g. special needs);

iii.   Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

5. Reasonable adjustment in assessment

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and students with equity considerations may request reasonable adjustment to an assessment task to accommodate their needs. Adjustments to an assessment must take into account the special characteristics of the student. Any adjustments made must be 'reasonable' so that they do not impose an unjustifiable hardship upon the Institute.

A request for reasonable adjustment is made by the student in writing to the teacher for the unit of study affected.

Making a reasonable adjustment will involve varying the procedures for conducting an assessment, for example:

i.   allowing additional time for the completion of an assessment;

ii.   extending deadlines for an assessment;

iii.   varying question and response modalities for an assessment;

iv.   providing or allowing additional resources in examinations.

6. Grades

Students will receive a grade for each unit of study in which they are enrolled. The grade will be the addition of the marks awarded for each assessment task. Student performance in individual units of study shall be graded in accordance with the following grading definitions:

Grade	Definition
High Distinction Mark range: 85% and above Code: HD	Comprehensive understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to an outstanding level; demonstration of an extremely high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and excellent achievement of all learning outcomes of the unit.

Grade	Definition
Distinction Mark range: 75-84% Code: D	Very high level of understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to a very high level; demonstration of a very high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and comprehensive achievement of all learning outcomes of the unit.
Credit Mark range: 65-74% Code: C	High level of understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to a high level; demonstration of a high level of interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all learning outcomes of the unit.
Pass Mark range: 50-64% Code: P	Adequate understanding of most of the basic unit content; development of relevant skills to a satisfactory level; adequate interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all learning outcomes of the unit.
Non-graded Pass Mark range: - Code: NGP	Successful completion of a unit assessed on a pass/fail basis, indicating satisfactory understanding of unit content; satisfactory development of relevant skills; satisfactory interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all learning outcomes of the unit.
Fail (did not meet academic standards) Mark range: <50% Code: F	Attempted all assessments and did not achieve 50%. Inadequate understanding of the basic unit content; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve some or all learning outcomes of the unit.
Fail (non-submission) Mark range: <50% Code: FN	Did not attempt all assessments and did not achieve 50%. Inadequate understanding of the basic unit content; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve some or all learning outcomes of the unit.
Withdraw with Failure Mark range: - Code: WF	Withdrew from the unit after the census date.
Withdraw without Failure Mark range: - Code: WO	Withdrew from the unit before census date or after the census date with special circumstances.

Grade	Definition
Credit Granted Mark range: - Code: CPL	Credit for prior learning has been granted for the unit of study following an application and its approval.

7. Publication of results

All final results must be reviewed and approved before publication to students.

The Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee will nominate three Committee members (but not any student representative) to meet at the end of each study period as the Results Review Committee to approve results prior to publication. At least one of the members will be an independent member of the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Once results have been approved the Dean will ensure that the approved mark and grade is recorded in the student database against the relevant unit of study and will authorise the publication of results to students.

8. Review of decision

A student may request a Review of Decision on assessment. A request for a review may relate to the decision regarding an individual assessment task or a final grade for a unit of study.

In the first instance, students should approach the teacher, where appropriate, to discuss their concerns about the assessment decision. Where the issue regarding the assessment decision is unable to be resolved at this level, a request for a review may be made in writing on the prescribed form and lodged with the Course Coordinator within 10 working days of formal notification of the assessment result.

The grounds upon which the student may request a review of an assessment decision are that:

i. the student believes that an error has occurred in the calculation of the grade;

ii. the assessment decision is inconsistent with the published assessment requirements or assessment marking criteria;

iii. the assessment requirements as specified in the Unit of Study Guide were varied without the approval of the Dean and without written notification to students;

iv. due regard has not been paid to an approved application for Special Consideration.

Students should note that each review against an assessment decision is determined on its own merits without reference to other applications.

The Course Coordinator will normally respond to the request for a review of an assessment decision in writing within 20 working days and may confirm or vary the original decision. All decisions relating to reviews of assessment decisions are sent to the Dean for reporting as appropriate.

If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their request for Review of Decision regarding an assessment decision, they may lodge a formal grievance in writing to the Registrar: registrar@astra.edu.au within 20 working days, in accordance with the Institute's *Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure*.

9. Definitions

Term	Definition
Census date	The last date on which a student's enrolment requirements for the current study period must be finalised. Census is also the last date for a student to withdraw from a unit without incurring a financial liability and/or academic penalty.
Course	A structured sequence of study leading to the award of a degree, or other recognized qualification, which when successfully completed is conferred on the graduand by the Board of Directors of Astra Institute of Higher Education.
(the) Institute	Astra Institute of Higher Education.
Moderation	The review of assessment grading to ensure consistency in grading. Refer to the Moderation Policy for guidelines and strategies concerning the implementation of moderation.
Reasonable adjustment	The amendment of assessment procedures or materials to enable their application with students who have specific needs or disabilities.
Unit	A unit of study in a higher education course or a unit of study, module and/or unit of competency in a vocational education and training course.

10. Related documents
• Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

11. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Academic Board	12 October 2021	Document creation
1.1	Academic Board	12 July 2022	Update to appeal criteria under '8. Review of an assessment decision' Addition of Assessment Genres list at Appendix 1. Addition of Feedback Types list at Appendix 2.
1.2	Academic Board	29 June 2023	Updates at '3.1 Assessment Tasks', '8. Review of Decision', and to the Assessment Genres list at Appendix 1.

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Appendix 1: ASTRA Assessment Genres

ASTRA Assessment Genres			
Genre	**Definition**	**Rationale: Students will …**	**Alignment to ASTRA Graduate Attributes**
Annotated Bibliography	A list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.	access and manage detailed information on the available academic literature on a given topic; think critically and make judgements.	Communication and Literacies
Business Plan	A detailed, structured proposal that describes in detail how a business defines its objectives and how it is to go about achieving its goals.	demonstrate integrated knowledge to identify opportunities for growth.	Communication and Literacies; Innovation; Integrity and Responsibility; Motivation and Passion; Informed Leadership
Case Study	An intensive, systematic investigation of an individual, group, community or some other unit.	demonstrate professional knowledge and understanding; think critically and make judgements, solve problems and develop plans; apply theory.	Communication and Literacies; Integrity and Responsibility
Critical Review	An academic task that requires critical reading, critical writing, systematic analysis and evaluation. This is achieved by breaking down an item into parts, identifying the significant components, discussing the potential strengths and weaknesses and making reasoned judgements with evidence.	demonstrate analytic and persuasive capabilities.	Communication and Literacies; Innovation; Motivation and Passion; Informed Leadership
Debate	A formal discussion on a particular issue, in which opposing arguments are put forward and which usually ends with a vote.	express verbal analytic and persuasive capabilities, and demonstrate knowledge and understanding.	Communication and Literacies; Innovation; Integrity and Responsibility; Motivation and Passion; Informed Leadership
Diagnostic	A form of pre-assessment typically completed very early in a student's enrolment in a unit or course. A diagnostic test is used to measure a student's aptitude in a given subject area (e.g. academic writing, mathematics) and guide any additional necessary support strategies.	gain insight into their relative strengths and weaknesses in a subject area (e.g. academic writing, mathematics).	Communication and Literacies

ASTRA Assessment Genres

Essay	An essay contains a central idea or argument; a thesis statement. Usually an essay has four main components: an introduction, a series of body paragraphs, a conclusion, and a reference list. a thesis statement (claim, proposition, main idea); context (background, framework, setting); reasons (support, evidence, examples); counter-arguments (objections, contrary considerations); responses (refutations, answers to objections). Types include and may not be limited to reflective, critical, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative.	express written analytic and persuasive capabilities, and demonstrate knowledge and understanding.	Communication and Literacies; Motivation and Passion
Examination	A test of a student's knowledge or ability in a particular area.	demonstrate knowledge and understanding or more complex reasoning such as logical thinking, interpretation or analysis.	Communication and Literacies
Interview	A structured conversation where questions are posed and answers are elicited.	communicate to others to interrogate, advocate, negotiate, present; and demonstrate professional competence and skills.	Communication and Literacies; Integrity and Responsibility; Motivation and Passion
Literature Review	Extensive research on published work in a particular field in order to establish the scope and depth of an area or issue.	present an understanding of the existing research and debates relevant to a particular area of study.	Communication and Literacies; Motivation and Passion
Log Book	A record of important events in the management of an endeavour.	perform procedures and demonstrate techniques: computation, following protocols, organising information, being self-directed, managing time and tasks, organising.	Communication and Literacies; Integrity and Responsibility; Motivation and Passion; Informed Leadership
Methodology	Tasks that require the application of procedures, conventions or rules to systematically fulfil a process. Includes budget, dataset, definition, design, files, forms, proposal, survey design, research participation.	perform procedures and demonstrate techniques: computation, following protocols, organising information, being self-directed, managing time and tasks, organising.	Communication and Literacies; Innovation; Integrity and Responsibility
Online Discussion Forum	An electronic message board (in the class space) for asynchronous communication and discussion.	communicate with peers to argue, describe, advocate, interview, negotiate, and present on specific relevant topics.	Communication and Literacies; Innovation; Motivation and Passion
Portfolio	Samples of a learner's work, showing progression over time and attention to established quality standards and parameters. Can include documents of different genres, e.g., critical reflection, conceptual mapping, and report.	compile academic and professional evidence for the purpose of evaluating learning progress and professional standards.	Communication and Literacies; Innovation; Integrity and Responsibility; Motivation and Passion; Informed Leadership

ASTRA Assessment Genres			
Presentation	The process of showing and constructing the content of a topic, with a particular purpose and audience, through a public medium. Types include and may not be limited to research poster, case study presentations.	demonstrate knowledge and understanding and express verbal analytic and persuasive capabilities.	Communication and Literacies; Innovation; Motivation and Passion
Quiz	A test of a student's knowledge and understanding in a particular area; shorter than an exam.	demonstrate knowledge and understanding or specific information or more complex reasoning such as logical thinking, interpretation or analysis.	Communication and Literacies
Reflection	Written activities that demonstrate how an individual's or group's learning and experiences relate to the theories, concepts and models studied.	focus on process as well as outcome; take charge of own learning through critical self-reflection and form professional identity.	Communication and Literacies; Innovation; Integrity and Responsibility; Motivation and Passion; Informed Leadership
Report	A report is written for a clear purpose and to a particular audience; presents, analyses and applies specific information and evidence; clearly structured format making use of sections and headings so that information is logical and easy to follow.	demonstrate knowledge and understanding and express analytic and persuasive capabilities.	Communication and Literacies; Innovation; Integrity and Responsibility; Motivation and Passion
Research Proposal	A structured, formal document that explains to an audience what is planned to be researched, why the topic is worth researching, and how will be investigated.	demonstrate mastery of subject knowledge and familiarity with current research trends, critical thinking skills, and ability to analyse evaluate and synthesise information.	Communication and Literacies; Innovation; Integrity and Responsibility; Motivation and Passion
Review	A summarisation and evaluation of ideas and information into a structured text.	demonstrate understanding of existing knowledge and create (scholarly) commentary on that knowledge.	Communication and Literacies
Self-assessment	A structured task that allows individuals to review their performance against predefined standards for the purpose of identifying elements that can be improved.	reflect on their own learning and use self-determination skills to identify areas for improvement.	Communication and Literacies; Innovation; Integrity and Responsibility; Motivation and Passion; Informed Leadership

Appendix 2: Feedback Types

Type	Definition	Rationale: Feedback will …
Generic	A mark and/or grade only, awarded in accordance with the relevant grading rubric for the assessment task. Does not include commentary on the student's performance. Only to be used for final examinations that are not returned to students.	unambiguously provide students a quantitative measure of their performance against the standards provided in the grading definitions for the unit in section '6. Grades' of the *Student Assessment Policy and Procedure*.
Individual	Verbal or written feedback to students that focuses on individuals within a group. Feedback can relate to the observed skills, behaviours, attitudes and knowledge an individual within the group relative to the learning outcomes being examined. Typically used in conjunction with oral assessment tasks, or oral components of written tasks, such as debates and presentations.	individually inform students how they are performing in relation to specific learning outcomes and will give students opportunity to reflect on their learnings, ask clarifying questions, and adjust their learning practices.
In class	Verbal feedback to a group or cohort of students that is delivered in class for the purpose of allowing the group or cohort to identify shared and/or individual gaps in their current level of understanding. Provides the group or cohort the opportunity to discuss gaps in their understanding and engage in shared dialogue about corrective actions to improve their learning. Typically used in conjunction with formative assessment tasks such as quizzes.	collectively inform students how they are performing in relation to specific learning outcomes and will give students opportunity to reflect on their learnings, ask clarifying questions, and adjust their learning practices.
Returned work	Written feedback that is provided with the returned assessment task and which compares student performance to the established range of standards already shared, highlights strengths and weaknesses, and gives specific suggestions so that the student can take concrete next steps to improve their learning. Can be used in conjunction with all written assessment genres.	provide students, individually or collectively, with very specific information about their performance, comparative to the relevant established range of standards as described in the rubric for the assessment.
Peer	Written or verbal feedback that is given by one student to another or to the group or cohort on their performance relative to an agreed standard. Can be used with all assessment genres, typically in conjunction with and supplemental to feedback from the educator.	allow students to share a similar discourse, and to develop capability in understanding, interrogating and applying criteria and standards. Peer interactions around feedback will encourage collaborative learning and to facilitates students' ownership of their own learning by enhancing their capacity for judgement.