



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF  
**WELLINGTON**  
TE HERENGA WAKA

# ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK

*Te Herenga Waka–Victoria University of Wellington exercises reasonable care to ensure that the information contained in this handbook is accurate at the time of preparation. If subsequent changes are necessary, they will be incorporated into the online version and notification sent to Associate Deans, Titoko and the Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association.*

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| Contact persons:                | Director, Academic Office, Te Waikura<br>Senior Academic Policy Adviser |

*Procedures sitting under the Assessment Handbook are provided as appendices. Procedures are approved separately by the Vice-Provost Academic as per the University's Policy Framework.*

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# 1 Scope

## 1.1 Scope

This Handbook contains regulations, procedures and guidelines. It applies to all qualifications and non-thesis courses offered at Te Herenga Waka–Victoria University of Wellington.

*Note: The course grades set out in section 17 also apply to Master's theses, but for all other information on the assessment of Master's or Doctoral theses refer to the [Master's Thesis Regulations](#), the [Doctoral Policy](#), the [PhD Procedures](#) and the relevant qualification regulations.*

## 2 Purposes and principles of assessment

Assessment is making judgements about the extent to which students' work achieves the learning objectives and meets any identified standards. However, assessment can also be used to engage students in productive learning, provide feedback to guide improvement, inform teaching and learning decision-making and develop a student's own understanding of assessment. This university recognises the following three main purposes of assessment although understands that there may be other wider considerations that are also valid.

### 2.1 Purpose of assessment

#### 2.1.1 Assessment of learning

Assessment of learning involves gathering, interpreting and using evidence to make judgements about students' achievements. Assessment of learning is often summative and provides information about how well a student has achieved the identified learning objectives.

#### 2.1.2 Assessment for learning

Assessment for learning positions assessment more as part of the learning journey rather than determining whether the student has achieved the learning objectives/outcomes.

Assessment for learning emphasises consistent and timely feedback to help the student learn more effectively and efficiently. High quality formative feedback for example, supports students to reflect on their progress and to have agency over their learning.

#### 2.1.3 Assessment as learning

In assessment as learning the student develops a deeper understanding of their own learning through self-assessment. Another way to think of this is as 'Assessment Literacy' and the skills of the student as a reflective practitioner. The student, unlike in the other purposes, is not reliant on others for a grade or feedback. Instead, through self-reflection, students acquire an understanding as to why they are assessed in a certain manner and what they need to improve their learning in the future.

## 2.2 Principles of assessment

The University is committed to the provision of high-quality assessment practices that promote student engagement and align with the following principles. These principles are to be applied throughout all stages of assessment, that is the design, conduct, feedback and marking/grading of assessment.

### 2.2.1 Equitable and inclusive

Equitable and inclusive assessment is responsive to, accessible and appropriate for the diverse needs of learners. Particular attention will be given to the needs of identified equity groups to remove barriers to successful participation. Assessment tasks are designed to recognise and eliminate systemic disadvantage so that academic merit will be the overriding basis for allocating marks or grades to students.

See also the University [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework](#) and [Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments Policy](#).

### 2.2.2 Transparent

Assessment is transparent when the purpose, requirements, objectives and standards expected of all assessment tasks are made clear to all students in advance. Transparency requires that information about assessment processes is provided in advance, including when the assessment is to take place, and when feedback/grades will be available. Students are also made aware of moderation and scaling processes.

### 2.2.3 Aligned

Assessment is aligned when it has a clear relationship with the identified course learning objectives.

### 2.2.4 Manageable and sustainable

Manageable and sustainable assessment pays attention to the workload and wellbeing of students and staff.

### 2.2.5 Valid

Assessment is valid to the extent that it measures what it is intended to measure, without being affected by other characteristics. For example, a test of mathematical ability should not require perfect spelling.

### 2.2.6 Reliable

Assessment is reliable when it provides an accurate and consistent measure of student performance. Reliable assessment is reproducible under comparable circumstances and exhibits parity between the judgements of different assessors.

### **3 Responsibilities for assessment and moderation**

This section introduces the roles and responsibilities introduced in this Handbook. Further details are provided in sections that follow.

#### **3.1.1 Academic Board and Learning and Teaching Committee**

The Academic Board is the guardian of assessment standards at the University. The Learning and Teaching Committee assists the Academic Board to discharge its responsibilities in relation to matters concerning learning, teaching (including assessment), the student learning experience, and delivery of curricula. The Learning and Teaching Committee is responsible for approving Faculty Assessment and Moderation Procedures (see section 4).

#### **3.1.2 Vice-Provost (Academic)**

The Vice-Provost (Academic) has oversight of all teaching, learning and student matters. Within this domain, where specified in this Handbook, the Vice-Provost (Academic) is responsible for a range of teaching, learning and assessment decisions and is the appeal authority for most decisions made at Faculty level.

In extraordinary circumstances, where the Vice-Provost (Academic) is convinced that the application of any requirement in this Handbook would be inconsistent with the key principles of assessment (section 2.2), the Vice-Provost (Academic) may, on the request of the Faculty, after consultation with appropriate parties, modify the application of the relevant clause.

#### **3.1.3 Deans and Associate Deans**

Where specified in this Handbook, Deans and Associate Deans have responsibility for approving exceptions to constraints on particular types of assessment. Faculty typically give different Associate Deans different roles in relation to curriculum and assessment. This Handbook uses the term ‘relevant Associate Dean’ to acknowledge that more than one Associate Dean in a Faculty may have decision-making roles related to assessment.

#### **3.1.4 Manager, Course Administration and Timetabling**

Where specified in this Handbook, the Manager, Course Administration and Timetabling is responsible for the management of centrally managed paper-based tests, and some procedures pertaining to assessment processes.

The Manager, Course Administration and Timetabling manages the Examination Management Team.

#### **3.1.5 Faculty Boards, Faculty Academic Committees and/or Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees**

Faculty Boards, Faculty Academic Committees and/or Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees, are responsible for developing and monitoring the Faculty-wide Assessment and Moderation Procedures in accordance with section 4. This includes delegation of the monitoring and reporting responsibilities laid out in the requirements to an appropriate committee to ensure that agreed standards are met.

### 3.1.6 Heads of School and Programme Directors

Subject to Faculty Assessment and Moderation Procedures (section 4), Heads of School have oversight of, and responsibility for:

- i) The construction and alignment of assessment across each programme;
- ii) Ensuring fair and consistent assessment practice within their School;
- iii) Monitoring the conduct and outcomes of moderation;
- iv) Monitoring student workload; and
- v) School-level academic integrity processes.

This authority may be delegated to Programme Directors (or equivalent) or to a School Committee. The Head of School has authority, after consultation with the course coordinator, to decide on any question concerning marking within the course (subject to section 3.3.2).

Heads of School should ensure that all teaching staff in the School gain experience in course design and the principles of assessment, and direct those who lack relevant experience to attend a formal development programme. In particular, all new course coordinators should participate in professional development on assessment or be mentored by a more experienced staff member before taking full responsibility for course assessment. Similarly, new examiners and tutors should be provided with appropriate training and support.

### 3.1.7 Course coordinators

The course coordinator (not necessarily involved in teaching the course) is normally an academic staff member and is responsible for assessment in the course, whether or not it contributes to the final grade. A non-academic staff member may only be appointed as a course coordinator with the Dean's approval.

In particular, course coordinators have oversight of:

- i) Developing and delivering teaching material;
- ii) Designing assessment tasks and marking criteria, including pre-assessment moderation;
- iii) Quality of assessment;
- iv) Marking processes, including post-assessment moderation;
- v) Assigning, supporting and supervising tutors undertaking marking; and
- vi) Ensuring a Class Representative is appointed in accordance with the [Class Representative Policy](#)

### 3.1.8 Examiners and Markers

An examiner is a person who has overall responsibility for the design of an item of assessment including ensuring that it is fit for purpose, aligned with the relevant course learning objectives, and that pre-assessment moderation is undertaken according to the Faculty requirements.

Examiners will usually be academic staff members. Heads of School may appoint other people as examiners if appropriate.

Markers can include tutors and other staff, as appropriate. They are responsible for marking components of student work.

### **3.1.9 Tutors**

Tutors may mark and provide feedback. See the [Tutor Policy and Procedures](#).

### **3.1.10 Class representatives**

The Class Representatives have a role in assisting communication between students and staff in relation to issues in the course and facilitating student consultation if changes to the assessment scheme are being considered. It is not their role to help other students understand assignment requirements or to provide academic or pastoral support. They provide a point of contact for students. VUWSA manages the Class Representative system. Contact the VUWSA Student Representation Coordinator (studentvoice@vuwsa.org.nz) with any questions or concerns see the [Class Representative Policy](#) for details.

### **3.1.11 Students**

Students are expected to appropriately engage in assessment tasks and processes. This includes taking responsibility for planning and prioritising their assessment tasks and acting in line with University's Academic Integrity Policy (*see also the [Student Charter](#) and [Academic Integrity Policy link to follow](#)*).

### **3.1.12 Conflicting responsibilities**

Where an individual has two roles (such as Head of School and course coordinator) relating to a particular academic decision, responsibility for the higher-level approval should be delegated to a senior colleague.

## **3.2 External moderators**

An external moderator is appointed by the Head of School, and is a suitably qualified person, external to the University, who contributes to the post-assessment moderation process. See section 12 for information about Honours and taught Master's programmes.

*Note: refer to the Faculty of Law Assessment and Moderation Procedures for details of external moderation in relation to LAWS courses.*

## 4 Faculty assessment and moderation

### 4.1 Moderation overview

Moderation is carried out through a range of processes of peer review and is important in ensuring that assessment aligns with specified criteria, learning objectives, and the above key assessment principles. Moderation processes should be designed to provide a robust check of the assessment and marking quality, while not being unduly onerous for staff.

Moderation is normally carried out by academic members of staff, but the Head of School may allocate responsibility to others such as teaching fellows, adjunct staff, tutors, or a person external to the University.

Moderation should take place throughout the assessment process. It can be divided into two main stages:

- a) Pre-assessment moderation: an independent check of assessment tasks and criteria to ensure that they are consistent with the purpose and principles of assessment (see section 2), for example, ensuring that assessment tasks and criteria are valid i.e. have been designed to ensure they are assessing the learning objectives in a suitable way, are free from errors, and that the questions or tasks are easily understood by students and markers.
- b) Post-assessment moderation: an independent check that the marking of work is consistent and fair. Tools for post-assessment moderation might include holding a pre-marking meeting for all markers to ensure a common understanding of standards, looking at a sample of marked work, and/or grade distributions.

### 4.2 Faculty Assessment and Moderation Procedures

- a) Each Faculty must have a Faculty Assessment and Moderation Procedures document specifying its own requirements for assessment and moderation. These requirements must clearly outline and define standards for assessment and moderation for courses in the Faculty in the context of the range of disciplines offered. The Procedures for each Faculty must be approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee.
- b) The *Faculty Assessment and Moderation Procedures* should set out how each of the following will be managed within the Faculty:
  - i) Responsibilities regarding the setting and marking of assessment tasks, including consideration of the professional development that may be required for examiners and markers;
  - ii) Responsibilities regarding the monitoring and reporting on moderation, including the role of the Faculty's Academic Committee (and/or other Faculty committees such as the Learning and Teaching Committee if applicable);
  - iii) Requirements for pre-assessment moderation of assessment tasks and marking criteria;
  - iv) Requirements for post-assessment moderation, especially where there are multiple markers;
  - v) The training provided for tutors;

- vi) The support available for tutors when undertaking the role of a marker;
  - vii) Any restrictions on the amount of each student's work in a course that can be marked by tutors; and
  - viii) Processes for record-keeping and reporting, including what reports are required, what records are held and where.
- c) Any agreed Faculty-wide requirements regarding the following must also be included in the document:
- i) Alignment with any professional moderation requirements;
  - ii) Extensions and penalties;
  - iii) Mandatory course requirements;
  - iv) Faculty maximum on group work if less than the normal 50% of the course grade;
  - v) Any requirements for oversight of assessment scheduling;
  - vi) Processes for the moderation of course grades (see section 9.3 for detailed guidelines);
  - vii) External moderation of Honours and taught Master's programmes; and
  - viii) Any other Faculty requirements relating to assessment including such matters as the percentage of course assessment undertaken in various formats.
- d) Faculty Assessment and Moderation Procedures must be reviewed by Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees at least every three years and reported to the University Learning and Teaching Committee, which must also approve any significant changes.
- e) Faculty Assessment and Moderation Procedures must be accessible to all students and staff.

## **5 Assessment design**

### **5.1 General principles**

- a) Assessment design must be consistent with the purposes of assessment as set out in section 2.1 and with the key principles of assessment as set out in section 2.2.
- b) The assessment requirements for a course must apply to all students enrolled for that course. This does not preclude requirements that offer a consistent range of choices to all students such as the following examples:
  - calculating final grades on the best one or several out of a number of pieces of assessed work;
  - allowing students to choose from a range of alternative assessment tasks;
  - providing for the diverse needs of students, including those who are submitting assessments in te reo and New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL);
  - allowing students to resubmit work (see section 6.5).

*Note: See section 13 for information on variations to the course assessment requirements for individual students with disabilities or those adversely affected by special personal circumstances.*

- c) Courses should be assessed in a way that supports learning. Assessment should be aligned with the course learning objectives, and consideration should be given to the amount of assessment required for students to demonstrate their achievements. The course learning objectives, and the amount of assessment required of students, should also be taken into account when alternative assessment tasks may be needed (see section 13).
- d) Assessment systems should avoid systemic biases, such as cultural bias.
- e) It is desirable that a range of assessment formats is used within a course to support the diversity of learners.
- f) Course assessment should be designed so that missing one major assessment item due to special personal circumstances does not preclude a student from passing the course. Normally accommodations can be made through extensions or the options in section 13. Where none of these options can be used, an alternative assessment item must (unless clearly infeasible) be provided for a student who has missed one major assessment due to special personal circumstances, either to determine an appropriate assessed grade, or to provide evidence to support an aegrotat decision.
- g) Students must be provided with information in advance on how each assessment item will be assessed in order for them to plan and allocate their time appropriately.

**Good practice guideline: information about how an assessment item will be assessed**

For tests, such information might only be an indication of the distribution of marks across questions or between different sections.

For essay-type items it would be appropriate to indicate the relative importance of aspects such as structure, clarity of language or referencing.

## 5.2 Academic integrity

Validity is one of the key principles of assessment, and in order for assessment to provide an accurate and consistent measure of student performance, it is important to ensure the authenticity of student work. This section should be read in conjunction with the *Academic Integrity Policy for Students to follow*.

- a) Assessment tasks should be designed to minimise the frequency and seriousness of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.
- b) A student may reuse their own work that has previously been submitted for another assessment task (in the same or a different course) unless this is prohibited in the course outline.
- c) In line with the University's Academic Integrity Policy for Students, students must acknowledge work that has previously been submitted for assessment.

Note 1: For further information and resources relating to academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism see <https://intranet.wgtn.ac.nz/staff/learning-teaching/issues-misconduct> (for staff) or



<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/support/student-interest-and-conflict-resolution/academic-integrity>  
(for students).

## 5.3 Workload

### 5.3.1 Workload principles

Assessment tasks should be reliable, valid, fair and manageable for staff and students. In line with section 2 assessment principles, the design of assessment schemes and tasks must take into account workload implications for staff and students.

### 5.3.2 Student workload

- a) The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) defines one credit (point) as equivalent to 10 notional learning hours, with the points value for a qualification being based on an estimate of “how long it would typically take a person to achieve the stated outcomes in the context specified and to demonstrate that achievement through assessment”.
- b) The NZQF defines notional learning hours as “all planned learning activities leading toward the achievement of programme or qualification learning outcomes”. This includes scheduled contact time, preparation for class sessions, individual or group study, and work on assessment tasks.
- c) Irrespective of discipline or mode of delivery, courses should have workload expectations that are commensurate with the points attributed to the course.
- d) A 30-point course assessed entirely by written work, such as essays, should normally not require more than 10,000 words, with the appropriate multiple applied for similar courses worth different points. Word limits for essays and similar assessment items within courses should be comparable, reflecting the weighting in the assessment scheme and the amount of time that students are expected to dedicate to the task. Where courses are assessed with other approaches, different guidelines should be developed within each Faculty.

| Guidelines: Workload for courses with 12 teaching weeks |                                      |                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Points value                                            | Hours per week during teaching weeks | Total additional hours distributed across non-teaching weeks |
| 15 (150 hours)                                          | 10                                   | 30                                                           |
| 20 (200 hours)                                          | 13                                   | 44                                                           |
| 30 (300 hours)                                          | 20                                   | 60                                                           |

## 5.4 Language of assessment

- a) Assessment is conducted in the English language except where:
  - i) the use of another language is a requirement of the course; or
  - ii) a student chooses to be assessed in te reo Māori in accordance with section 6.3 (see also Appendix A: Using Te Reo Māori for Assessment Procedure).

**Guideline**

During their course of study at the University, students are expected to develop ideas and express themselves in well-structured, grammatically correct written language. Even in courses where diagrams, drawings, mathematical and scientific notation, physical artefacts or performance are the main means of expression, the ability to write clearly and accurately may be an important component of the assessment.

- b) Schools should ensure that assessment across all courses in a programme shows appropriate consistency in referencing requirements and the use of style guides.

### 5.5 Mandatory Course Requirements

- a) Mandatory Course Requirements (MCRs) are requirements (in addition to achieving a pass grade) that a student must meet in order to pass a course. Any MCRs must be:
- i) necessary to the achievement of course learning objectives, student safety, the graduate outcomes of the programme and/or the University's graduate profile; and
  - ii) stated, together with a brief justification, in the course outline.
- b) A student who has obtained an overall mark of 50% or more, but failed to meet an MCR, receives a failing 'K' grade.
- c) An MCR requiring 100% attendance at a specific activity can only be set if it is essential for meeting the course learning objectives. Such an MCR must be stated in a way that allows for special personal circumstances and must be approved by the relevant Associate Dean.
- d) An MCR requiring any level of compulsory attendance at lectures must be approved by the relevant Associate Dean.
- e) If an MCR is set, consideration should be given to substitutes by which the MCRs could be satisfied.
- f) On a case-by-case basis, if appropriate, MCRs may be waived or varied for individual students with special circumstances (see section 13) by:
- i) the course coordinator; or
  - ii) the Head of School or relevant Associate Dean after consultation with the course coordinator.

### 5.6 Requirements relating to specific types of assessment

- a) In order to provide students with a range of assessment opportunities, every course should include at least one assessment task that is not produced under test conditions (except where required by external accreditation).

*Note: Any staff setting up new assessment approaches, such as those developing new courses or new assessment approaches in existing courses, should liaise with the Centre for Academic Development in order to ensure their approach aligns with good practice.*

**Guidelines**

Assessment tasks might include, but are not limited to:

- essays, formal reports and other written assignments (see section 5.3.2(d) regarding word limits)
- reflective journals or blogs
- lab reports
- creative compositions such as: written, musical and visual compositions, performances, designs and artworks
- tests (see section 5.6.2 and Appendix B: Centrally Managed Paper-based Test Procedures)
- field work (see the [Off-Campus Activities Policy](#))
- activities within practicums, internships or work placements (see section 5.6.4)
- presentations and performances
- participation (see section 5.6.5)
- projects.

*Note: For further information on design and practice relating to different assessment types refer to the webpage with [Learning and teaching guides](#) or contact the Centre for Academic Development.*

### **5.6.1 Assessment items requiring attendance at a specific time**

- a) Activities that are required for an assessment item and require attendance online or in-person, at a specific time, must be scheduled:
  - i) during teaching weeks (including weekends, but not the weekends adjacent to the mid-trimester break or study period), or
  - ii) during an assessment period, or
  - i) in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the relevant Associate Dean, during the mid-term break or study break, and the adjacent weekends.
- b) Assessment activities that require attendance at specific time during the assessment period must be centrally scheduled via Course Administration and Timetabling.

### **5.6.2 Tests**

Tests are short duration assessment items (up to a few hours) which all students are required to complete at a fixed time.

The use of online tests and individualised tests (with different questions from a test bank for each student) mean that the definition of exactly what constitutes a test cannot be precise, and appropriate judgement must be used for test-like assessment that does not match the traditional pattern of a written, in-person, invigilated test.

- a) Unless required by external accreditation, a course needs approval from the relevant Associate Dean to have more than 70% of the assessment conducted under test conditions.

- b) The constraints placed on tests vary with the weight that they contribute to the course, their duration, and when they are scheduled. Higher-weight tests place significant stress on the students and pose a higher risk to students if something goes wrong.
- c) For the purposes of clarity, the Handbook recognises the following three types of tests:
- i) small tests: tests of duration up to 30 minutes and weight up to 10%;
  - ii) Centrally Managed Tests: paper-based tests held during the assessment period **and managed by Course Administration and Timetabling**; and
  - iii) all other tests – this includes tests scheduled during the assessment period but not managed by Course Administration and Timetabling – as well as tests held during class time.
- d) The contribution of a test to the final grade of the course is limited as follows:
- i) a Centrally Managed Test must contribute between 30% and 70% (inclusive) of the grade of the course; and
  - ii) any other test cannot contribute more than 35% of the grade of the course, except with the approval of the relevant Associate Dean.

*Note: Tests scheduled during trimester 3 should take into account that there is no assessment or study period and therefore no Centrally Managed Tests. This could for example mean a lowering of contact hours in the final week or ensuring there are lower assessment weightings for tests.*

More information on test conditions is provided in section 6.9 below.

### 5.6.3 Online mechanisms for assessment

- a) Assessment using digital technologies should be carried out in line with the general principles for assessment laid out in section 2.2. In particular, online invigilated assessment requires significant planning and resources and Associate Deans and CAD should be consulted.

Additional requirements:

- i) any digital technologies employed in relation to online assessment must be consistent with VUW data security, privacy and reliability requirements;
  - ii) digital technologies should be able to be used reliably by any student registered in the course;
  - iii) arrangements for online assessment must take particular care with authenticity and privacy. The use of Learning Management System (LMS) tools will assist in this process. This includes taking all practical steps to ensure that:
    - the student who did the work is the one who submits it (and the same principle applies for groupwork); and
    - unless it is specifically required by the assessment task, that students cannot see other students' work prior to submission (aside from group work).
- b) Course coordinators should take into consideration technology failures that prevent students submitting work and plan accordingly.

- c) Arrangements for assessment using digital technologies must take account of the technology students are able to access and the need to ensure equitable test conditions (e.g. such as where students will be when they are using the technology).

#### 5.6.4 Internships and work placements

- a) Internship, placement and practicum courses must comply with the [Internship, Placement or Practicum Course Procedure](#), including the use of an agreement between the University, the student and the host organisation, and recording placement details on the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) placement register.

*Note; Refer to the Internships, Placements and Practicums SharePoint site:*

[https://vuw.sharepoint.com/sites/CE\\_Internships\\_placements\\_practicums\\_RESOURCES/SitePages/Home.aspx](https://vuw.sharepoint.com/sites/CE_Internships_placements_practicums_RESOURCES/SitePages/Home.aspx).

- b) Like any other courses, credit-bearing internships or work placements must be assessed against the stated course learning objectives and have assessment tasks and criteria clearly stated in the course outline. In designing assessments, consideration should be given to supporting reflective practice and the integration of academic requirements with workplace activities.
- c) Internship or work placement courses may be graded as pass/fail or may use the normal A+ to E scale.
- d) Assessment may include input from staff in the internship or work placement organisation, but responsibility for assessment sits with the course coordinator, except that the Dean may delegate that responsibility to a different staff member.
- e) The course coordinator (or other staff member where delegated by the Dean) must ensure that any issues arising out of conflicts between the assessment requirements and the tasks required in the internship or work placement are resolved in a way that allows the student to be assessed. The Head of School or relevant Associate Dean should be consulted where required.
- f) Arrangements relating to any payment (including “in kind” payment such as including the student in film credits) must be specified and communicated to students at the beginning of the course.

#### 5.6.5 Attendance and assessment based on participation

- a) Marks should be limited to specific forms of academic performance. This means that marks must not be allocated or deducted for simple attendance or non-attendance at learning/teaching events.

*Note: Where appropriate, a certain level of attendance may be set as a mandatory course requirement. Refer to the Centre for Academic Development resources at Appendix H of the [Course and Programme Design Handbook](#).*

- b) When using participation as an assessment tool, consideration should be given to ensuring the assessment is fair to all students by managing the group dynamics to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to participate without distortion by factors such as (but not limited to) gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, disability or political affiliation or by factors such as class size, mode of attendance (online or in-person), or the various time zones in which the class operates (especially for online learning).

**Good practice guideline – tutorials and seminars**

Forums such as tutorials or seminars provide students with the opportunity to develop the communication skills that are a vital part of everyday working life, and participation can:

- encourage students to prepare for class and to do the background reading
- encourage students to think and reflect on issues and problems
- foster the development of communication and presentation skills, including speaking and listening skills
- encourage social interaction and the sharing of ideas
- develop group and team skills (where the assessment focuses on group work).

Contribution to class discussion can help demonstrate course learning objectives but assessment of that may be problematic.

- c) Up to 10% of the assessment in a course may be based on participation, provided that:
- i) performance is assessed on clearly defined tasks and not on vague impressions of the quantity or quality of a student's contribution to class discussion; and
  - ii) criteria for assessing the in-class performance of students are clearly specified in a manner that students can translate into action or behaviour.
- d) Records on individual student performance must be kept and be available for moderation and appeal purposes.
- e) The Learning and Teaching Committee may approve a larger component of the course assessment to be based on participation where satisfied that it is appropriate for the nature of the course and that what is proposed adequately addresses the issues in section 5.6.5(b).
- f) Tutors responsible for managing tutorial/seminar groups in which participation is to be assessed must have relevant experience or have completed the appropriate training on assessment and feedback. See also the [Tutor Policy and Procedures](#).

## 5.7 Group work and group assessment

When used appropriately, group work and/or group assessment can be a valuable teaching strategy that contributes to students' learning and the development of their communication, teamwork and leadership skills. Collaboration among students to explore and develop ideas and solutions to problems and to promote engagement is a valued activity that stimulates learning through interaction. This needs to be balanced against the requirement for assessment to provide each student with equitable opportunity to demonstrate their learning and to accurately measure their performance.

### 5.7.1 Group work

- a) Group work refers to activities where students work together on a learning task.

- b) The use of a substantial amount of group work within a course should be supported by the course learning objectives.
- c) Assessment tasks based on group work must not contribute more than 50% towards a student's final grade unless the relevant Associate Dean has approved otherwise. Within their Faculty Assessment and Moderation Procedures (see section 4), Faculties may set their own upper limit below 50%.
- d) If group work is to be used within a course, that must be stated in the course outline, along with an indication of the time commitment that will be required outside scheduled classes. The outline must include a clear statement of how the work will be assessed, including any:
- individual grades based on identified individual items;
  - group assessment (see section 5.7.2) where all students in the group are awarded the same grade based on a jointly prepared item; and
  - group or individual grades based on the group process.
- e) Group work assignments must be carefully planned, supervised and monitored by the course coordinator to ensure that:
- all students are able to contribute to the task;
  - students are not under peer pressure to make time commitments in excess of that indicated in the course outline; and
  - no individual is unfairly disadvantaged if the group process is compromised.
- f) The course coordinator is expected to be familiar with the Centre for Academic Development resources on group work: <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/learning-teaching/support/approach/guides/group-work-and-assessment/group-work-assessment.pdf>.

*Note: Additional resources have been developed by the Wellington School of Business and Government <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/learning-teaching/support/course-design/group-work>.*

### 5.7.2 Group assessment

- a) Group assessment refers to an item or element of assessment that has been completed by members of a group and for which group members are all assigned the same mark.
- b) Marks from group assessment (as distinct from group work) may not exceed 15% of the final course grade unless the relevant Faculty Board has approved otherwise, having received a description of how the group assessment will be implemented.

#### **Good practice guideline: group projects**

Group projects contributing over 15% to the course grade are commonly arranged as follows:

#### **Group assessment component (up to 15% of the course marks):**

Students within each group work together to create a group outcome (such as a report, presentation, performance or model) with all students in the group getting the same mark.

**Individual assessment component (the balance of the marks for the assessment item):**

Each student prepares an individual report focussing on, for example, their individual contribution to the group project, details of any individual analysis or research involved or an individual reflection on the group process or outcome. An individual report could also involve a review or commentary on work presented by other groups in the class.

**5.8 Peer feedback and assessment**

- a) Having students within a course review and/or assess each other's work can assist student learning and develop a broader range of learning partnerships.
- b) Peer assessment is where a mark given by a peer contributes to another student's course grade. Peer assessment requires the approval of the Learning and Teaching Committee, and may contribute at most 10% of the formal assessment determining a course grade. Training and guidelines for staff in the design and conduct of assessment tasks that involve peer marking are important and course coordinators introducing peer assessment would be expected to work closely with the Centre for Academic Development (CAD).

*Note: In the first instance contact the relevant Faculty liaison person from the CAD team*

<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/learning-teaching/cad>

- c) Peer feedback is where one or more students provide feedback on the work of another student in the class. The quality of peer feedback may be assessed and contribute to the course mark of the student providing the feedback. Peer feedback can be used at the course coordinator's discretion and does not count as part of the 10% limit on peer assessment.

**Good practice guideline: an example of peer feedback used for assessment**

An assessment item is set up with two components, each contributing to the final course grade:

- Component 1 involves an assessment task such as an essay, report or presentation.
- Component 2 involves critiquing the work of one or more other students.

Process (all students do both components):

- Student A submits their essay/report/presentation.
- Student B reviews student A's work and submits feedback for Student A.
- Student A is marked on the quality of their essay/report/presentation.
- Student B is assessed on the quality of the feedback they provided to Student A.

**5.9 Self-reflection and self-assessment**

- a) Students should be encouraged to reflect on, analyse, and evaluate their learning from assessment tasks and, where possible, this should be an integral part of all courses.



- b) Self-assessment is where a student suggests a grade for their own work. A self-assessed grade must not contribute towards a student's course grade.
- c) Assessment can be made on a student's self-reflective capabilities.

## 5.10 Assessment timing

### 5.10.1 Spread and scheduling

- a) Assessment and feedback in a course should be spread reasonably evenly across the full length of the course (including any designated assessment period). Schools should attempt to avoid serious assessment bottlenecks for students and staff. In programmes where students have a common core of courses, course coordinators should liaise regarding the scheduling of assessment to avoid overloading students at particular times.

*Note: the assessment period was previously called the examination period.*

#### Good practice guideline

Where possible, and particularly in 100-level courses, there should be some assessment scheduled within the first three weeks of a course. This provides students with early feedback on how well they are understanding the material and the expectations of the course. It also allows staff to identify students needing additional support and to intervene where appropriate.

- b) Submission dates should, where possible, be set to allow for extensions of deadlines in cases of illness or other special personal circumstances.
- c) Alternative arrangements must be made for any student who has reasonable grounds for being unable to attend an evening or weekend assessment.

### 5.10.2 Use of teaching weeks

Except as provided in sections 5.10.3-5.10.5, all assessment items that require compulsory attendance must be run during the teaching weeks. This does not include the weekends adjoining trimester breaks or the weekend after teaching ends. Notwithstanding online assessment windows (which means that tests may be technically accessible overnight), assessments must not finish later than 9.30 pm without approval from the relevant Associate Dean.

### 5.10.3 Use of mid-course breaks

- a) The mid-trimester break is not a holiday; it is a break from scheduled teaching sessions. The mid-trimester break includes the weekends at each end.
- b) During a mid-trimester break, students should not be assigned more than half the normal workload expected during teaching weeks.
- c) Assessment should not force students to work in a particular part of the break.
- d) Other than in exceptional circumstances, and with relevant Associate Dean approval, an assessment item or mandatory course requirement, rehearsals and performances must not require attendance on campus during the trimester breaks. Where possible, such exceptions should be signalled in the course outline.

- e) Notwithstanding sections 5.10.3(b)–(d), placements, field trips, block courses, and optional revision or support sessions may be run in mid-trimester breaks. These must be signalled in the course outline.
- f) For multi-trimester courses, the break between trimesters is normally treated as a holiday. Any assessment items due during this period needs Associate Dean approval.

#### **5.10.4 Use of designated assessment periods**

- a) Each course is encouraged to have one assessment item (including any test) scheduled during the designated assessment period (rather than all assessment during the teaching weeks).
- b) A course may not have more than one assessment item during the assessment period without the approval of the relevant Associate Dean.
- c) If an assessment item during the assessment period requires all students in the course to attend at a specific time (whether online or on campus), it must be centrally timetabled.
- d) The Manager, Course Administration and Timetabling will ensure appropriate arrangements are made for any student who has two centrally timetabled assessment items at the same time.
- e) Where the assessment for a course includes an assessment task that is not a centrally timetabled test due in the assessment period, students must be provided with full details of the requirements within the first three-quarters of the teaching weeks. This should include the due date and details such as the topic of an essay.
- f) Course coordinators must make suitable accommodations for any student who has any non-centrally timetabled assessment scheduled at the same time as a centrally timetabled assessment.

#### **5.10.5 Use of study period**

- a) The study period preceding each assessment period provides time in which students can focus on their preparation for final assessments.
- b) Study periods include the weekend immediately following the end of teaching.
- c) No new material may be delivered during study period, although optional revision sessions to support students' preparation for final assessments may be offered.
- d) Except in exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of the Vice-Provost (Academic) in consultation with the relevant Associate Dean, no assessment item can be scheduled or due during the study period.

*Note: See section 6.6.1(b) regarding class-wide extensions beyond the end of the teaching weeks.*

#### **5.10.6 Assessment beyond the end of the trimester**

Assessment for each course shall be completed by the end of the trimester (including any assessment period), except that the relevant Associate Dean may approve an extension beyond this for an individual student as set out in section 6.6.2(g).

## 6 Course delivery and implementation of assessment

### 6.1 Communicating the assessment scheme and other course information

#### 6.1.1 Course outline – general requirements

- a) The course outline is the means by which students are informed of important information about a course including:
- i) course learning objectives;
  - ii) teaching format (online vs in-person, block, seminar-based, field trip, etc);
  - iii) times, dates, and venues of class sessions;
  - iv) set texts;
  - v) workload (total hours for the course, and hours per week);
  - vi) the assessment scheme, and for each item:

- the type of assessment;
- percentage weighting;
- the CLOs addressed by the assessment item;
- due date;

*Note 1: Class extensions are possible.*

*Note 2: For assessments due in the assessment period (see section 5.10.4) the due date in the course outline can refer to the assessment period rather than stating a specific date. Once the assessment timetable is available, specific dates for any non-centrally timetabled assessment in the assessment period must be communicated to students through all the channels for formal announcements specified in the course outline.*

- any group work, group assessment or peer assessment involved (see sections 5.8-5.9);
  - any resubmission options;
  - penalties for late submission; and
  - any assessment items (other than tests) for which extensions cannot be granted.
- vii) mandatory course requirements;
  - viii) a link to previous course feedback; and
  - ix) the channel for formal announcements.
- b) The course coordinator is responsible for preparing a course outline for each course. This includes completing the information required in all mandatory fields specified in the online course outline system by the relevant deadlines.
- c) Each course outline must be completed, checked and approved and must be available to students no later than one week before the start of teaching.

- d) Any changes to the course outline after it has been approved must be made in the online system and follow the Faculty procedures for checking and approval. Students registered in the course must be informed of any changes through all the channels for formal announcements specified in the course outline.
- e) Except as set out in section 6.1.2, once a course has been running for two weeks, the general pattern of assessment laid down in the course outline must be adhered to.

**Good practice guideline**

Even though the course outline does not require details of the assignments, finalised details of assessment tasks, including expected workload, should be provided to students as early as possible in the course to enable students to effectively manage their time.

When developing an assessment item, check that the task aligns with the workload allocation set out in the course outline.

### 6.1.2 Changes to course outline during a course

- a) Any changes to the assessment scheme in the course outline must be done in a way that minimises disadvantage to any student. For example, if an assessment task is cancelled, its weighting cannot be distributed to assessments already completed unless that is to the student's (or students') advantage. (See also section 13.3.3 regarding reweighting).
- b) Major changes to the assessment scheme within a course may be permitted in exceptional circumstances provided that there has been effective consultation with the students in the class and the VUWSA Student Representation Coordinator ([studentvoice@vuwsa.org.nz](mailto:studentvoice@vuwsa.org.nz)), and approval by the relevant Associate Dean. If in doubt about whether a proposed change is major or minor, the course coordinator should consult the relevant Associate Dean.
- c) Minor changes could include amending due dates or restructuring of assessments that does not significantly affect the overall nature of what students are required to do.
  - i) During the first two weeks of a course, the course coordinator may make minor changes to the assessment scheme.
  - ii) After the initial two-week period, minor changes may only be made in consultation with the class through the Class Representative(s).
  - iii) Any changes must conform with School and Faculty requirements.

*Note 1: Any change that adds or removes a centrally timetabled assessment must be communicated to the Manager, Course Administration and Timetabling.*

*Note 2: Refer to section 13 for information on variations to assessment for individual students.*

## 6.2 Presence in the University's online learning and teaching environment (Nuku)

For every course, the following must be provided online and accessible through the course site on the Learning Management System (LMS):

- a) Detailed information about all course assessment tasks.

- b) Any other important information about the course that is not in the course outline.  
This might include:

- Copies of, or links to, any required electronically available course readings and other such resources that students must obtain or be able to access;
- required readings set within physical texts, such as prescribed course textbooks;
- course announcements;
- advice about how to succeed in the course;
- expectations about student use of online communication tools; and
- the name(s) and contact detail(s) of any class representative(s) once they have been selected.

*Note: Support and advice in relation to using LMS (Nuku) is available from the Centre for Academic Development.*

### 6.3 The use of te reo Māori in assessment

- a) Te reo Māori is an official language of Aotearoa New Zealand. The University's Te Tiriti o Waitangi Statute by way of the principle of Options (Kōwhiringa) acknowledges Māori rights to pursue their own personal direction, whether that be in accordance with tikanga Māori or not. In the context of the University, this means that Māori staff and students have a choice about whether or not to access Māori specific processes, services or support within the University environment.
- b) Students may submit work (including oral presentations) for assessment in te reo Māori except where:
- i) the course is taught fully or partly in a language other than English or Māori and the assessment requires students to demonstrate their facility in that language; or
  - ii) facility in the English language is central to the objectives of all or part of the course.
- Note: as set out in Appendix A: Using Te Reo Māori for Assessment Procedure, students wanting to submit work in te reo Māori must give at least one month's notice so that appropriate arrangements can be made.*
- c) Students using te reo Māori for work submitted for assessment are expected to be proficient in the language and able to develop ideas and express themselves in well-structured, grammatically correct Māori language.
- d) Where the marker is not competent in te reo Māori, the work may be assessed by a different marker (either within this University or from elsewhere) or the submitted item for assessment will be translated before marking.
- e) The translator of the submitted work should be on the National Translators and Interpreters Register which is administered by Te Taura Whiri i te reo Māori—Māori Language Commission, or, a current staff member at this University and

approved by the DVC (Māori), or, a person nominated by the Head of School and approved by the DVC (Māori).

*Note: See Appendix A: Using Te Reo Māori for Assessment Procedure and the associated Guidelines for more details.*

#### **6.4 Requirements relating to the use of NZ Sign Language (NZSL) in assessment**

- a) NZ Sign Language is an official language of New Zealand, and the University is committed to inclusion and accessibility for all students. In line with these principles, the University recognises that Deaf students have a right to use NZSL to participate in university education.
- b) Except where the course requires assessment of skills in another spoken language, Deaf students who use NZSL are entitled to use NZSL for any assessed oral presentation.
- c) Students submitting work in NZSL for assessment are expected to be proficient in the language and able to develop ideas and express themselves in well-structured, grammatically correct NZSL.
- d) For practical purposes, students need to give at least four weeks notice to the examiner, or relevant class teacher, of their intention to use NZSL in oral assessments.
- e) Unless the marker is competent in NZSL, or an interpreter is available at the time of presentation, presentations submitted in NZSL will be recorded for subsequent translation.
- f) An interpreter must be registered with the Sign Language Interpreters Association of New Zealand (SLIANZ), and be a current, qualified staff member of Te Amaru-Disability Services, or from a recognised NZSL interpreting agency. This person must be approved by Te Amaru-Disability Services, who will provide reasonable resourcing.

#### **6.5 Resubmission of work**

- a) The course coordinator may allow students to resubmit work that has been amended on the basis of feedback.
- b) In line with the University's Academic Integrity Policy for Students, students must acknowledge work that has previously been submitted for assessment.
- c) Options for resubmission of work should be specified in the course outline, or can be arranged on a case-by-case basis by the course coordinator with approval of the Head of School.
- d) Resubmissions may be offered as either:
  - i) an option for all students who failed the assessment, with 50% or C- as the maximum possible grade for the resubmitted work; or
  - ii) an option for all students to improve their grade in the assessment item.

*Note: where resubmission is not made available in the course outline, it may still be offered under section 13.3.4 to an individual student with special personal circumstances.*

- e) If a student's resubmitted work is assessed as being at a lower grade than the original grade, the highest grade determined for the student must stand.

## 6.6 Extensions

- a) An extension is permission to submit work later than the due date. Extensions do not apply to assessment tasks completed under test conditions.
- b) An extension does not attract a penalty.
- c) Granting of an extension is at the discretion of the relevant course coordinator (subject to section 5.6.1(b) and any Faculty-wide constraints specified in the Faculty Assessment and Moderation Procedures).
- d) When giving an extension, course coordinators should consider the longer-term impact on the student, including their ability to meet deadlines in other courses. In some cases alternative arrangements, such as reweighting (see section 13.3) or an aegrotat pass (see section 13.5), may need to be considered instead of an extension.
- e) Consideration should also be applied to how staff workloads are managed.

### 6.6.1 Class-Wide Extensions

- a) A change to the deadline for an assessment item constitutes a change to the course outline and is subject to section 6.1.2. Consultation with the Class Representative (or the whole class) should be carried out.
- b) A class-wide extension beyond the end of the teaching weeks must be approved by the relevant Associate Dean.

### 6.6.2 Extensions for individual students

- a) The goal of an extension is to ensure fairness for students experiencing particular circumstances. An extension is not intended to give the student more time than other students, but to recognise that they have not been able to use the time allocated to complete the assessment item. The question of advantage, or not, therefore needs to be judged on a case-by-case basis.
- b) In some instances, (for example tests, weekly tutorial assignments, assignments where answers or feedback have already been provided) late submissions may not be feasible.
- c) Automatically approved extensions, allowing each student a specified amount of flexibility within the course without the need for them to demonstrate special personal circumstances, may be used where defined in the course outline (see the Good Practice Guideline below).

**Good practice guideline: Automatically approved extensions**

Where this approach has been used, some course coordinators have found that many students will still submit their work on time such that workflow of marking is not impeded. Other course coordinators report most students taking the automatic extension such that marking and feedback flow is negatively impacted. Staff are

encouraged to consult colleagues and CAD for advice relevant to your discipline. This approach can be implemented in a variety of ways.

**Example 1**

The course outline has stated that a short extension for a particular assignment of two days will be automatically granted to any student who requests it with an email prior to the scheduled deadline. It is advisable to remind students of the provision close to the deadline.

- The extension is automatic, so the student does not need to provide a justification or any supporting evidence, and the course coordinator does not need to engage with the student's circumstances.
- Any work submitted late without an extension having been requested is penalised in the normal way.
- Longer extensions need to be negotiated and may require justification and supporting evidence.

The approach can be adapted, for instance to allow automatic extensions only for particular assessment items, or to allow each student a maximum of one automatic extension within the course.

**Example 2**

Use a tracked online system allowing each student up to a total of three days/72 hours of extensions, which may be used across one or several assessments in the course with no requirement for it to be requested or approved.

- d) Subject to 6.6.2(a) – (c), an extension will be considered on the grounds of academic workload pressure (such as 3-4 assessment tasks due at the same time), unexpected obligations from employment or personal circumstances as set out in section 13 (see also guidelines below).
- e) A student seeking an extension must provide a reasonable justification, for example (but not limited to), one of the reasons listed in section 13.
- f) The course coordinator may request supporting evidence. However, in the case of illness, staff must not require a student to obtain a medical certificate if the student did not need to, or was unable to, see a medical professional about the issue. Course coordinators should not normally request supporting evidence for short extensions of only a few days, and should take into account the nature of the justification before requesting evidence.
- g) Staff should be flexible in accepting a range of supporting evidence and must recognise that in some situations it may not be possible or reasonable for the student to provide documentation.
- h) Once sighted, any supporting evidence need not be retained (but if retained must be disposed of in accordance with section 15).



**Guidelines: considerations on granting extensions**

Extensions are a significant point where students ask for help, often for reasons of well-being. The principles of fairness and empathy should be applied. Sometimes, for short extensions, students have unexpected circumstances arise where an extension can help ease stress and improve student wellbeing.

Some of the more common reasons students seek short extensions are unexpected employment obligations out of the student's control, unexpected relationship issues or failure of technology. A short extension to recognise these kinds of issues is appropriate given our pastoral obligations to students. Staff should be aware of the staff intranet page on supporting students <https://intranet.wgtn.ac.nz/staff/support-students>.

The granting of extensions based on unexpected employment obligations must balance a range of considerations. The first consideration is that many students are employed in settings that may be subject to significant, unexpected obligations such as covering shifts for staff who are ill and responding to other unforeseen circumstances. Course coordinators are asked to take into account such circumstances when providing extensions. Unexpected employment obligations do not include the normal working hours that a student's employment entails. See also the University's information on the [Pastoral Care Code](#).

- i) The course coordinator may grant an extension up until the end of the relevant trimester.
- j) The relevant Associate Dean, in consultation with the course coordinator, may, in special personal circumstances, grant an extension beyond the end of the trimester, but in no case beyond six months from the end of the trimester.

*Note 1: See section 13 for information on other provisions relating to students with special personal circumstances.*

*Note 2: Students' LMS access is normally cut off 14 days after the end of the course, so access to online materials and submission of very late work through the LMS is not always feasible and alternative arrangements may be required. Consult CAD for further information about LMS.*

*Note 3: See also the [Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments Policy](#).*

## 6.7 Penalties for late submission

- a) Penalties involving a reduction in the student's mark or grade for the assessment item may be applied to work that is submitted late without an extension.
- b) Penalties (including any cut-off dates) must be clearly specified in the course outline and must conform to school or Faculty-wide requirements.
- c) Penalties must be proportionate, transparent and reasonable.
- d) Where a penalty has been applied, this fact should be recorded so that the information is available when course grades are being finalised.
- e) Unless an extension has been granted, no assessment item will be marked if it is submitted after the end of the relevant trimester unless approved by the relevant Associate Dean.

- f) Course coordinators may accept late submissions, even after a cut-off date, to meet Mandatory Course Requirements or to demonstrate achievement of CLOs.

## 6.8 Implementing Mandatory Course Requirements

If Mandatory Course Requirements (MCRs) are set (see section 5.5), they must be applied, except that:

- i) Where feasible, a student who has not met an MCR should be given an additional opportunity to satisfy the requirement.
- ii) The course coordinator may waive an MCR for a student with special personal circumstances as set out in section 13.

## 6.9 Administering tests

### 6.9.1 Centrally Managed Tests

- a) The Course Administration and Timetabling team administers paper-based Centrally Managed Tests in accordance with the Procedures in Appendix B.
- b) All students sitting a Centrally Managed Test are required to follow the Examination Rules (<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/study/exams/rules>).

### 6.9.2 Tests

- a) All relevant conditions on any tests must be communicated to students well beforehand. This includes:
  - i) date, time and duration:
    - For a small test that contributes to the final grade (10% or lower), students must be informed of the date, time and duration at least a week ahead of time through the official communication channel.
    - For any test held in the assessment period, students must be informed in the course outline of the duration of the test and that it will be in the assessment period. Students must be informed of the date and time when the assessment period has been timetabled.
    - For any other test, students must be informed by the end of the second teaching week of the date, time, and duration of the test.
  - ii) format, for example, paper-based, online, take-home or practical;
  - iii) required equipment (such as calculators) that students are expected to bring and use; and
  - iv) whether the assessment is “closed book” (i.e. students must not access any resource material), or “open book” (i.e. students may access any resource materials they choose) or whether only specified resources may be used.
- b) Tests must be scheduled in line with the following:
  - i) all tests held during an assessment period (including final tests), that require students to attend at a specific time, must be centrally timetabled to avoid clashes;

- ii) in-person, small tests must be held in class sessions;
  - iii) all tests not held during an assessment period must be scheduled during the teaching weeks of the course. They may not be held in the weekend immediately following the end of teaching, the study period, or the weekends adjoining and during the mid-trimester break;
  - iv) tests held during the teaching weeks may be held in normal scheduled class sessions, or evenings (after 5pm) or weekends (other than those specified in iii);
  - v) alternative arrangements must be made for any student who has reasonable grounds for being unable to attend an evening or weekend test, or a clash with a test in another course; and
  - vi) any test or tests held in the final week of teaching of Trimester 1 or Trimester 2 must not be worth more than 25% in total, except with the permission of the Head of School who must be satisfied that the students in the course will not be overloaded by assessment in all the courses they are taking.
- c) Integrity requirements on tests:
- vii) reliable identification is required for students sitting a mid-year or final test in the assessment period and strongly recommended for other tests contributing 15% or more of the course grade. This applies to both online and in-person tests;
  - viii) separated seating (to minimise students' ability to see each other's work) is required for in-person final tests and is strongly recommended for other in-person tests contributing 15% or more of the course grade; and
  - ix) measures should be taken to ensure the integrity of online tests, with proportionally greater attention taken for tests that contribute more of the course grade.

*Note: Outside of each Faculty, advice on how to manage integrity for online assessment tasks can be sought from CAD/Principal Advisor on Academic Integrity.*

d) Prevention of cheating:

- i) Strict security of test papers and scripts is necessary.
- ii) When sitting a test, students should, as much as possible, be seated in a way that minimises opportunities to see other students' work.
- iii) For tests, there must be a process for identifying each student, such as:
  - checking photographic identification (any official ID should be accepted; accepting only Te Herenga Waka–Victoria University of Wellington student IDs is unreasonable);
  - requiring each student to sign their test paper and matching signatures if any concerns arise; or
  - visual identification by the invigilator.

- iv) Appropriate constraints should be imposed to prevent students from communicating with other people. For example, in a paper-based test, mobile devices may be prohibited.
- e) Equitable opportunity to perform:
  - i) Where students are expected to bring calculators, tables, documents, specified equipment or other aids into a test, they must be given written advice of this requirement well beforehand, and it should be specified on the test question paper.
  - ii) Any substantive clarification or correction of test questions made while the test is running must be shared with all students.
  - iii) The University's obligations to students with disabilities or who are impaired on the day must be met (as specified in the [Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments Policy](#)).
  - iv) If there is a significant disruption to a test, the course coordinator or the Examinations Management Team should consult with the relevant Associate Dean.
- f) Minimising stress, distraction and disruption:
  - i) Test questions must be clear, well-written and unambiguous.
  - ii) The examiner must be contactable and able to provide any required clarification or correction during a test.

**Good Practice guideline: tests**

- Colleague peer review of test question wording is strongly encouraged.
- A test location should not expose students to excessive background noise.
- Students must be provided with clear instructions about the location and time of the test, and about any items they need to bring.
- A clearly visible clock (or other indication of time) should be displayed.

### 6.9.3 Online tests

There should be appropriate support available to students to address issues that arise including technical, administrative and academic issues. When the test is open outside of normal business hours, there should be clear instructions for students on processes to address any issues that arise.

The following good practice guidelines are recommended for online tests:

**Good practice guidelines for online tests**

- a) All online tests should be designed with the assumption that they will be open-book unless specific integrity efforts are taken (e.g. specific invigilation software). This may mean that questions will need to test more than simple recall of facts. Information about writing test questions can be found in the Centre for Academic Development's (CAD's) *'Guide for developing multiple choice and objective style questions'* <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/learning-teaching/support/approach/guides/developing-questions2/developing-questions.pdf>

- b) The tests should be administered through the LMS, made available at a specific time and closed at a specific time. These times should be communicated clearly to students in advance. Tests that use randomisation or personalisation to ensure that each student has a different test, can be made available over a period longer than the duration of the test to give students the opportunity to select an appropriate time when they can sit the test.
- c) Where possible, example questions of the same format as those students can expect to see in the test should be made available to students in advance.
- d) Students should be advised as to what to do if there is a problem with the test. For example, if there is a computer outage or problems with connecting to the internet during the test, students should take a screenshot or photo of the error and contact the course coordinator or test invigilator as soon as possible.
- e) Each test may begin with an honour code statement. The suggested wording for this is:
- Recognising the trust that the University and the academic staff teaching my course have placed in me in this current situation, I affirm that:*
- *I have completed all steps of the attached assessment on my own,*
  - *I have not used any unauthorised materials while completing this assessment, and*
  - *I have not given anyone else access to my assessment.*
- It is possible to deny students access to the test in the LMS unless they have acknowledged this statement.
- f) Advice about online tests and their design and implementation is available through CAD.

*Note: For additional procedures, written primarily for external invigilators, see Instructions to Examination Invigilators (available through Course Administration and Timetabling). Staff are encouraged to read and follow those instructions as appropriate to the nature and particular circumstances of the test being invigilated.*

## 6.10 Processes for dealing with plagiarism and other academic misconduct

All instances of suspected plagiarism or other academic misconduct must be dealt with under the Academic Integrity Policy for Students and/or [Student Conduct Statute](#) and their procedures.

## 6.11 A student who is repeating a course

- a) A student who is repeating a course, or who withdrew part-way through a previous offering of the course, is entitled to submit individual work done in their previous attempt at the course.
- b) At the discretion of the Head of School, in consultation with the course coordinator, a student may be permitted to carry forward marks, without having to submit work for the relevant assessment task, for specified items of assessment, and/or the achievement of some MCRs.
- c) Carrying forward marks or achievement of MCRs:

- i) should particularly be considered where a student had to withdraw from the previous offering of the course because of special personal circumstances;
  - ii) is normally only permitted where the item is similar in both offerings of the course and the student performed satisfactorily in that item in their previous attempt at the course.
- d) Even if permission to carry a mark forward is granted, the student may choose to redo the assessment item.

## 7 Feedback

Feedback on assessment assists student learning and helps them to improve their performance. Quality feedback needs to be timely and specific. Summative feedback informs students of how well they have demonstrated competence in relevant areas.

Feedback improves the transparency of assessment processes because it helps students understand their performance in relation to an assessment item.

Comprehensive and detailed feedback is an area where staff can invest a considerable amount of time, and a balance needs to be struck between supporting student learning and managing staff workloads. (See also section 2.1.2).

### 7.1 Providing feedback

- a) Feedback is provided in a number of ways, including marks and grades, model answers, comments from markers on individual student work and generic feedback to the entire class. The nature of feedback that is provided will depend on the type of assessment task, and its timing and weighting. Feedback does not need to be individualised to be effective. It should be professional and respectful.
- b) So that it can be of use for subsequent assessment items, feedback should be provided on each in-term assessment item:
  - as soon as possible, normally within *three weeks* of the date of submission. Note, for late submissions or submissions with extensions, this may not apply; and
  - in such a way that it facilitates student learning.
- c) Where a course has a final assessment item in the assessment period, feedback (including marks/grades) on as much of the in-term work as possible should be communicated to students by the start of the study period.

*Note: For further information refer to <https://intranet.wgtn.ac.nz/staff/learning-teaching/resources-support/assessment/providing-feedback>.*

#### Good practice guideline

Where full feedback cannot be provided within three weeks, the course coordinator should ensure that they communicate with students, letting them know the reason for the delay and the expected timeframe.

Before all marking is finished, it may be possible to provide partial feedback by giving general information to the class on aspects that were generally done well or badly, or to provide model answers to help students know what they should be aware of in subsequent assessments.

## 8 Marking assessment items

Marking and moderation processes must support reliable, valid, fair and transparent assessment of student work (see also Principles of assessment section 2.2)

### 8.1 Marking processes

- a) All assessment tasks must be designed and marked against criteria linked to the learning objectives of the course and not marked simply to conform to a standard distribution curve.
- b) A marking guide, rubric or matrix should normally be used to aid in the judgements made about the quality of student work. Where appropriate this should be provided to students beforehand.
- c) Marking must be consistent with any guidelines provided to students.
- d) If an individual assessment item is marked using letter grades, they must follow the general characterisations of performance given for each grade in section 17.
- e) If an assessment item is given a numerical mark, that is retained for finalising the overall course grade, this should be returned to the student, even if a letter grade is also assigned.
- f) Schools must have processes in place to ensure the security of assessment items and marks and student privacy (see the [Information Security Policy](#)).
- g) It is essential that schools take active measures to ensure markers are given adequate training, guidance and monitoring (see section 3).

*Note: If a marker suspects there are academic integrity issues in student work they should refer to University resources at the following: <https://intranet.wgtn.ac.nz/staff/learning-teaching/resources-support/assessment/academic-integrity-and-plagiarism>*

#### Good Practice guideline

The recorded marks for in-term assessment items should be made available to students so that they can check that the recorded mark is correct. Recording marks in the LMS grade centre achieves this.

### 8.2 Research projects and other large individualised items of assessment

Where individual students in a course work with different supervisors on different topics, marking processes need to balance knowledge of the student's topic and ensuring consistent standards across the cohort. In assessing such projects the following should be used:

- i) a marking guide, rubric or matrix should be used;
- ii) a student's work should be independently marked by at least two markers, one of whom may be their supervisor; and
- iii) the course coordinator is responsible for determining the final grade, unless the Head of School allocates that responsibility to the Programme Director or a school committee.



### 8.3 Moderation

Pre-marking, during-marking, and post-marking moderation ensures that the marking is reliable, consistent and fair. Moderation must be carried out as specified in the relevant Faculty Assessment and Moderation Procedures (see section 4.2 and Appendix D). The minimum university-wide requirements are set out below.

#### 8.3.1 Pre-marking and during-marking moderation

- a) The use of a marking guide is mandatory where the marking is shared between markers or undertaken by tutors.
- b) Coordinators must ensure that all those engaged in marking share the same assumptions about the meaning of the marks (letter grades or numbers) and agree on the interpretation of the marking guide. This can be achieved by processes such as:
  - calibrating against marking criteria prior to marking;
  - independently marking a small number of assignments and discussing the outcome; and
  - undertaking further checks as required to ensure consistency.

For further information see <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/learning-teaching/support/course-design/objectives/assessment>

#### 8.3.2 Post-marking moderation

- a) Especially when there are multiple markers, assessment items should be moderated (and adjusted up or down if necessary) before marks or grades are released to students.
- b) When there is a single marker, post-marking moderation can involve calibrating a sample of the first items assessed against a sample of later items.
- c) Schools must ensure that marks or grades for assessed items have been checked and authorised as correct by an appropriate person before being released to students.
- d) Except when correcting errors, or in other exceptional circumstances, and with approval from the Head of School, marks or grades may not be reduced after they have been released to students.

### 8.4 Return of marks, grades, feedback and assessed items to students

#### 8.4.1 Protection of student privacy

- a) It is a breach of privacy to publish student names and ID numbers together, either associated with the return of marks or otherwise.
- b) The return of marks, grades, individual feedback and assessed work must be managed in a way that protects student privacy. Preferably, marks should be returned individually to students, for example, through the Grade Centre in the LMS or emailed to students individually. In any published list, students must be identified only by ID number listed in numerical order. It is not adequate to print out a list in alphabetical order and simply blank out or remove the students' names.

*Note: Retention and disposal of student work is covered in section 15.1.*

**8.4.2 Return of assessment items**

- a) After it has been marked, students must be able to get access to any assessment item that they have submitted. This may be in the form of the student being handed back the original, the student viewing the original under supervision, or the student getting a copy (digital or otherwise) of the item.
- b) When an original physical assessment item is returned to a student, there should be consideration given to the integrity of the appeal process. For example, during the appeal period, students may be given a copy of their paper test script, or only permitted to view the original item under supervision. The process should take into account the weight of the assessment item.
- c) After the deadline for reconsideration (see section 14.2(f)), all physical assessment items should be returned to students at their request.

## 9 Course grades

### 9.1 Grade scales

Course coordinators may only use course grades from Table 1 in section 17, except that for courses classified as pass/fail, the grades in Table 2 are used.

**Good practice guideline: discipline-specific grade characterisations**

In addition to the general characterisations of performance given for each grade in section 17, disciplines are encouraged to articulate specific grade characterisations relevant to each level that apply to all courses in a particular major or programme.

### 9.2 Determining course grades

- a) The determination of course grades is a significant final step in the assessment process. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the principles of this Handbook are applied and that the determining of course grades is consistently carried out, fair and transparent to students.
- b) Care must be taken at every stage of entering and processing marks and grades to ensure that the data and calculations are correct. Marks and grades must be stored in a place that is accessible to School administration.
- c) Grades for a course shall be based on students' marks or grades in the assessment items for that course and combined according to the assessment scheme specified in the course outline. In exceptional circumstances this may be varied with the approval of the relevant Associate Dean.
- d) For assessment items that are assigned letter grades, then either:
  - i) those grades must be converted into marks by taking the midpoints of the corresponding grade ranges. The grade ranges and their midpoints are set out in Table 1 in section 17; or
  - ii) marks must be provided to students at the same time as the letter grades.
- e) The final mark for the course should be converted to a letter grade using Table 1 in section 17. Where appropriate, scaling (including small movements of the grade boundaries) can be applied. See section 10 and the Scaling Guidelines.
- f) If a student does not submit an assessment item (or fails to attend a test), then the course mark should be calculated using a zero for that component of the assessment.
- g) A 'K' grade should be assigned to any student who obtained a passing mark but who failed to satisfy one or more of the mandatory course requirements. (See section 5.5).

*Note: Sitting a Centrally Managed Test or reaching 40% or some other minimum level is not a mandatory course requirement unless identified as such in the course outline (see sections 5.5 and 6.1).*

### 9.3 Moderating course grades

- a) Once marking is complete, a final moderation process should be carried out as specified in the relevant Faculty Assessment and Moderation Procedures (see section 4.2 and Appendix D). The minimum university-wide requirements are set out below:
- i) The preliminary distribution of course grades should be compared with those for recent offerings of the same course or similar courses. While course grades reflect student performance in terms of the Learning Objectives, major differences in grade distribution from year to year should inform course moderation decisions.
  - ii) Moderation should involve careful consideration of the pass/fail boundary, and of the effect of any penalties that have been applied. Each student who has marginally failed the course should have their grade reviewed, taking into account their performance in the course as a whole, in order to decide whether a pass would be justified.
  - iii) In addition, boundaries between grades, especially the A/A+ boundary should be examined to ensure that the boundaries are set appropriately. Where appropriate, grade boundaries may be adjusted by one or two marks to align with gaps between groups of very similar students, but the pass/fail boundary must not be raised above 50%.
  - iv) In cases where the course grades differ considerably from any previous years (or are well outside grade expectations for new assessment tasks), consideration should be given to scaling one or more of the component assessment items, or the final grades attained over all pieces of assessment. Final grades cannot be scaled down, unless in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of both the Head of School and relevant Associate Dean. (See also section 10 for different scaling methods and criteria for their use.)
  - v) Except for the correction of errors (see section 9.6), and any grade changes in response to breaches of Academic Integrity, no course grades may be revised downwards after they have been released to students.

#### Good practice guideline

Things to check when finalising and entering grades:

- Make sure the marks belong to the right students. In particular check the results have not been transposed for students with the same surname, or for students with adjacent surnames and similar first names. The use of student ID numbers is encouraged in such circumstances as an additional check.
- Check that the assessment weights and the grade calculation follow what is stated in the course outline.
- Mismatching of student names, ID numbers and grade data can occur when sorting an Excel spreadsheet. Errors are less likely when using a filter rather than the “sort” function. After any sorting, check a sample of students to ensure that the grades are correct.

- b) Before final grades are entered into the Student Management System (Banner), the calculation process and spreadsheets must have been checked by a second person to ensure that the grades are correct.
- c) The Head of School must be provided with a brief report on what moderation has taken place and consequent changes, including any scaling. The Head of School, or their delegate, must approve the grades before they can be entered into the Student Management System (Banner).
- d) The Head of School has the authority, after consultation with the examiners, to make the final decision on any question concerning the grades.
- e) It is important that course results are available promptly in order to facilitate course planning and approvals for the following trimester, scholarship applications and graduation processes.
- f) The following records must be retained for seven years:
  - i) individual assessment results record must be readily available (but not the items themselves);
  - ii) moderation reports, including any scaling; and
  - iii) where practicable, assessment information should include any penalties that have been applied (see section 6.7) or variations to the assessment scheme approved for individual students (see section 13).

*Note: Retention and disposal of student work is covered in section 15.1.*

#### **9.4 Reporting course grades**

- a) Except as set out in (b) below, following approval (under section 9.3(c)), Schools must enter course grades for all courses into the Student Management System (Banner).
- b) Tītoko staff are responsible for entering:
  - i) the non-graded course results listed in Table 3 in section 17.2 (including aegrotat passes, degree passes and withdrawals); and
  - ii) grade changes approved under section 9.6.
- c) Course grades must be entered by the published deadline for the relevant trimester.

*Note: Information on grade entry processes may be obtained from the relevant School Office.*

#### **9.5 Provision of course results to students**

- a) Students' results must be managed in a way that ensures student privacy.
- b) Once course grades have been entered into the Student Management System (Banner), students may access their official results through Student Records. School staff should not communicate course grades to students directly.

## 9.6 Changes to grades already submitted

- a) Where a grade has been entered into the Student Management System (Banner), and been found to be incorrect, the Head of School must inform the relevant Associate Dean and the Manager, Course Administration and Timetabling using the appropriate form (available from the Course Administration and Timetabling Office).
- b) The relevant Associate Dean is responsible for approving changes that involve raising a grade.
- c) Grades may be lowered only with the permission of the Dean on the recommendation of the relevant Associate Dean. A student whose grade has been lowered may appeal to the Vice-Provost (Academic).
- d) Any decision to lower a grade should balance the integrity of grades as a statement of student achievement against any student hardship that is likely to result from the change, and should take account of:
  - i) fairness to all students in the course;
  - ii) whether the student(s) could reasonably be expected to have known that the grade was incorrect;
  - iii) how quickly the error was identified, and the student(s) informed of it;
  - iv) whether correcting the grade is likely to have significant detrimental impact on the student(s); and
  - v) the amount of change required.
- e) Where appropriate, options for temporarily withdrawing the grades can be considered in consultation with the Manager, Course Administration and Timetabling.
- f) The School must inform the affected student(s) of the change.

## 10 Scaling

### 10.1 General

- a) Scaling may be used when the grade distribution for an assessment item or for a course is not considered appropriate.
- b) Scaling of assessment marks or grades is at the discretion of the course coordinator at any time before course grades are finalised.
- c) Scaling of the results for individual assessment items or for the course must be transparent to students and documented in the course moderation report provided to the Head to School (see section 9.3) and provided when course grades are approved or used as a basis for aegrotat decisions.
- d) Prior to being released to students, marks or grades for assessment items may be scaled up or down.
- e) After being released to students, marks or grades for assessment items may only be scaled up.

### 10.2 Scaling methods

#### 10.2.1 General principles

Scaling methods must:

- follow defensible principles;
- be appropriate to the underlying problem both in terms of which marks are scaled and by how much;
- be stated clearly and objectively; and
- be fair to all students.

#### 10.2.2 Scaling method appropriate to the underlying problem

- a) If marks for one piece of assessment are too high or too low, the scaling should generally be applied to that assessment item rather than the overall course marks in order to develop an accurate profile of performance for later review (for example, in aegrotat considerations).
- b) If the problem concerns only part of the range of marks (for example, just the high marks, or just the low marks), the scaling should be focused on that range.
- c) If the problem is not clearly linked to a particular item of assessment, the overall course marks should be scaled.

#### 10.2.3 Scaling method fair to all students

- a) See the guidelines below for further information on common scaling methods. Scaling should preserve the order of students in the set of marks that the scaling is applied to; it should not reverse the order of two students, nor compress a range of marks into a single mark.

- b) Scaling should be smooth; it should not make significantly larger changes to some students than to other nearby students, and it should not make unreasonable changes to students at either end of the range. Using a mathematical formula is recommended to guard against errors.
- c) After any scaling has been carried out, the records of students at important grade boundaries should be scrutinised. In particular, the pass/fail boundary should be looked at to check that the scaled boundary is set appropriately. In some cases, it may be appropriate to re-examine scripts or assessment items of students just below the important boundaries.

#### Scaling Guidelines

The most common scaling methods are outlined below:

- a) Move each grade boundary by a small number of marks, typically to a nearby 'gap' in the marks. For example, move the C- boundary down to 47 and the C boundary to 54. Care should be taken to ensure that adjacent boundaries are not moved by very different amounts, and generally all boundaries should be moved in the same direction. This method should only be applied to the overall marks. It is recommended that boundaries not be moved by more than 5 marks or so. The C- boundary may not be moved above 50. Moving grade boundaries up should only be done in special cases.
- b) Add (or subtract) a fixed number of marks (typically 1–10) to all marks. This approach can be useful if the problem applies across the full range of marks, and there are no very low marks or very high marks. This method is appropriate for scaling overall course marks or marks for individual items of assessment, but it is not safe if there are students with very high marks or very low marks (for example, above 85 or below 20).
- c) Multiply all marks by the same factor. If there are too many high marks, then the factor should be less than 1. For example, a factor of 0.9 changes 80 to 72, but 54 is transformed into a fail, so particular attention needs to be given to the effect on students near the pass/fail boundary. Conversely, multiplying by a factor greater than 1 may be appropriate if the problem is primarily in the lower mark range, but caution must be applied as this may create unrealistic marks at the top end. For example, a factor of 1.2 changes 42 to 50, but 90 to 108.
- d) Linear transformation: This simple continuous transformation is determined by assigning particular scaled values to two different points. For example, the formula  $w = 1.5x - 25$  (where  $x$  is the original mark and  $w$  is the scaled mark) would convert 70 into 80; but keep 50 unchanged. Caution is needed here too, as a mark below 17 would give a negative scaled mark, while a mark above 86 would scale up to more than 100. Generally, that sort of effect can be prevented by a judicious choice of constants, for example, scaling 45 to 50 and keeping 100 fixed. Alternatively, a piecewise linear transformation could be used, where different linear transformations are applied to different ranges of marks (see below).
- e) Piecewise linear transformation: If there are very high or very low marks, or if the problem is primarily in the middle mark range, a more complex approach should be taken. A common example is where multiplication is used for the lower marks (where multiplication is safe) and a linear transformation (a combination of addition and multiplication) is used for the higher marks. The scaling effect is smooth throughout (if the constants are chosen appropriately) but more pronounced in the middle of the range. In the following example a mark of 0 would remain at 0, marks from 0 to 46 are scaled smoothly into a range of 0 to 50 to increase the pass rate, and then marks from



46 to 100 are scaled smoothly into a range of 50 to 100. (Note that '[mark]' means the original mark, and '[scaled]' means the value after scaling.)

$$\text{If } [\text{mark}] < 46, \text{ then } [\text{scaled}] = [\text{mark}] \times 50 / 46$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{If } [\text{mark}] \geq 46, \text{ then } [\text{scaled}] &= 100 - (100 - [\text{mark}]) \times (100 - 50) / (100 - 46) \\ &= 100 - (100 - [\text{mark}]) \times 50 / 54 \end{aligned}$$

Note that 46 could be replaced by whatever value is wanted as the new pass mark (if the intention is to reduce the pass rate, then replace 46 by some number above 50).

To implement the above scaling approach in Excel, assuming the unscaled mark is in cell G2 with the rest of the marks in column G below that and you want to scale 46 up to 50, enter this expression in cell H2:

$$=\text{if}(G2 < 46, G2 * 50 / 46, 100 - (100 - G2) * 50 / 54)$$

and then copy down the column of marks using Fill Down (highlight the entire column starting at G2 and hit Command-D).

- f) Before carrying out scaling, check students at the top and bottom of the ranked class list, and at the pass/fail point, to ensure that the method selected is achieving appropriate results. Some experimentation with different methods may be necessary.

*Note: For further advice on scaling, contact the Academic Office.*

## 11 Qualification awards: honours, merit, distinction

### 11.1 Qualifications which may be awarded with honours, merit or distinction

- a) The following types of qualifications may be awarded with honours where specified in the relevant qualification regulations:
  - i) postgraduate honours degree: a one-EFTS (120 points) degree following a bachelor's degree (for example, the BA(Hons) and BSc(Hons) degrees);
  - ii) undergraduate degree awarded with honours: a 4-EFTS (or longer) bachelor's degree that may or may not have 'honours' in the title (for example, the LLB(Hons) and BE(Hons) degrees); and
  - iii) some 240-point master's degrees.
- b) Unless otherwise specified in the qualification regulations, master's degrees may be awarded with merit or distinction.
- c) The relevant Associate Dean, after consultation with the relevant Head of School, may extend the maximum period for completing the requirements for the award of honours, merit or distinction.

### 11.2 Award of honours

#### 11.2.1 General requirements

- a) The award of honours for students in a programme must be determined by a committee established by the school or programme, except that for master's degrees awarded with honours, the final decision is made by the Associate Dean.
- b) Initially the marks or grades for each student's course are averaged (weighted by the points values), but the mechanical average is only a starting point. The class of honours to be awarded shall be assessed on the candidate's overall performance. The assessment to be made is of the candidate's command of the subject displayed over a range of material and tasks appropriate to the time specified for the programme.
- c) If individual course marks are easily available, those should be used; otherwise, the calculation must use the midpoint for each course grade as set out in section 17.1. The same approach must be used for all students in a cohort.

#### Good practice guideline

It would be very unusual and need a strong justification to award a class of honours below the calculated average if students have their individual course grades and can calculate it.

#### 11.2.2 Undergraduate degrees awarded with Honours

This section applies to BE(Hons) and LLB(Hons).

The following classes of honours may be awarded: First Class, Second Class (first division) and Second Class (second division) (see section 17.3(b)).

**Bachelor of Engineering with Honours**

- a) The award of honours to candidates completing the BE(Hons) degree is determined by the Faculty of Engineering Committee of Examiners, comprising all academic staff teaching in the programme.
- b) The award of honours is made on the basis of performance in 300- and 400-level courses from the BE(Hons) schedule.

**Bachelor of Laws with Honours**

- a) The award of honours to candidates completing the LLB(Hons) degree is determined by the Law Faculty Research and Postgraduate Committee, taking into account course marks decided at the relevant meetings of examiners.
- b) The award of honours is made on the basis of performance in 300-, 400- and 500-level courses.

*Note: refer to the LLB(Hons) Regulations.*

**11.2.3 Postgraduate Honours degrees**

This section applies to the following degrees: BA(Hons), BBmedSc(Hons), BCom(Hons), BEd(Hons), BMus(Hons), BSc(Hons) and BTM(Hons).

- a) The following classes of honours may be awarded: First Class, Second Class (first division), Second Class (second division), and Third Class (or pass) (see section 17.3(b)).
- b) The award of honours is determined by the School committee of examiners.
- c) To graduate with a postgraduate honours degree, a student needs to pass at least 120 points. Where a student has failed a course in the degree, the overall class of honours will normally be based on all courses taken for the qualification, including the failed course(s). This may be varied where the failure was due to special personal circumstances.
- d) Where an honours student has substituted one or more courses from another programme, the coordinator of the substitute course (or the relevant Head of School) should be invited to participate in the meeting of honours examiners. The coordinator of the substitute course should also communicate the mark for that course in writing to the director of the student's Honours programme (or the relevant Head of School).

**11.2.4 Master's degrees awarded with honours**

This section applies to master's degrees where the relevant qualification regulations include provision for the award of honours.

*Note: MBmedSc and MSc are currently the only master's degrees of this type.*

- a) The following classes of honours may be awarded: First Class, Second Class (first division) and Second Class (second division) (see section 17.3(b)).
- b) The award of honours is determined by the Associate Dean following a recommendation by a committee established by the school or programme.
- c) Honours may not be awarded where a thesis has been resubmitted.

### 11.3 Award of distinction or merit

This section applies to all qualifications where there is provision for the award of distinction or merit (see section 17.3(a)).

- a) The decision to award distinction or merit is made by the Dean (or delegate) on the advice of the appropriate School or Faculty committee.
- b) Unless otherwise specified in the relevant qualification regulations, the award of distinction or merit should be assessed on the basis of the candidate's overall performance in the programme. If individual course marks are easily available, those should be used; otherwise, the calculation must use the midpoint for each course grade as set out in section 17.1. The same approach must be used for all students in a cohort.
- c) The award should not be determined by a mechanical averaging of marks or grades, though it should be supported by the course grades awarded by individual examiners.
- d) Neither distinction nor merit may be awarded where a thesis has been resubmitted.
- e) In the case of the MEd, neither distinction nor merit may be awarded where a candidate has failed a course.

## 12 External assessment of honours and taught master's programmes

- a) External assessment provides independent comment on the appropriateness of the academic content of the courses in a programme, compared with national and international standards.
- b) At least every three years, Heads of School must appoint assessors for honours and coursework master's programmes in their school. The assessor(s) should be someone of scholarly standing in the discipline or subject area (though not a teacher in the programme being assessed). This includes people occupying academic positions in universities other than Te Herenga Waka–Victoria University of Wellington but could also include people outside universities with expertise in the subject area. In special circumstances, a person outside New Zealand may be appointed.
- c) The external assessor will be asked to provide the Head of School responsible for the programme with a written report addressing:
  - the overall alignment of assessment practice with the principles of assessment (section 2);
  - the appropriateness of the academic content of the courses in the programme compared with national and international standards;
  - the appropriateness of the learning objectives for the nature of the courses and the programme;
  - the appropriateness of the assigned pieces of assessment (including any large final test) for the course learning objectives and for the programme learning objectives;
  - the fairness, consistency and reliability of the process of assessment and grading of the candidates, and the appropriateness of the level of grades awarded; and
  - identification of any good practice in relation to teaching and assessment processes.
- d) The Head of School, either directly or through a delegate, must follow up on any issues that need to be addressed.
- e) Faculties must maintain a record of all external assessment reports. The Dean may require a brief overview of each report to be provided by the Head of School to the Faculty Board or the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee.

## 13 Alternative provisions for special personal circumstances

### 13.1 General Principles

- a) Where a student's special personal circumstances are such that the normal assessment process would be unfair for, or would disadvantage, that student, it is appropriate for some feasible accommodations to be made. In accommodating special personal circumstances, the magnitude of the variation to the course assessment scheme needs to be balanced against the nature of the circumstances and the extent to which the student could have been expected to plan accordingly. Such variations should not compromise academic standards, the essential nature of the course, or what are deemed to be essential skills or knowledge. Care should be taken to ensure that the student involved is not unfairly advantaged over other students in the course.
- b) Special personal circumstances include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - i) an impairment assessed by Disability Services under the [Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments Policy](#);
  - ii) mental or physical illness or injury;
  - iii) violence;
  - iv) sexual harm;
  - v) technological failure while completing an assessment item;
  - vi) tangihanga, funeral, bereavement and/or circumstances involving the health or wellbeing of a relative or close friend;
  - vii) compulsory attendance at court;
  - viii) national or international representative commitments;
  - ix) significant cultural commitments;
  - x) activities in which the student is representing the University; or
  - xi) sudden hardship or trauma.
- c) Extensions and other support should be used where feasible to allow a student affected by such circumstances to complete the assessments as stated in the course outline (see section 6.1). Where this approach is not appropriate or sufficient, variations to the course assessment as set out below may be considered.

### 13.2 Supporting documentation

- a) Acceptable documentation providing evidence of the student's special circumstances:
  - i) may be required, where appropriate, to support a request for any of the variations to the course assessment set out in section 13.3;
  - ii) sensitivity needs to be applied when requesting supporting documentation, with consideration given to the nature of the documentation sought and the special circumstances of the student; and

- iii) is required for any application for an aegrotat pass (see section 13.5 and Appendix C: Aegrotat Procedure). Where the application involves a student's health, the supporting documentation must be provided by a registered health professional and address the degree of impairment, the dates and time period of the impairment.

*Note: See section 6.6.2 for documentation requirements for extensions.*

- b) Documentation should be contemporaneous with the circumstances.
- c) The student's personal privacy must be respected, and the details of their special circumstances may only be disclosed as required to process, or consider appropriate, accommodations. Usually it is sufficient for the documentation to be sighted by the relevant staff member, who should explain the situation to other staff as required, respecting personal privacy.
- d) Where documentation is required, it should be submitted in one of the following ways:
  - i) as part of an application for an aegrotat pass;
  - ii) via a relevant student support advisor such as those from Tītoko, Āwhina and International Student Experience who will then liaise with the relevant School or relevant Associate Dean;
  - iii) to Disability Services, for students with impairments who are registered with Disability Services. Disability Services will then liaise with the relevant School or relevant Associate Dean;
  - iv) to the Head of School who may decide whether this is to go the School office, the course coordinator, or another identified staff member, and advise students accordingly in course outlines;
  - v) to the relevant Associate Dean if neither (i) to (iii) applies and the student does not want the details of their situation shared with the School. The relevant Associate Dean will then liaise with the School.
- e) Schools must not retain supporting documentation beyond the date set out in section 15 for the relevant trimester.
- f) Under the Privacy Act 2020, students are entitled to request access to their personal information held by the University. This includes any medical and other information provided as part of an aegrotat, extension, or other variation to assessment based on special personal circumstances. Any such requests should be referred to the University's Privacy Officer ([privacy@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:privacy@vuw.ac.nz)).

### **13.3 Variations to assessment approved at School or Faculty level**

#### **13.3.1 Modifying the administration of an assessment item**

Where Disability Services recommends a variation in the administration of an assessment item, the Examinations Team (in the case of a Centrally Managed Test), or the course coordinator (in the case of other assessment) or should normally follow the recommendation. Where the course coordinator disagrees with the recommendation, they must consult their Head of School.

Common variations include providing a reader/writer, alternative room or rest periods, or allowing extra time.

### 13.3.2 Offering alternative assessment items

- a) The Head of School may give approval for an alternative item of assessment to be developed for an individual student when:
  - i) the particular format of an assessment item is impractical for a student with an impairment or special personal circumstances;
  - ii) the student's performance in the assessment item has been impaired; or
  - iii) the student has missed an assessment under test conditions due to special personal circumstances.
- b) Every effort should be made to ensure the assessment criteria and standards are consistent with those applied to other students.
- c) Where there is more than one student requiring alternative assessment, course coordinators may use the same alternative assessment activity for reasons of manageability.

*Note: A student who withdraws and re-enrols in a subsequent offering of the course is entitled to carry forward marks for some assessment items and/or achievement of mandatory course requirements – see section 6.11.*

### 13.3.3 Waiving or re-weighting of assessment items

Where justified by special personal circumstances, the course coordinator, with the approval of the Head of School, may reallocate up to 30% of the course assessment by reweighting assessment items. Any reweighting should take into consideration the coverage of Course Learning Objectives.

#### **Good practice guideline: reweighting assessments**

Reweighting involves reducing the amount one (or more) assessment contributes to the overall course grade and increasing the contribution of other assessments.

#### **Example 1**

Course Assessment:

- Item 1: 15%
- Item 2: 35%
- Item 3: 50%

If a student had special circumstances affecting assessment item 3, the weighting for that could be reduced by 30% and reallocated to the other assessments in an appropriate way to achieve a fair outcome, eg:

- |               |    |               |
|---------------|----|---------------|
| • Item 1: 30% | OR | • Item 1: 20% |
| • Item 2: 50% |    | • Item 2: 60% |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                 |                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 3: 20%</li> </ul> <p><b>Example 2</b></p> <p>Course Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 1: 20%</li> <li>• Item 2: 25%</li> <li>• Item 3: 25%</li> <li>• Item 4: 30%</li> </ul> <p>If a student had special circumstances that affected assessment item 2, reweighting could be eg:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 3: 20%</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 1: 25%</li> <li>• Item 2: 0%</li> <li>• Item 3: 30%</li> <li>• Item 4: 45%</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>OR</p>                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 1: 20%</li> <li>• Item 2: 0%</li> <li>• Item 3: 25%</li> <li>• Item 4: 55%</li> </ul> |

**13.3.4 Resubmission of an assessment item**

In special circumstances, where there is no formal School or course policy on resubmissions (see section 6.5), the Head of School, on the recommendation of the course coordinator, may permit an individual student to withdraw an assessment item and resubmit it.

**13.3.5 Changing the assessment requirements**

In special circumstances, and where the above provisions alone do not satisfactorily allow a student to meet the course requirements, the relevant Associate Dean, in consultation with the course coordinator and the Head of School, may approve a variation to the course assessment.

**13.3.6 Tests**

Resit tests, where students are given the opportunity in a formal test setting to repeat a test for a failed course, are not offered at Te Herenga Waka–Victoria University of Wellington. However, this does not preclude a School, with approval of the relevant Associate Dean, from offering an alternative assessment to individual students as set out in section 13.3.2.

### 13.4 Academic disadvantage

- a) A student who believes that their grade for a course or award for a qualification was adversely affected by particular circumstances not satisfactorily addressed by the provisions of section 13.1-13.3 should discuss their situation with the course coordinator, the relevant Programme Director or relevant Associate Dean. This person may request written details of the alleged academic disadvantage and/or refer the matter to the appropriate staff member(s). In many cases, a satisfactory outcome can be achieved without formal action being required. If not, then the procedures in the Academic Grievance Policy are applicable.
- b) Members of the relevant Faculty must respond to a student's claim of academic disadvantage and should make all reasonable efforts to try to resolve the matter within the Faculty, within a reasonable time frame. A written summary of the resolution should be provided to the student.

*Note: The student should be informed that they may, at any time, contact any of the following for advice or support: [student.interest@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:student.interest@vuw.ac.nz), the VUWSA Advocates [advocate@vuwsa.org.nz](mailto:advocate@vuwsa.org.nz) or the Academic Office.*

### 13.5 Aegrotat pass

An aegrotat should be used only in cases of last resort when it is not feasible to adequately accommodate the student's circumstances by means of extensions (see section 6.6), re-weighting, alternative assessments, or any of the other provisions in section 13.3.

*Note: refer to Appendix C Aegrotat Procedure.*

#### 13.5.1 General requirements

- a) A student may apply for an aegrotat pass if they have been prevented from satisfactorily completing assessment items due in the final three teaching weeks of the course (or later) due to special personal circumstances.
- b) The relevant Associate Dean may approve an aegrotat pass (grade G), offer a late withdrawal or confirm a failing grade in a course within their Faculty based on the criteria set out in sections 13.3.2 – 13.3.6.
- c) If a student submits an application for an aegrotat pass but achieves a passing grade based on completed assessment, the student is to be offered the option of having their passing grade converted to a "G" pass.
- d) An aegrotat pass counts as a pass in all respects; hence, it will be accepted for meeting major or degree requirements, as well as satisfying any prerequisite requirement.
- e) Aegrotat passes are not available for some courses as stated in the relevant qualification regulations.
- f) Prior to the formal decision being made, under no circumstances should a staff member indicate to a student that they will gain an aegrotat pass.

### 13.5.2 Eligible assessment items

An aegrotat application can be considered when special circumstances have affected one or more assessment items:

- i) due in the final three teaching weeks of the course or later;
- ii) that are in total worth more than 30% of the final mark; and
- iii) for which it is not feasible to adequately accommodate the student's circumstances by means of extensions (see section 6.6), reweighting, alternative assessments, or any of the other provisions in section 13.3.

### 13.5.3 The student's circumstances

- a) The student must have been affected by special personal circumstances beyond the applicant's control, which have:
  - i) prevented them from sitting or completing a test or other eligible assessment item; or
  - ii) seriously impaired their performance in an eligible assessment item.
- b) A statement from a registered health professional or other acceptable evidence of the student's impairment must be provided.
- c) Any student who advises an examiner or other staff that they are medically unfit to sit a Centrally Managed Test must be referred to the Examinations Management Team for consideration of options, including sitting in a separate room, or referral to Mauri Ora.

### 13.5.4 Achievement in the course

- a) The applicant must have completed sufficient work to a standard that justifies a pass. Normally, before an aegrotat pass can be approved, the student should have submitted at least 30% of the course assessment and have demonstrated achievement against the course learning objectives.
- b) When making a decision on an aegrotat application, the relevant Associate Dean will take into account information provided by:
  - i) the course coordinator, which must include:
    - details of the student's progress in the course, including the amount of assessment the student has completed within the course and the marks achieved;
    - a grade spreadsheet showing the achievement of the entire class or a cohort of students who were performing at a similar level to the applicant in assessment items other than the affected assessment(s);
    - the applicant's achievement against the course learning objectives;
    - comments to assist interpretation, such as any extensions or alternative assessment provided, and identifying any assessment items that are particularly helpful as an indicator of students' understanding of the course material, and

- a recommendation as to whether, given there are special circumstances, a pass is clearly justified.
- ii) the Head of School must review the information provided by the course coordinator and may comment on the recommendation and add any relevant information.

### **13.5.5 Appeals**

A student whose application for an aegrotat pass was declined may appeal to the Vice-Provost (Academic) (see Appendix C Aegrotat Procedure).

## 14 Reconsiderations and appeals

### 14.1 General

It is important that students have the opportunity to query any assessment result and for any issues they raise to be given due consideration.

Staff may consult the Academic Office on process and possible remedies.

*Note: At any point, the student may contact the VUWSA advocates for advice and support [advocate@vuwsa.org.nz](mailto:advocate@vuwsa.org.nz)*

### 14.2 Reconsideration of individual items of assessment

- a) A student who considers that the mark (or grade) awarded for any particular item of assessment (including a test) is incorrect, or that they deserve a higher mark, should consult the course coordinator without delay, and should articulate the basis for their concern in relation to the assessment criteria and the feedback provided on their work. The coordinator should respond to any points raised with reference to the marking scheme used for that item but is not required to re-mark the work.
- b) If the student does not feel able to discuss the matter directly with the course coordinator, or if they consider that the matter has not been resolved, they should contact the relevant Programme Director, Head of School, or relevant Associate Dean.
- c) If the discussion indicates that the mark or grade should be increased, the course coordinator will amend the mark or grade for that item of assessment as appropriate.
- d) If the discussion highlights an issue that may have affected marks or grades of other students, an appropriate way of addressing any disadvantage should be determined and affected students must be informed. The Head of School and/or relevant Associate Dean must be consulted if significant changes are required. Where appropriate, the class representative and/or Student Representation Coordinator should be consulted.
- e) Other than in cases of incorrect data entry or calculation, if it is concluded after reconsideration that a lower grade should have been awarded, the first grade determined for the student must stand.
- f) Any requests for work to be reconsidered must normally be made within 10 working days of the marked work being made available to the student. This period may be extended by the Head of School or relevant Associate Dean.

### 14.3 Correction of course grades

- a) A student who considers that their course grade has been calculated incorrectly should, without delay, consult the course coordinator.
- b) If, after considering the points raised by the student, the course coordinator decides the course grade should be changed, they must follow the process set out in section 9.6 for changing a grade that has already been submitted to the Student Management System (Banner).

## 14.4 Appeals

- a) A student not satisfied with the outcome of a reconsideration application or other assessment decision by a course coordinator may appeal to the Head of School.

*Note: See section 3.1.12 regarding conflict of responsibilities.*

- b) If satisfied that there is a case to answer, the Head of School should:

- i) if the issues relate to the way the work was marked, arrange for the item in question to be marked independently by a qualified academic staff member (normally at this University); or

*Note: if the work has already been independently marked by two qualified academic staff members, the work, together with the comments from the two markers is normally sent to a reviewer instead.*

- ii) if the issues relate to other aspects of the course assessment and its implementation, consult the relevant Associate Dean or Academic Office for advice.

- c) The Head of School will then make a decision on the appeal.

- d) The Head of School's decision may be appealed to the relevant Associate Dean. The relevant Associate Dean will review the case and work with the Head of School and student to reach a final decision.

*Note: Where a student is unsatisfied with the outcome of the process, the student can refer to the Academic Grievance Policy.*

*The student can at any time, contact any of the following for advice or support: [Student Interest and Conflict Resolution Advisor](#), or the VUWSA Advocates [advocate@VUWSA.org.nz](mailto:advocate@VUWSA.org.nz).*

## 15 Retention and disposal of student work and documentation of special personal circumstances

### 15.1 Student work

- a) Student work submitted digitally and physical work that has not been returned to the student must be retained until the following dates:
- 30 September for Trimester 1 courses
  - 28 February for Trimester 2 courses
  - 31 May for Trimester 3 courses
- b) As soon as practical the student's digital work must be deleted, and the physical work destroyed or returned to the student except that:
- i) work may be retained longer where required for external accreditation or similar purposes, but the student should be informed of this. The work should be returned to the student, destroyed or deleted when it is no longer needed; and
  - ii) an individual staff member or School may only retain student work with the student's explicit written permission;  
*Note 1: Student permission for the School or supervisor to retain work submitted for a research project or dissertation may be routinely sought at the beginning of the course.*  
*Note 2: The retention of theses is covered in the Master's Thesis Regulations and the Doctoral Regulations: for PhD and other Doctorates with Theses.*
  - iii) with the student's explicit written permission, their work may be used by the University in publicity material.

### 15.2 Documentation of special personal circumstances

Where a student has provided documentation relating to their personal circumstances to support an extension or any of the provisions in section 13.3, this must be disposed of by the dates set out in section 15.1 for the relevant trimester.

*Note: Documentation forming part of an application for an aegrotat pass is retained for longer (see Appendix C: Aegrotat Procedure).*

## 16 Degree passes (formerly “compensation passes”)

### 16.1 General criteria

- a) A degree pass may be awarded by a Faculty to a candidate, who has a good overall performance in their degree, but who has failed a course needed to complete a bachelor’s degree.
- b) Unless specified otherwise in Appendix D: Faculty-Specific Degree Pass Procedures, a degree pass may be awarded to a student in any bachelor’s degree or a conjoint degree programme if the following eligibility criteria are met:
  - i) the failure occurred in the final year of the candidate’s programme;
  - ii) the failed course was worth no more than 20 points;
  - iii) the grade for the failed course was a D or a K;
  - iv) the failure was not due to academic misconduct; and
  - v) the candidate obtained an average of B- or better in the other courses taken for that qualification over the preceding 12 months or in their overall performance.
- c) The decision maker(s) will take into account, among other things, the extent and level of the failure in the final year, the total load attempted in the final year, the total period of study for the degree and the student’s performance in the degree programme as a whole.
- d) Only one ‘degree pass’ can be granted for a conjoint degrees programme.

### 16.2 What is a degree pass?

- a) If a student is awarded a degree pass, the grade for the failed course will not be changed in the student’s record. The points required to complete the degree will be recorded as credit at a specified level with an L grade; the subject and course code may be specified.
- b) A degree pass will be accepted as meeting major, specialisation or compulsory degree requirements.
- c) A degree pass will not be accepted for prerequisite purposes, nor shall a degree pass be credited to any qualification other than that for which the pass was awarded.

### 16.3 Degree pass process

- a) Unless specified otherwise in Appendix D: Faculty-Specific Degree Pass Procedures, decisions are made by the relevant Associate Dean in consultation with the Head of School of the student’s major.
- b) No application is necessary, although candidates who think they meet the criteria may draw their case to the attention of their Student Success Adviser.

*Note: see Appendix D: Faculty-Specific Degree Pass Procedures.*



## 17 Grades, GPA calculations and overall qualification results

*Note: Te Herenga Waka–Victoria University of Wellington’s GPA values and calculations may differ to those used at other New Zealand and overseas universities.*

### 17.1 Standard course grade ranges and indicative characterisations

a) The grades listed below:

- must be used for course grades determined by schools in accordance with section 9;
- may be used for individual assessments within courses (*see* section 8); and
- must be used for master’s theses (see the [Master’s Thesis Regulations](#)).

b) Marks should normally be rounded to the nearest interger using standard rounding, so marks ending in .50 or above are rounded up while marks ending with a number below .50 are rounded down.

*Table 1*

| Pass/fail | Grade | Grade Point<br>(for course<br>grades only) | Normal range<br>(after<br>rounding)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Midpoint | Indicative characterisation                         |
|-----------|-------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Pass      | A+    | 9                                          | 90%–100%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 95       | Outstanding performance                             |
|           | A     | 8                                          | 85%–89%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 87       | Excellent performance                               |
|           | A-    | 7                                          | 80%–84%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 82       | Excellent performance in most respects              |
|           | B+    | 6                                          | 75%–79%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 77       | Very good performance                               |
|           | B     | 5                                          | 70%–74%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 72       | Good performance                                    |
|           | B-    | 4                                          | 65%–69%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 67       | Good performance overall, but some weaknesses       |
|           | C+    | 3                                          | 60%–64%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 62       | Satisfactory to good performance                    |
|           | C     | 2                                          | 55%–59%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 57       | Satisfactory performance                            |
|           | C-    | 1                                          | 50%–54%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 52       | Adequate evidence of learning                       |
| Fail      | D     | 0                                          | 40%–49%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 45       | Poor performance overall, some evidence of learning |
|           | E     | 0                                          | 0–39%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 20       | Well below the standard required                    |
|           | K     | 0                                          | Fail due to not satisfying mandatory course requirements, even though numerical course mark at pass level or above. A student whose course mark is below 50 should be given a D (40–49) or E (0–39), regardless of whether they met the mandatory course requirements. |          |                                                     |

## 17.2 Other course grades

In addition to the grades listed above, the following ungraded course grades may be used:

- a) Grades that may be awarded by the course coordinator where the course is set up as pass/fail:

*Table 2*

| Pass/fail | Grade | Grade Point | Indicative characterisation                         |
|-----------|-------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Pass      | P     | None        | Overall pass (for a course classified as Pass/Fail) |
| Fail      | F     | 0           | Fail (for a course classified as Pass/Fail course)  |

- b) Grades that may be entered by Titoko staff:

*Table 3*

| Grade    |                                                                                                                          | Grade Point |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Pass     |                                                                                                                          |             |
| G        | Ungraded pass                                                                                                            | None        |
| J        | Pass in recognition of prior learning                                                                                    | None        |
| L        | Degree pass                                                                                                              | None        |
| Non-pass |                                                                                                                          |             |
| GP       | Grade pending—usually associated with an aegrotat application. The final grade is entered when a decision has been made. | None        |
| U        | Late withdrawal approved by Dean/Associate Dean                                                                          | None        |
| WD       | Withdrawal during permitted period                                                                                       | None        |

*Note: An explanation of course grades is also provided on the University website:*

<http://www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades>

## 17.3 Overall qualification results

Where provided for in the relevant qualification regulations, an overall qualification result may be awarded.

- a) For qualifications that can be awarded with distinction or merit:

Table 4

| Distinction/ Merit |                       | Overall standard of work |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| S                  | Pass with Distinction | A+ or A                  |
| T                  | Pass with Merit       | A- or B+                 |
| P                  | Pass                  | B to C-                  |
| F                  | Fail                  | D or E                   |

b) For qualifications that can be awarded with honours:

Table 5

| Honours |                                        | Overall standard of work |
|---------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1       | First Class Honours                    | A- or above              |
| 2(1)    | Second Class Honours (first division)  | B+ or high B             |
| 2(2)    | Second Class Honours (second division) | low B or B-              |
| 3       | Third Class Honours                    | C-, C, C+                |
| F       | Fail                                   | D or E                   |

#### 17.4 Historical grades

The following course grades are no longer in use, but may appear on student records:

Table 6

|    |                                                                        |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| B1 | Pass (68-74%) used from mid 1960s until 1991                           |
| B2 | Pass (60-67%) used from mid 1960s until 1991                           |
| H  | Overall pass (for some courses classified as Pass/Fail)                |
| M  | Overall pass with merit (used only for some teacher education courses) |

|    |                                                                                             |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Q  | Fail due to not satisfying mandatory course requirements, regardless of overall course mark |
| R  | Did not sit final examination                                                               |
| V  | Withdrawal without Dean's permission                                                        |
| WX | Withdrawal from assessment                                                                  |
| X  | Course cross-credited                                                                       |
| Y  | Exempt                                                                                      |
| Z  | Special pass                                                                                |

### 17.5 Grade point average (GPA) calculations

- a) A grade point average for a set of Te Herenga Waka–Victoria University of Wellington courses is calculated by assigning numbers to grades as set out in section 17.1 and multiplying by points values and adding, and then dividing the sum by the total number of points for those courses, i.e.

$$GPA = \frac{\sum_{\text{relevant courses}}(\text{points} \times \text{grade point})}{\sum_{\text{relevant courses}} \text{points}}$$

Example: A+ in a 20-point course, and B- in a 15-point course, gives

$$(9 \times 20 + 4 \times 15) / (20+15) = 240/35 = 6.9 \text{ (1dp)}$$

#### Good practice guidelines

If a student has failed a course several times, or passed a course previously failed, or passed a particular course more than once, then these guidelines could be followed in deciding which grades should be included in the calculation of their grade average:

- If the intention is to measure the student's overall performance, then all grades (both passes and fails) at Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington should be included in the calculation.
- If the intention is to measure the student's attained level of performance in a particular subset of courses (for example, for admission into Part 2 of a programme, an Honours programme or a limited-entry course or programme), then only the highest grade should be included for repeated courses.

## **APPENDICES**

The procedures provided in the appendices are approved as separate policy documents sitting under the Assessment Handbook.

## Appendix A: Te Reo Māori for Assessment Procedure

*This new Procedure, which will give effect to section 6.3 of the Assessment Handbook, is currently being developed.*

*Meanwhile, please refer to [the Use of Te Reo Māori for Assessment Policy](#).*

*The new Procedure will be based on the provisions in this Policy, modified to reflect the incorporation of some material into the Assessment Handbook section 6.3, the allocation of responsibilities in the context of the establishment of Tītoko, and the findings of the Tiriti o Waitangi Self-Review Report.*

*Advice may be sought from Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Mātauranga Māori).*

## Appendix B: Centrally Managed Paper-based Test Procedures

*Note: “Centrally Managed Tests” were previously known as “examinations”.*

### 1. Purpose

These procedures describe the processes and actions required to administer paper-based Centrally Managed Tests, and support sections 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 of the Assessment Handbook.

### 2. Application of these Procedures

These procedures apply to staff members and students.

These procedures apply to paper-based Centrally Managed Tests. Procedures for digital managed tests may differ.

### 3. Preparation of Centrally Managed Test papers

a) Preparation of the Centrally Managed Test paper for a course is the responsibility of the course coordinator. The paper must be:

- i) prepared using the current template provided by the Examinations Management Team and according to the specifications set out below; and
- ii) delivered to the Examinations Management Team for printing by the deadlines advised.

b) Each Centrally Managed Test paper should be accompanied by an Examiner’s Certificate issued by the Examinations Management Team and signed by the course coordinator and an academic colleague, certifying that the paper is correct and ready for printing. The course coordinator and the academic colleague are jointly responsible for careful checking of the Centrally Managed Test paper. Both the content and presentation of the final version of the paper must be verified as correct.

### 4. Format

a) All Centrally Managed Test papers, including appendices or attachments, must normally be of A4 size with the University logo appearing in the header on the first page. All pages must be numbered following the format “Page 1 of x” and the course code must appear in the footer of each page. The end of the paper (i.e. after the last question) shall be indicated by a row of asterisks.

b) Centrally Managed Test papers and any additional material that accompanies the paper must be electronically submitted to the Examinations Management Team by the deadline advised.

c) The following information must be stated clearly in each Centrally Managed Test paper:

- i) the correct course code, title, assessment period (ie. trimester), year and scheduled date;
- ii) the duration (two or three hours);
- iii) clear instructions: it is imperative that how many and which questions the student needs to answer is clear;

- iv) whether it is ‘open book’, ‘closed book’ or whether some materials are permitted;
  - v) any calculator requirements, using the statement included in the Centrally Managed Test paper template;
  - vi) the allocation of marks to each question;
  - vii) correct question and page numbering; and
  - viii) any special conditions, such as the inclusion of compulsory questions and/or sections of the course, or the achievement of a defined standard in any question or section of the paper.
- d) A Centrally Managed Test can be ‘open book’ or ‘closed book’.
- i) If a Centrally Managed Test is defined as ‘open book’, students may bring with them any notes, material or resources (for example, dictionaries) they choose, provided they are not electronic. Calculators are permitted, but laptops, electronic notebooks, iPads, smartwatches, etc. are not permitted. Mobile phones are not permitted.
  - ii) If a Centrally Managed Test is defined as ‘closed book’, students will not be permitted to bring any material or resources not specified on the test paper. The only exception to this is non-electronic, English/foreign language dictionaries for speakers of English as a foreign language with written authorisation from the course coordinator.
  - iii) If the course coordinator wishes to permit students to bring limited materials or resources into the assessment room (for example, Acts of Parliament, statistical tables), they must designate the Centrally Managed Test as ‘closed book’ and specify what is permitted in the instructions at the front of the test paper. This includes electronic devices.
- e) Any part of the Centrally Managed Test paper that is to be handed in for marking (for example, multi-choice answer-sheets) must carry the course code and include a space at the top of each page for the candidate’s student number. (Such items are printed separately.)
- f) At the end of a Centrally Managed Test, the answer papers are to be delivered to the Examinations Management Team.
- g) The security of Centrally Managed Test answer papers must be maintained at all times.

## 5. Errors in a managed test paper

Any error that is detected in a Centrally Managed Test paper before the assessment commences should be corrected by the course coordinator and/or the Examinations Management Team. If it is not feasible to reprint the paper, they should arrange for an announcement to be made in each room where students are sitting the test and for a notice to be displayed clearly at the front of each room.

Where an error is detected while a Centrally Managed Test is in progress it is usually not feasible to reliably communicate the correction to all students across all locations,



and to avoid disrupting other students, so the error must normally be addressed in the marking process.

In the event of a serious error requiring an adjustment to the specified mark allocation, the course examiner should consult the relevant Associate Dean and the Manager, Course Administration and Timetabling on any consequential remedial action.

## **6. Communication of Centrally Managed Test paper content**

- a) The course coordinator (or examiner) shall decide what prior information regarding the content of a Centrally Managed Test paper will be given to candidates. All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that all students registered in the course receive the same information. It would be acceptable to do this by making an announcement in lectures or tutorials during the last week of classes, provided that a copy of the same information is posted on the course noticeboard and/or the learning management system (Nuku).
- b) Staff should avoid setting the same questions as those used in previous years where that might give some students a significant advantage.

## **7. Electronic calculators and communications equipment**

- a) The use of electronic calculators may be authorised in Centrally Managed Tests. Any such authorisation, and any restriction on the types of device to be used, must be stated in the course outline and included in the instructions at the beginning of the Centrally Managed Test paper.
- b) All such devices may be subject to scrutiny and the clearing of memory and stored information. They will be checked by invigilators at the beginning of the Centrally Managed Test.
- c) Candidates sitting a Centrally Managed Test away from the University must secure approval for the particular make and model of the device that is proposed to be used. An authorisation certificate, obtainable from the Examinations Management Team, must be taken to the Centrally Managed Test on the day and produced on request.
- d) During any Centrally Managed Test, no candidate may have in their possession any equipment (such as a mobile phone, smart watch or wireless earbuds) that could be used to communicate with any person or device outside the room. No candidate may communicate with any other candidate inside the room.

## **8. Foreign language/English dictionaries**

- a) Unless prohibited in the instructions on the Centrally Managed Test paper, students whose first language is not English may use an English/foreign language dictionary (but not an English-only dictionary) in any Centrally Managed Test. Electronic dictionaries are not permitted.
- b) Each student wishing to take an English/foreign language dictionary into the room where they are sitting a Centrally Managed Test must present at the beginning of the test written authorisation from the course coordinator.

**9. Role of course coordinators during Centrally Managed Tests**

- a) In order to deal with any questions needing clarification, it is important that course coordinators be available at the University or contactable by mobile phone during Centrally Managed Tests for which they are responsible. Where feasible, it is recommended that course coordinators be present in the assessment room for the first 15–30 minutes of the Centrally Managed Test.
- b) Any course coordinator who is unable to be available during a Centrally Managed Test (for example, through being on conference leave or on research and study leave) should arrange for a colleague who is familiar with the test paper to be present on campus or be available on call, and should advise the Examinations Management Team accordingly.

**10. Examination Rules**

- a) Examination Rules detailing what students must and must not do when sitting a Centrally Managed Test must be made easily accessible to students prior to any Centrally Managed Test.
- b) Examination Rules are reviewed by the Manager, Course Administration and Timetabling and approved by the Vice-Provost (Academic).

**11. Special arrangements for individual students**

All decisions on special arrangements are made by Disability Services.

**12. Late arrival at a Centrally Managed Test**

- a) Arrival during the first 10 minutes: Any candidate who arrives after the start but during the first 10 minutes of a Centrally Managed Test will be permitted by the invigilator to sit in the scheduled room, provided that can be arranged without causing serious disruption to other students. No extra time will be allowed for the test.
- b) Arrival before the mid-point: Any candidate who arrives after the first 10 minutes should report to the Examinations Control Room for alternative arrangements.
- c) Arrival after the mid-point: Any candidate who arrives after the mid-point (including after the test has finished) should contact the Examinations Management Team immediately. Arrangements will be made for them to sit the test in a different room and/or different time.

**13. Unable to attend a Centrally Managed Test or require alternative test facilities**

A candidate who is prevented by special circumstances beyond their control from attending a Centrally Managed Test at the scheduled time and place, or who requires alternative test facilities, should get in touch as early as possible with the Examinations Management Team or with a member of the Student Counselling Service, Student Health Service or Disability Services to discuss their situation.

Options include:

- arranging to sit the Centrally Managed Test in a separate room or in alternative test facilities

- arranging to sit the Centrally Managed Test at a different time or different place
- applying for consideration under the aegrotat provisions.

*See section 13 of the Assessment Handbook for information on alternative provisions based on special personal circumstances.*

#### 14. Centrally Managed Tests at other locations or times

- All candidates are expected to present themselves for assessment at the scheduled time and place. However, in exceptional circumstances a candidate may apply to the Examinations Management Team to sit a Centrally Managed Test at another location, and/or at another time.
- Applications should be submitted in writing to the Examinations Management Team at least four weeks prior to the commencement of the assessment period, and must set out in full the circumstances that prevent the candidate from complying. Independent verification must be included.
- Where a candidate suffers serious personal circumstances for which they were unable to give advance warning, later applications may be considered. Such circumstances might include sudden serious illness or injury, or bereavement.
- Normally, any Centrally Managed Test at an alternative location should be sat on the same day and at the scheduled time. However, in exceptional circumstances, the Manager, Course Administration and Timetabling may permit the candidate to sit the test at another time, normally within 24 hours of the scheduled time, provided that the security of the test is not jeopardised.
- The University reserves the right to determine the suitability of the location and invigilation arrangements. Permission will be declined if appropriate arrangements cannot be made.

*Note: Candidates who have been permitted to present themselves for assessment outside the scheduled time or at another location outside Wellington will be subject to an administration fee as specified in the current Fees Schedule (see the [Fees Policy](#)). They will also be liable for any invigilation fees or courier costs, which may vary according to location.*

#### 15. Related documents

Assessment Handbook

[Examination Rules](#)

[Student Conduct Statute](#)

#### 16. Document Management and Control

|                                 |                                                               |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
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|                |                                                |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Contact person | Manager, Course Administration and Timetabling |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------|

## Appendix C: Aegrotat Procedure

### 1. Purpose

This procedure describes the processes and actions relating to applications for an aegrotat pass and support section 13.5 of the Assessment Handbook.

### 2. Application of this procedure

This procedure applies to staff members and students.

### 3. Aegrotat process

- a) Students affected by special personal circumstances should contact the course coordinator or (in relation to a Centrally Managed Test) the Examinations Management Team so that options for extensions or alternative arrangements can be considered (see Assessment Handbook section 13.3). Where the affected assessment is due in the final three weeks of teaching or later, the student should be advised of the aegrotat process.
- b) Any application for an aegrotat pass should be submitted as soon as possible, normally no later than two weeks after the due date for the affected assessment item. Applications should use the online application form and be accompanied by supporting documentation.
- c) Upon receipt of an aegrotat application, the Exams Coordinator will inform the relevant course coordinator so that the coordinator can consider whether it is appropriate to respond to the student's circumstances with extensions (see section 6.6) or any of the provisions for variations to assessment requirements as set out in section 13.3.

*Note: Further information, together with the application form, is available at <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats>.*

- d) Once the course grades have been entered,
  - i) if the student has passed and if the documentation shows the student's circumstances were above the threshold for an aegrotat, the Exams Coordinator will offer the student the option of having an ungraded pass (G).
  - ii) if the student has failed, then the aegrotat must be processed, and the Exams Coordinator should change the fail grade to GP and send the academic profile form to the course coordinator to complete. The course coordinator must also provide a grade spreadsheet showing a cohort of comparable students registered in the course (see Assessment Handbook section 13.5.4).
- e) The Head of School considers the information provided by the course coordinator, comments on their recommendation and adds any relevant information.
- f) The relevant Associate Dean considers the student's application, the supporting documentation and the academic profile, and:
  - i) Awards an aegrotat pass when:
    - The documentation clearly indicates the student was impaired at the relevant time;

- The student submitted and averaged above a pass in at least 40% of the course assessment; and
- The course marks for a relevant cohort is provided and at least two-thirds of similar students passed the course; and
- The relevant Associate Dean is confident that a pass is appropriate.

Or

ii) Declines to award an aegrotat pass when:

- The student's assessment not covered by the aegrotat application averaged below a pass; and
- Over half of the similar students in the cohort failed the course; and
- The relevant Associate Dean is confident that a pass is not appropriate.

Or

iii) Seeks advice from a reviewer appointed by the Director of the Academic Office before making a final decision based on the criteria set out in section 13.5 of the Assessment Handbook. The reviewer is normally an Associate Dean from a different Faculty.

- g) If an aegrotat pass is not awarded, but the relevant Associate Dean considers that the student's circumstances justify it, they may offer the student a late withdrawal (see [Course Registration Procedure](#) section 4.2 (c) and (d)).
- h) The Exams Coordinator is responsible for advising the student of the outcome of an aegrotat application and making any necessary changes to the student's academic record.

#### 4. Appeals

a) A student whose application for an aegrotat pass was declined may appeal in writing within 20 working days of being notified of the decision. The appeal must make clear the grounds upon which the appeal is based.

*Note: For further advice students may consult the VUWSA Advocates.*

b) Appeals should be submitted to the Examinations Management Team.

c) The appeal goes to the Associate Dean who will review their decision in the light of the student's appeal. The Associate Dean may consult the course coordinator, and will either:

- i) recommend that the original decision stand, providing comments regarding any points raised by the student, in which case the appeal is progressed; or
- ii) decide to change their original decision and grant the aegrotat pass, in which case the new decision is processed, and the appeal does not go any further.

d) Where the Associate Dean does not change their original decision, the appeal is reviewed by staff in the Academic Office before being forwarded to the Vice-Provost (Academic) for a final decision.

e) Late appeals may be accepted at the discretion of the Dean in special cases.

**5. Record keeping**

The Examinations Management Team. is responsible for the retention and disposal of records of aegrotat applications and the information supporting decisions. Records are to be retained for seven years.

**6. Related documents**

Assessment Handbook

[Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments Policy](#)

**7. Document Management and Control**

|                                                |                                                               |
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| Contact person                                 | Manager, Course Administration and Timetabling                |

## Appendix D: Faculty-Specific Degree Pass Procedures

*Note: A “degree pass” was previously known as a “compensation pass”*

### 1. Purpose

These procedures set out the detailed criteria and processes relating to the award of a degree pass and give effect to section 16 of the Assessment Handbook. They include faculty-specific requirements and the requirements for managing the award of a degree pass within a conjoint degree programme.

### 2. Application of these procedures

These procedures apply to staff members and students.

### 3. Architecture and Design Innovation

- a) Decisions will be made by the Associate Dean (Students)
- b) Degree passes will not normally be given where the student has failed any course needed to meet the 300-level requirements of a degree or major.
- c) A degree pass in BAS, BBSoc or BDI does not preclude progression to an associated postgraduate programme, but if the failed course is a prerequisite for a 400-level course, the student is required to pass the failed course before being permitted to enrol in the subsequent one.

### 4. Commerce

- a) Decisions will be made by the Associate Dean (Students).
- b) Degree passes will not normally be given in the BCom for any course needed to meet the requirement of 75 points at 300-level, or the 300-level requirements of a major or minor.
- c) Core courses taken earlier than the final year may be eligible for degree passes at the discretion of the Associate Dean (Students).

### 5. Education

Degree passes are not available for any programme administered by the Faculty of Education.

### 6. Engineering

- a) Decisions will be made by a subcommittee of the committee of examiners that determines the level of Honours for completing BE(Hons) students. To be considered for a degree pass the student must have obtained a B- or better average grade over all their other 300- and 400-level courses. The examiners will take into account, among other things, the extent and level of failure in the final year, the total load attempted in the final year, the total period of study for the degree and the student's performance in the degree programme as a whole.
- b) Degree passes will not normally be given for any 300- or 400-level course presented to meet the requirements of the BE(Hons) Part 2 or the requirements of the major.



**7. Health**

- a) In considering a student's application for a degree pass the Associate Dean will take into account, among other things, the extent and level of the failure in the final year, the total load attempted in the final year, the total period of study for the degree and the student's performance in the degree programme as a whole.
- b) Degree passes are normally not available for Health degrees with external accreditation.

**8. Humanities and Social Sciences**

- a) A degree pass for a course will be considered only if a student has satisfied the mandatory course requirements.
- b) Degree passes will not normally be given for any course needed to meet the requirement of 75 points at 300-level or any major/minor requirement, and the candidate must have satisfied the mandatory course requirements (so only courses failed with a D grade can be considered). For the BMus degree, degree passes will normally only be awarded for courses worth 20 points or less.
- c) The Associate Dean will take into account, among other things, the extent and level of the failure in the final year, the total load attempted in the final year, the total period of study for the degree and the student's performance in the degree programme as a whole.

**9. Law**

- a) Decisions will be made by a committee consisting of academic staff in the Law Management Group. The committee may consider the performance of the student in all matters, including (but not limited to) (i) the receipt of ungraded passes in other courses; and (ii) any instance of misconduct by the student. A degree pass will not be awarded if the failure in the course was due to academic misconduct.
- b) Degree passes will be awarded only when the failed course is a 300-level elective (other than LAWS 334) and where the candidate has a B- or better average over the rest of the degree. They will not be awarded for LAWS 301, 312 or 334, or in any 400- or 500-level LAWS courses.
- c) To be eligible for a degree pass, students must have failed the elective in their final trimester, except that a failed elective in the immediately preceding Trimester Two may be considered provided they have passed all the Trimester Three electives in which they were enrolled.

**10. Science**

- a) Decisions will be made by a committee of examiners chaired by the relevant Associate Dean. The committee will take into account the extent and level of the failure in the final year, the total load attempted in the final year, the total period of study for the degree, and the amount of failure in the programme as a whole. Greatest weight is given to performance in the major subject and in the final year.
- b) Degree passes will not normally be given if the failed course is needed to meet the 300-level requirements of a major.

**11. Conjoint degrees**

Either faculty can initiate the degree pass, but the decision is made in consultation with the other faculty.

**12. Related documents**

Assessment Handbook

[General Programmes of Study Regulations](#)

**13. Document Management and Control**

|                                                |                                                                                                                                                           |
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| Contact person                                 | Relevant Associate Dean                                                                                                                                   |