



# ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK

*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, Faculty Managers, Student and Academic Services, and the Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association.*

This handbook is one of four issued by the Academic Office *Te Waikura* that cover quality assurance in learning and teaching at Victoria University of Wellington. The other handbooks cover academic approval processes, programme and course design, and evaluation and reviews.

Issuer:	Academic Office
Sponsor:	Vice-Provost (Academic and Equity)
Approval agency:	Academic Board
Original approval date:	18 July 2013 (AB13/33b)
Release of this edition:	4 April 2018
Contact persons:	Director, Academic Office Senior Academic Policy Advisor

## CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Scope	1
1.2	Purpose of assessment	1
1.3	Principles	1
1.4	Moderation - ensuring robust assessment	2
1.5	Responsibilities for assessment and moderation	3
1.5.1	Academic Board and Academic Committee	3
1.5.2	Associate Deans	3
1.5.3	Managers, Student and Academic Services	3
1.5.4	Faculty Boards, Faculty Academic Committees and/or Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees	3
1.5.5	Heads of School and Programme Directors	3
1.5.6	Course coordinators	3
1.5.7	Examiners and Markers	4
1.5.8	Tutors	4
1.5.9	Class representatives	4
1.5.10	Students	4
1.6	Assessors for law examinations	4
1.7	Other assessors	5
<b>2</b>	<b>FACULTY ASSESSMENT AND MODERATION PROCEDURES</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT DESIGN</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1	General requirements	7
3.2	Requirements relating to specific types of assessment	10
3.2.1	Group work and group assessment	10
3.2.2	Peer assessment	10
3.2.3	Self-assessment	10
3.2.4	Examinations	11
3.2.5	Tests	11
3.2.6	Attendance and assessment based on participation	12
3.3	Assessment timing	13
3.3.1	Spread and scheduling	13
3.3.2	Assessment during the trimester	13
3.3.3	Examinations and other final assessment items	13
3.3.4	Assessment beyond the end of the trimester	14
<b>4</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1	Communicating the assessment scheme	15
4.2	Extensions and penalties	15
4.2.1	Extensions	15

4.2.2	Penalties for late submission	17
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Processes for dealing with plagiarism and other academic misconduct</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>A student who is repeating a course</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>FEEDBACK</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>MARKING ASSESSMENT ITEMS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Marking processes</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Return of assessed items and feedback to students</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Student access to marked exam scripts</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>COURSE GRADES</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>7.1</b>	<b>Grade scales</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>7.2</b>	<b>Determining course grades</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>7.3</b>	<b>Moderating course grades</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>7.4</b>	<b>Reporting course grades</b>	<b>22</b>
7.4.1	Deadlines for grade entry	22
<b>7.5</b>	<b>Provision of course results to students</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>7.6</b>	<b>Changes to grades already submitted</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>SCALING</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>8.1</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>8.2</b>	<b>Scaling methods</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>9 ALTERNATIVE PROVISIONS BASED ON EXCEPTIONAL PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>9.1</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>9.2</b>	<b>Variations to assessment approved at school or faculty level</b>	<b>25</b>
9.2.1	Supporting documentation	25
9.2.2	Offering alternative assessment items	26
9.2.3	Waiving or re-weighting of assessment items	26
9.2.4	Resubmissions for students who have failed an assessment item	26
9.2.5	Changing the assessment requirements	26
9.2.6	Special examinations	26
<b>9.3</b>	<b>A student who has accidentally missed an examination (special pass)</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>9.4</b>	<b>Aegrotat pass</b>	<b>27</b>

9.4.1	What is an aegrotat pass?	27
9.4.2	Criteria for an aegrotat pass	27
9.4.3	Processing aegrotat applications	28
9.4.4	Students with aegrotat applications pending	29
9.4.5	Impaired performance comment on academic transcript	30
9.4.6	Aegrotat appeals	30
<b>10</b>	<b>RECONSIDERATIONS AND APPEALS</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>10.1</b>	<b>Reconsideration of individual items of assessment</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>10.2</b>	<b>Reconsideration Deadlines</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>10.3</b>	<b>Retention of Student Work</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>10.4</b>	<b>Appeals</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>10.5</b>	<b>Academic disadvantage</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>COMPENSATION PASSES</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>11.1</b>	<b>General criteria</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>11.2</b>	<b>What is a compensation pass?</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>11.3</b>	<b>Compensation pass process</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>11.4</b>	<b>Faculty-specific criteria</b>	<b>33</b>
11.4.1	Architecture and Design	33
11.4.2	Commerce	34
11.4.3	Education	34
11.4.4	Engineering	34
11.4.5	Humanities and Social Sciences	35
11.4.6	Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music	35
11.4.7	Law	35
11.4.8	Science	36
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>37</b>
	<b>Appendix A: Scaling</b>	<b>37</b>
1.	Application	37
2.	Common scaling methods	37
	<b>Appendix B: Course grades and overall qualification results</b>	<b>40</b>
1.	Course grade ranges and indicative characterisations	40
2.	Other course grades	41
3.	Overall qualification results	41
4.	Historical grades	41
	<b>Appendix C: Grade point averages</b>	<b>42</b>
1.	Grade point average (GPA)	42
2.	Academic progress grade (APG)	42
	<b>Appendix D: Award of Honours</b>	<b>43</b>
1.	Introduction	43

2.	General requirements for honours	43
3.	Postgraduate Honours degrees	43
4.	Undergraduate degrees awarded with Honours	45
5.	Award of Honours for Master's degrees	46
<b>Appendix E: Award of Distinction or Merit</b>		<b>47</b>
<b>Appendix F: Guidelines for staff supervising tests</b>		<b>48</b>
1.	General	48
2.	Specific measures	48
<b>Appendix G: Management of examinations</b>		<b>49</b>
1.	Preparation of examination papers	49
2.	Format	49
3.	Security	50
4.	Errors in an examination paper	50
5.	Communication of examination paper content	50
6.	Computers, electronic calculators and communications equipment	51
7.	Foreign language/English dictionaries	51
8.	Role of course coordinators during examinations	51
9.	Special arrangements for individual students	51
10.	Late arrival at examinations	52
11.	Unable to attend an examination or require alternative examination facilities	52
12.	Examinations at other locations or times	52
<b>Appendix H: Examination Rules</b>		<b>54</b>
1.	Entry and exit from examination rooms	54
2.	Materials used during examinations	54
3.	Use of dictionaries	54
4.	Timekeeping	55
5.	Misconduct	55
6.	Identification	55
7.	Legibility	55
8.	Food and drink policy	55
<b>Appendix I: A student who has accidentally missed an examination (special pass)</b>		<b>56</b>
1.	General	56
2.	Students with special pass applications pending	56



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Scope

This handbook applies to all non-thesis courses offered within Victoria University qualifications. The course grades set out in appendix B 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 Policy](#), the [Doctoral Policy](#), the [PhD Procedures](#) and the relevant qualification statutes.

## 1.2 Purpose of assessment

Assessment of student performance in courses and programmes is central to a fundamental aim of the University: to award its qualifications at an international standard. It is also an integral part of the commitment of the University to providing learning opportunities to achieve the best results for individual students.

The purposes of assessment are:

- a) **To foster student learning:** Assessment tasks allow students to identify what is expected of them in relation to the learning objectives. A strong and explicit link between the objectives and assessment performance better enables students to see the purpose of the course and to develop self-efficacy in achieving that purpose. Feedback on performance makes an essential contribution to improving performance.
- b) **To assess student achievement:** Assessment is the way of determining whether a student has achieved the objectives of a course to a satisfactory standard. Assessment at one level can provide assurance that a student is ready to progress to the next.
- c) **To provide evidence of the quality of programmes:** Comprehensive and effective assessment is a vehicle which demonstrates that relevant knowledge and skills are addressed in aggregate across a programme and gives assurance that students are acquiring the knowledge and skills. This contributes to the reputation of the University's programmes and serves the requirements of professional accreditation

## 1.3 Principles

Assessment at Victoria is based on six key principles:

### a) **Validity**

Assessment should be fit for purpose. Assessment tasks should therefore be appropriate for the level, content and learning objectives of the course and the graduate attributes of the programme and university. A valid task will be one that measures what it purports to assess.

### b) **Reliability**

Assessment should provide an accurate and consistent measure of student performance. This involves both consistency in marking and the authenticity of student work.

c) **Fairness and inclusivity**

Assessment tasks should provide every student with an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their learning. Tasks should not discriminate against students on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability or political affiliation.

d) **Contribution to learning**

Assessment should be recognised as a learning activity. Assessment tasks should contribute to the development of skills and knowledge that can be applied within the course as well as in other contexts.

e) **Manageability**

Assessment tasks should be reasonable and practicable in terms of time and resources for both students and staff.

f) **Transparency**

The intention and practice of assessment should be clearly described to students and to other staff teaching in a course so that its benefits, purposes and procedures are understood by all parties, in the spirit of a teaching and learning partnership.

#### **1.4 Moderation - ensuring robust assessment**

Moderation is carried out through a range of processes of peer review and is important in ensuring that assessment aligns with established 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**

Pre-assessment moderation is an independent check of assessment tasks and criteria to ensure that they are valid i.e. have been designed to ensure they are assessing the learning outcomes in a suitable way, are free from errors and that the questions are easily understood by students and markers.

b) **Post-assessment moderation**

Post-assessment moderation is 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.



## **1.5 Responsibilities for assessment and moderation**

### **1.5.1 Academic Board and Academic Committee**

The Academic Board is the guardian of assessment standards at the University. The Academic Committee is responsible to the Board for ongoing review and evaluation of assessment practice and policy, and for approving any deviation from standard practice. The Academic Committee is responsible for approving faculty assessment and moderation procedures (see Section 2a).

### **1.5.2 Associate Deans**

Associate Deans have responsibility for approving exceptions to some constraints on particular types of assessment.

### **1.5.3 Managers, Student and Academic Services**

Managers, Student and Academic Services are responsible for the management of the Faculty's examinations, and some procedures pertaining to assessment processes. Each Faculty has an appointed Manager, Student and Academic Services.

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

Faculty Boards are responsible for developing and monitoring the requirements of Faculty-wide assessment and moderation procedures. This includes delegation of the monitoring and reporting responsibilities laid out in the procedures to an appropriate committee to ensure that agreed standards are met.

### **1.5.5 Heads of School and Programme Directors**

Subject to Faculty assessment and moderation procedures (Section 2), Heads of School have oversight of, and responsibility for:

- the construction and alignment of assessment across each programme;
- ensuring fair and consistent assessment practice within their School; and
- monitoring the conduct and outcomes of moderation.

This authority may be delegated to Programme Directors or to a School Committee. The Head of School has authority, after consultation with the course coordinator, to make the final decision on any question concerning marking within the course (subject to 1.6).

*Note: 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.*

### **1.5.6 Course coordinators**

The principal 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:

- design of assessment tasks and marking criteria, including pre-assessment moderation

- quality of assessment
  - marking processes, including post-assessment moderation
- Assigning, supporting and supervising of tutors undertaking marking

#### **Good practice**

All new course coordinators should participate in professional development on assessment before taking full responsibility for course assessment. Initially they would normally co-ordinate with, or be mentored by, a more experienced staff member.

### **1.5.7 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 as required by the Faculty procedures.

The examiners will usually be academic staff members. However, adjunct professors, assistant lecturers, teaching fellows, postdoctoral fellows and teaching assistants can be appointed as examiners by the Head of School.

The course coordinator is responsible for the allocation and oversight of appropriate markers.

### **1.5.8 Tutors**

All tutors must participate in professional development on grading and feedback before being involved in marking. It is the responsibility of the course coordinator (or in some schools, Programme Director) to direct tutors to the training course for tutors.

### **1.5.9 Class representatives**

All undergraduate courses (and some postgraduate courses) shall normally have at least one Class Representative (*see* the [Class Representative Policy](#) for details). The Class Representatives have a role in assisting with communication on issues involving assessment, especially facilitating student consultation if changes to the assessment scheme are being considered. VUWSA manages the Class Representative system at Victoria. Contact the VUWSA Student Representation Coordinator ([src@vuwsa.org.nz](mailto:src@vuwsa.org.nz)) for any questions or concerns.

### **1.5.10 Students**

Students are responsible for managing their workload, submitting assignments and assessments on time, attending classes and doing the work involved in a course to the best of their ability (*see* also the [Student Charter](#)).

## **1.6 Assessors for law examinations**

Assessors for law examinations are selected by the Law School. The Council of Legal Education (CLE) appoints moderators of CLE subjects.

In the event of a disagreement regarding a law examination between an examiner and an assessor where no compromise can be reached, the Head of School, together with the examiner and assessor, shall appoint an independent authority to settle the issue.

### **1.7 Other assessors**

An assessor is a person external to the course who contributes to the post-assessment moderation process. Heads of School may appoint suitably qualified assessors who are external to the School. This includes assessors for Honours and taught Master's programmes. See the Evaluation and Review Handbook for more information.

## 2 Faculty assessment and moderation procedures

- a) Each faculty must have procedures specifying faculty requirements on assessment and moderation. Faculty procedures must clearly outline and define standards for assessment and moderation in the faculty in the context of the range of disciplines offered. Faculty procedures (including any changes to the procedures) will be approved by the Academic Committee as per their responsibility for review and evaluation of assessment.
- b) The document 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 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.
  - viii) Processes for record keeping and reporting.
- 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%.
  - v) Any requirements for oversight of assessment scheduling.
  - vi) Processes for the moderation of course grades (see Section 7.3 for detailed guidelines).
  - vii) Any other faculty requirements relating to assessment.

### 3 Assessment design

#### 3.1 General requirements

- 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 [the Use of te reo Māori for Assessment Policy](#).

*Note: Assessment in te reo Māori is not permitted where:*

- *the course is taught fully or partly in a language other than English or te reo Māori and the assessment requires students to demonstrate their facility in that language; or*
- *facility in the English language is central to the objectives of all or part of the course.*

#### Comment

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) The system of assessment that is selected for a course must be available to all students enrolled for that course. This does not preclude systems that offer a consistent range of choices to all students and are clearly communicated in the course outline, such as:
- 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
  - allowing students to resubmit failed assessment items in accordance with a formally adopted school or faculty policy, where normally, such a resubmitted item should be graded at no more than 50% or a bare 'C-' pass
  - allowing all students the option of resubmitting particular assessments, in which case the 50%/C- maximum does not apply.

*See section 9 for information on variations to the course assessment system for individual students, with disabilities or those adversely affected by medical or other personal circumstances.*

#### Comment

As assessment, including constructive feedback, is a central part of the learning experience, the strategy for assessment should be integral to programme and course design.

Assessment should foster and provide evidence of the achievement of course learning objectives, which themselves contribute to the development of the programme/major attributes and in turn reflect the development of Victoria's [graduate profile](#).

Although the course coordinator or examiner is responsible for setting individual assessments, there should be collegial processes across the programme to ensure coherence in assessing learning across the courses of the discipline. This should include consideration of assessment types, clarity of assessment tasks and size of assessment tasks including word limits.

Assessment tasks should be selected to most effectively engage the students and assess the intended learning outcomes of the course.

For further information on design and practice relating to different assessment types refer to the Centre for Academic Development  
[www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Assessment](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Assessment)

Assessment tasks might include, but are not limited to:

- clinical activities
- computer programs
- creative compositions
- essays, formal reports and other written assignments (*see* section 3.1(c) regarding word limits)
- examinations (*see* section 3.2.4 and appendix G)
- field work (*see* the Off-Campus Activities Policy)
- lab reports and short assignments
- participation (*see* section 3.2.6)
- portfolios
- presentations and performances
- professional practica, internships or placements
- projects
- reflective journals or blogs
- tests (*see* section 3.2.5 and appendix F).

c) Irrespective of discipline or mode of delivery, courses within a programme should have comparable workload expectations that are commensurate with the points attributed to the course. The expectation is 10 hours per point, including scheduled contact time, individual or group study, and work on assessment tasks. The course outline will specify the average time that is notionally assigned to the completion of each assessment task.

A 30-point course assessed entirely by written work 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.

**Good practice**

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 or exam conditions, except where examinations are required by external accreditation organisations.

Assessment systems may unintentionally have cultural biases or favour particular learning and communication styles. It is desirable that a range of assessment items are used within a course to better accommodate students from different backgrounds.

Learning and assessment tasks should be scheduled so that the workload is spread reasonably evenly over the course, where the time period normally includes the teaching weeks, mid-trimester break, study week and the examination period. See section 3.3 for further details.

Finalised details of assessment tasks should be provided to students as early as possible in the course to enable students to effectively manage their time.

- d) Students must be graded on the basis of more than one piece of work in a course, unless that piece of work is an extended essay or project that includes opportunities for feedback before submission.
- e) Assessment tasks should be designed to minimise the frequency and seriousness of plagiarism.

*For further information and resources relating to academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism see [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Assessment](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Assessment)*

**Good practice**

Assessments that comprise specific, unambiguous tasks provide fewer opportunities for deliberate plagiarism and reduce the risk of inadvertent plagiarism by students with poor referencing or paraphrasing skills. Examples include those that require students to keep and produce a research diary or portfolio as part of their assignment.

Plagiarism is also minimised where assessments involve tasks at an appropriate level of complexity. Assessments should explicitly require the student to demonstrate original thought through critical appraisal, reflection and justification rather than recall, description and discussion. Such assessments may include problem-based or inquiry-based projects.

With online assessment there should be a mechanism to identify who is doing the work and making the submission.

## 3.2 Requirements relating to specific types of assessment

### 3.2.1 Group work and group assessment

- a) *Group work* refers to activities where students work together on a task. When used appropriately, group work 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.
- b) 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. Faculties may, if they wish, set their own upper limit below 50%.
- c) *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. Marks from *group assessment* (as distinct from *group work*) may not exceed 15% of the final course grade unless the Academic Committee has approved otherwise, having received a description of just how the group assessment will be implemented.
- d) If group work is to be used either as preparation for an individual assignment or in preparing a full assignment with a shared grade, then 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 assessment will be calculated.
- e) Group work assignments must be carefully planned, supervised and monitored by the course coordinator. There must be a fall-back assessment plan to protect any students whose group is unable to complete its work. The course coordinator is expected to be familiar with the Centre for Academic Development resources on group work: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Groupwork](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Groupwork)

### 3.2.2 Peer assessment

Peer assessment (assessment by one or more students of the work of another student enrolled in the same course) is useful to assist student learning and to develop a broader range of learning partnerships. With the approval of Academic Committee, peer assessment may contribute up to a maximum of 10% towards 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).

*In the first instance contact the relevant faculty liaison person from the CAD team [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/academic-development/about-cad/contact-us](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/academic-development/about-cad/contact-us)*

### 3.2.3 Self-assessment

A self-assessed grade must not contribute directly towards the formal assessment determining a course grade.



**Comment**

Self-evaluation is encouraged as part of reflective practice and where possible should be an integral part of all courses. A necessary component of self-evaluation requires students to reflect on and analyse their learning from the assessment task, and does not involve them assigning a grade (i.e. it is not self-marking). Although a student-initiated grade must not contribute directly towards the formal assessment determining a course grade, participation in the self-evaluation activity could be given a component of the course grade assigned by the lecturer.

**3.2.4 Examinations**

- a) Any examinations:
- i) must be worth at least 30% of the course grade;
  - ii) must be centrally timetabled during the examinations period at the end of each trimester;
  - iii) are managed by the relevant Faculty Student and Academic Services Office;
  - iv) must be of either 2 hours' or 3 hours' duration;
  - v) may involve practical activities; and
  - vi) if open-book, must be designated as such on the examination paper.

*Refer to appendices G and H for further details on examination processes and examination rules.*

*Note: Some non-examination assessment activities may be scheduled using the central examination timetabling system. See section 3.3.3.*

**3.2.5 Tests**

- a) Tests are managed within the school (including responsibility for arranging supervision).
- b) Tests may be in-class, take-home or online, and may include practical work.
- c) A single test must not be worth more than 50% of the course grade.
- d) In-class tests for courses taught in Trimester One or Trimester Two:
  - i) must be conducted during teaching weeks; and
  - ii) may be scheduled after 6pm or in weekends, providing the details are set out in the course outline and consideration is given to any students whose personal circumstances make attendance particularly difficult.
- e) If scheduled in the final week of teaching in Trimester One or Trimester Two, in-class tests must not be worth more than 25% of the course grade, unless approved by the relevant Head of School.
- f) For courses taught in non-standard trimesters, these conditions may be varied by the Head of School.

### 3.2.6 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 [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Mandatory\\_Course\\_Requirements](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Mandatory_Course_Requirements)*

#### **Comment**

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

- b) Up to 10% of the assessment in a course may be based on participation providing:
- 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;
  - ii) criteria for assessing the in-class performance of students are clearly specified in a form that students can translate into action or behaviour;
  - iii) students are provided with prior opportunities to learn the skills that are being assessed; and
  - iv) records are kept for each class in which participation is assessed.
- c) The Academic Committee may approve a larger component of the course assessment to be based on participation.
- d) Tutors responsible for managing tutorial/seminar groups in which participation is to be assessed must have completed the appropriate CAD training on assessment and feedback.
- e) When using participation as an assessment tool, consideration should be given to ensuring the assessment is fair to all groups and not distorted by gender differences, cultural differences, personality, class size, group dynamics or other factors that may affect students' willingness and ability to participate.

### 3.3 Assessment timing

#### 3.3.1 Spread and scheduling

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

Submission dates should be set so as to allow for extensions of deadlines in cases of illness or other exceptional personal circumstances. In-term work should cover enough of the course objectives that the overall performance of a student who may need to apply for an aegrotat (for an examination, or for work due in the last three weeks of the course) can be reliably and fairly considered.

#### 3.3.2 Assessment during the trimester

Except for field trips or where approved by the relevant Associate Dean, all assessment items that require compulsory attendance during a trimester must be run during the teaching weeks, but not in the weekends adjoining or during mid-trimester breaks or in the weekend after teaching ends.

#### 3.3.3 Examinations and other final assessment items

- a) Study periods immediately preceding examination periods should be kept free to allow students time in which to prepare for final assessments. Except in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Convenor of the Academic Committee in consultation with the relevant Associate Dean, during this period no assessment item can be due, and no assessment requiring compulsory attendance can be scheduled.
- b) Each course may have one assessment during the examination period providing that any of the following conditions are met:
  - i) the assessment item is an examination;
  - ii) the assessment task does not require attendance at the University;
  - iii) the course is part of a postgraduate programme that has no examinations scheduled during that period;
  - iv) permission has been given by the relevant Associate Dean, and the course coordinator agrees to make suitable arrangements for any student who has an examination scheduled at the same time.

*Note: Unless otherwise specified by the Associate Dean, approval is required only for the first time a course is offered with that assessment scheme.*
- c) Where the assessment for a course includes a non-examination assessment task due in the examination 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 or the scope of an online test.
- d) All other assessment tasks must be due before study period begins.

**Comment**

Non-examination assessment events such as presentations or performances may be centrally timetabled in the examination timetable to assist scheduling. Such events:

- should not be scheduled in rooms that are required for faculty-administered examinations
- are managed by the relevant school
- are not subject to the constraints that apply to examinations.

**3.3.4 Assessment beyond the end of the trimester**

Assessment for each course shall be completed by the end of the examination period for the final trimester of the course. In extraordinary circumstances an extension beyond the examination period may be granted to an individual student by the relevant Associate Dean, but in no case beyond six months from the end of the trimester.

## 4 Implementation of assessment

### 4.1 Communicating the assessment scheme

- a) An outline of the assessment scheme must be provided to students within the course outline on the day the course begins (*see Academic Approvals Handbook*).
- b) Any changes to the original assessment scheme must be clearly communicated to students through all the channels for formal announcements specified in the course outline, and a written statement of the new assessment scheme must be sent to the Manager, Student and Academic Services within one week of the change.
- c) During the first two weeks of a course, minor amendments may be made to the assessment scheme. Significant changes require approval from the Associate Dean.
- d) Except as set out below, once a course has been running for two weeks, the general pattern of assessment laid down in the course outline must be adhered to.
- e) Minor changes (such as extending deadlines or combining two assignments) may be made, in consultation with the class through the Class Representative. If in doubt about whether a proposed change is minor, the course coordinator should consult the Associate Dean.
- f) Significant 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, and approval by the Associate Dean.

*Note 1: Any change that adds or removes an examination must be communicated to the Manager, Course Administration and Timetabling.*

*Note 2: Refer to section 9 for information on variations to assessment for individual students.*

### 4.2 Extensions and penalties

Programme Directors have oversight of all practice relating to extensions and penalties in their programme to ensure a consistent approach.

#### **Comment**

The development of work discipline and time management skills is an important part of the educational process and it is expected that each student takes responsibility for allocating sufficient time for their studies. Nevertheless, reasonable provision must be made for late submission. In some instances, penalties may be involved.

#### 4.2.1 Extensions

- a) An extension (with no penalty) will be considered on the grounds of exceptional personal circumstances as set out in section 9 or workload pressure such as having three or four major pieces of work due in a short period with insufficient

time over the trimester to adequately manage them (*see* the [Student Workload Policy](#)).

- b) A student who receives an extension must not be unfairly advantaged over other students. The intention is that an extension does not actually give the student more time, but recognises that the student has not been able to use the time allocated. The question of advantage or not therefore needs to be judged on a case-by-case basis.
- c) Particularly for extensions beyond a few days, or if a student requests an extension for more than one assessment item in the course, the course coordinator must be satisfied that the student's exceptional personal circumstances are valid, and may require a medical certificate or other supporting evidence where in doubt.
- d) In some instances (such as tests or weekly tutorial assignments) late submissions may not be feasible. The granting of an extension is at the discretion of the relevant course coordinator, and the approach taken to extensions needs to be clearly stated in the course outline.
- e) The course coordinator may decide to grant an extension up until the end of the relevant examination period or waive any mandatory requirement to complete that assessment item. (*See* section 9 for information on other provisions relating to students with exceptional personal circumstances.)
- f) The Associate Dean, in consultation with the course coordinator, may in extraordinary circumstances grant an extension beyond the relevant examination period, but in no case beyond six months from the end of the trimester. Consideration may also be given to changing the pattern of assessment, as set out in section 9.2.

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

**Good practice**

For short extensions, obtaining evidence of the circumstances, and considering and approving the extension may involve more time and effort by the student and the course coordinator than is warranted. Course coordinators are encouraged to use discretion when applying a requirement for supporting documentation relating to short extensions, unless there is a pattern of failure to meet deadlines.

One approach is the automatic extension, which works as follows:

- A few days before the assessment item is due, students are advised that a short extension of 2 days will be automatically granted to any student who requests it with an email prior to the scheduled 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 do 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.

*Where this approach has been used, it is found that most students still make every effort to submit their work on time, and the number of students requesting automatic extensions is relatively low.*

**4.2.2 Penalties for late submission**

- a) Penalties may be applied to work that is submitted late without a valid excuse or an extension having been approved, but only where that has been clearly specified in the course outline. Penalties must be proportionate, transparent and reasonable.
- b) Where a penalty has been applied, this should be recorded so that the information is available when course grades are being finalised.

**4.3 Processes for dealing with plagiarism and other academic misconduct**

All instances of suspected plagiarism or other academic misconduct must be dealt with under the [Student Conduct Statute](#). (For further information, contact the Student Interest and Disputes Resolution Advisor).

**4.4 A student who is repeating a course**

A Head of School may permit marks for some items of assessment to be carried forward for a student repeating a course.

## 5 Feedback

It is important that students are informed of how well they have demonstrated competence in relevant areas in order to assist their learning and improve their performance. 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 all course members. The nature of feedback that is provided will depend on the type of assessment task, and its timing and weighting. The following guidelines should be considered when designing assessment regimes:

- Provide feedback on assessment items as soon as possible, normally within *three weeks* of the date of submission, so that it can be of use for subsequent assessment items.
- Provide feedback on all pieces of in-term assessment in such a way that it facilitates student learning.
- Where a course has an examination, communicate as much of the in-term marks/grades as possible to students by the start of the study period preceding examinations.

*For further information refer to [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Assessment](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Assessment)*



## 6 Marking assessment items

Individual assessment items may be marked using letter grades or numbers. (The assignment of letter grades may follow the general characterisations of performance given for each grade in appendix B.) The pass/fail approach should normally be used only for small assessment items.

### 6.1 Marking processes

- a) Individual assessment items may be marked using letter grades or numbers. The pass/fail approach should normally only be used for small assessment items.
- b) All assessment tasks should be designed and marked against criteria linked to the learning objectives of the course and not marked simply to a standard curve of achievement.
- c) Where possible, students should be given basic information on how each assessment item will be assessed before they need to begin working on it. For tests and examinations 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 assign marks to aspects such as structure, clarity of language or referencing.
- d) It is essential that schools take active measures to ensure new staff who are assessing students are given adequate training, guidance and monitoring (*see* section 1.5).
- e) The use of a marking guide is mandatory where the marking is shared between markers or undertaken by tutors.
- f) Course coordinators must ensure that all those engaged in marking share the same assumptions about what constitutes an A, B, or C and agree on the interpretation of the marking guide and the weighting of marks. This can be achieved by processes such as:
  - calibrating against marking criteria prior to marking
  - independently assessing three or four assignments and discussing the outcome
  - calibrating a sample of the first items assessed against a sample of later items.

*For further information see [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Assessment](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Assessment)*
- g) Schools must ensure that markers are reminded of the need to ensure security of assessment material while marking is underway. Refer to the Information Security Policy for more information.

### 6.2 Return of assessed items and feedback to students

- a) Individual feedback on assessed work should be managed in a way that ensures student privacy, for example, through the Grade Centre in Blackboard, emailing students individually or putting feedback in envelopes.
- b) When marks or grades for assessment items are released, schools must ensure that:
  - i) assessment items have been moderated as required by the faculty Assessment and Moderation procedures

- ii) the marks or grades have been checked and authorised as correct by an appropriate person before being posted; and
- iii) in any published list, students are identified only by ID number. It is a breach of privacy legislation to list student names and ID numbers in combination.

*Note: It is not adequate to print out a list in alphabetical order and simply blank out or remove the students' names. Any class results made available to all students should be listed in numerical order of ID numbers.*

- c) Uncollected student work must be retained until 30 September for Trimester One courses, 28 February for Trimester Two courses, and 31 May for Trimester Three courses before being destroyed.

### **6.3 Student access to marked exam scripts**

- a) Examination scripts must not be returned to students until the deadline for reconsiderations has passed (*see* section 10.1). Prior to that deadline, students wishing to understand how they performed in various aspects of the work will be permitted by the school to read their examination script and the marking guide in a supervised environment, or may request a copy of their work and the marking guide. (*See* section 10 for information on reconsiderations.)
- b) Students may collect their examination script from the school after the deadline for reconsiderations and before the scripts are destroyed (*see* section 10.1). No examination script will be reconsidered after it has been returned to the student.

## 7 Course grades

### 7.1 Grade scales

Individual course grades are assigned using the grades listed in appendix B.

#### **Good Practice**

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

### 7.2 Determining course grades

- a) Grades for a course shall be based on students' performances in the assessment items for that course. However, they should not be determined solely by the numerical outcome of the marking process: examiners must consider the appropriateness of the grade divisions and may adjust the course marks to fit the indicative characterisations given in appendix B.
- b) The overall course mark for a student should be computed in accordance with the assessment scheme specified in the course outline, or as subsequently varied with the approval of the relevant Associate Dean.
- c) To calculate the course mark when one or more assessment items were initially assigned letter grades only (and not numerical marks), convert those grades into marks by taking the midpoints of the corresponding grade ranges. The normal grade ranges and their midpoints are set out in the table in appendix B. If any other practice is to be followed in calculating final course marks, then the marks must be provided to students at the same time as the grades for assessment items.
- d) If a student does not hand in an assessment item (or fails to attend a test or examination), then the course mark should be calculated using a zero for that component of the assessment.
- e) A 'K' grade should be assigned to any student with a course mark of 50% or more who failed to satisfy one or more of the mandatory course requirements.

*Note: Sitting the examination or reaching 40% or some other minimum level is not a mandatory course requirement unless identified as such in the course outline (see the Academic Approvals Handbook).*

### 7.3 Moderating course grades

- a) Once marking is complete a final moderation process should be carried out:
  - i) The preliminary distribution of course grades should be compared with those for recent offerings of the same course or similar courses.
  - 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, but also those between A/B and B/C grades should be examined to ensure that the boundaries are set appropriately.
- iv) In cases where the course grades are seriously out of line with expectations, consideration should be given to scaling one or more of the component assessment items, or the final grades attained over all pieces of assessment. (*See* section 6 and appendix A for different methods and criteria for their use.)

*Note: no grades may be revised downwards after they have been released to students.*

- b) Responsibility for moderation of course grades is allocated by the Head of School. Normally moderation is carried out by the course coordinator, programme director, the group of examiners involved in the course, or a group of relevant academic staff.
- c) A brief record should be kept of what moderation has taken place and consequent changes, and submitted to the Head of School.
- d) Calculation of the final course marks should be checked by a competent person, to ensure calculations have been done correctly.
- e) Except for the Faculty of Law (*see* section 1.6), the Head of School has the authority, after consultation with the examiners, to make the final decision on any question concerning the grades.

## **7.4 Reporting course grades**

- a) The Head of School must approve the overall grade distribution and the report on moderation.
- b) Following approval, schools are responsible for entering course grades for all taught courses into the Student Management System (Banner).

*Note: Faculty Student and Academic Services Offices are responsible for entering results for non-taught components of qualifications, such as Professional Work Experience for BE(Hons).*

- c) A record of the results for individual assessment items must be retained in the school. This must include information on any penalties that have been applied (*see* section 4.2.2) or variations to the assessment scheme approved for individual students (*see* section 9).

*Note 1: Information on grade entry processes may be obtained from the relevant school office.*

*Note 2: If there are any discrepancies between the list of students who completed the course and the class list, contact the relevant Faculty Student and Academic Services Office.*

### **7.4.1 Deadlines for grade entry**

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. Results must be entered by the following deadlines:

Trimester One courses	Wednesday after the end of the examination period
Trimester Two and full-year courses	Second Thursday after the end of the examination period (all except LAWS 100–300 courses)
	Third Tuesday after the end of the examination period (LAWS 100–300 only)
Trimester Three courses (Summer)	First teaching Friday in January (courses run in November–December)
	First Friday after the end of the examination period (all other courses)

*Note: Any exceptional circumstances delaying grade entry must be discussed with the Manager, Student and Academic Services who will consult with the Director of Student Academic Services.*

## 7.5 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 MyVictoria. Schools should not communicate results to students prior to official course grades being entered.

## 7.6 Changes to grades already submitted

If it is discovered that a grade has been incorrectly entered into the Student Management System (BANNER), then the relevant Head of School must, without delay, inform the Associate Dean and the Manager, Student and Academic Services in writing, using the appropriate form (available from the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office).

- a) Grades may be lowered only with the permission of the Convenor of the Academic Committee on the recommendation of the Associate Dean.
- b) Where appropriate, options for temporarily withdrawing the grades can be considered in consultation with the Manager, Student and Academic Services.
- c) The School has the responsibility for informing students of the error.

*Note: The Manager, Student and Academic Services is responsible for ensuring the Director, Student Academic Services is informed of all grade changes that require the approval of the Convenor of the Academic Committee.*

## 8 Scaling

### 8.1 General

- a) Prior to being released to students, marks or grades for assessment items may be scaled up or down.
- b) After being released to students, marks or grades for assessment items may only be scaled up.
- c) Scaling of assessment marks or grades is at the discretion of the course coordinator at any time before course grades are finalised. Where scaling would result in a change in mark of 10% or more for any student, the course coordinator should consult with the Programme Director or Head of School.
- d) If scaling is carried out at the end of the course, 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.

### 8.2 Scaling methods

- a) Scaling methods must:
  - i) follow defensible principles;
  - ii) be appropriate to the underlying problem;
  - iii) be stated clearly and objectively; and
  - iv) be fair to all students.

*See appendix A for further information on scaling methods.*

#### **Good practice**

Where possible, scaling should be applied to individual assessment items rather than to final grades in order to develop an accurate profile of performance for later review (for example, in aegrotat considerations).

## 9 9 Alternative provisions based on exceptional personal circumstances

### 9.1 General

- a) Exceptional personal circumstances such as the following may mean the normal assessment process is unfairly onerous for individual students:
  - i) an impairment assessed by Disability Services under the [Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments Policy](#);
  - ii) temporary illness;
  - iii) bereavement;
  - iv) circumstances involving the health or wellbeing of a relative or close friend;
  - v) compulsory attendance at court;
  - vi) national or international representative commitments;
  - vii) significant cultural commitments; or
  - viii) activities in which the student is representing the University.
- b) In accommodating exceptional 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.
- 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 4.2.1). Where this approach is not appropriate or sufficient, variations to the course assessment as set out below may be considered.

### 9.2 Variations to assessment approved at school or faculty level

#### 9.2.1 Supporting documentation

- a) Any student wanting to be considered for a variation to the course assessment under the provisions below must supply appropriate documentation supporting their claim of exceptional circumstances. (*See* section 4.2.1 for documentation required for extensions.)
- b) For students with impairments who are registered with Disability Services, the documentation is lodged with Disability Services, who liaise with the relevant school or Associate Dean.
- c) Otherwise, the student should normally provide the documentation to the course coordinator, who should make it available to other staff as required, respecting personal privacy.

*Note: Schools may choose to receive or retain documentation in the School office.*

### **9.2.2 Offering alternative assessment items**

- a) The Associate Dean, in consultation with 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 unfairly demanding for a student with an impairment or adverse 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 for unavoidable personal reasons that they have communicated to staff.
- b) Every effort should be made to ensure the assessment criteria and standards are consistent with those applied to other students.

### **9.2.3 Waiving or re-weighting of assessment items**

Where justified by exceptional personal circumstances, the course coordinator, with the approval of the Head of School, may waive up to 30% of the course assessment or re-weight assessments, with no single weight being changed by more than 30%, and award a course grade based on the other assessments.

### **9.2.4 Resubmissions for students who have failed an assessment item**

In exceptional cases, where there is no formal school policy on resubmissions (*see* section 3.1(b)), the Head of School, on the recommendation of the course coordinator, may permit an individual student to resubmit an assessment item.

### **9.2.5 Changing the assessment requirements**

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

### **9.2.6 Special examinations**

Resit examinations, where students are given the opportunity in a formal examination setting to repeat an examination for a failed course, are not offered at Victoria. However, this does not preclude a school offering an alternative assessment to individual students as set out in section 9.2.2.

## **9.3 A student who has accidentally missed an examination (special pass)**

- a) A candidate who has missed a Faculty-conducted examination because of mistaking its time or place may be permitted to sit the examination late and, on the approval of the Convenor of the Academic Committee, be awarded a special pass (grade Z).
- b) The decision of the Convenor of the Academic Committee will be based on the student's academic profile including a recommendation from the School, and the information provided by the student in the Application for a Special Pass.

*See Appendices G, H and I for more details on late arrival at an examination.*



- c) A special pass counts as a pass in all respects. Hence it will be accepted for meeting major, specialisation or compulsory degree requirements, as well as satisfying any prerequisite requirement. A special pass is not restricted to the qualification that the student was enrolled in when it was awarded.
- d) An applicant who is not granted a special pass will receive the relevant fail grade (D, E or K).
- e) The student may appeal a decision not to award a special pass to the Provost.

*See appendix I for more details on special pass procedures.*

## **9.4 Aegrotat pass**

### **9.4.1 What is an aegrotat pass?**

- a) An aegrotat pass (grade G) may be awarded when a student is prevented from satisfactorily completing the course due to exceptional circumstances outside their control. An aegrotat pass will be considered only where it has not been possible for the student to achieve a passing grade with appropriate support through extensions (*see* section 4.2.1) or any of the provisions in section 9.2.
- b) Aegrotat decisions are made centrally by the Convenor of the Academic Committee (or nominee) and are based on information provided by the student, the relevant Faculty/School and health professionals.
- c) Aegrotats are not awarded on compassionate grounds alone; the applicant must also have completed sufficient work to such a standard that the Head of School can state that the student is clearly worthy of a pass.
- d) An aegrotat pass counts as a pass in all respects. Hence it will be accepted for meeting major, specialisation or compulsory degree requirements, as well as satisfying any prerequisite requirement. An aegrotat pass is not restricted to the qualification that the student was enrolled in when it was awarded.
- e) Aegrotat passes are not available for some courses as indicated in the relevant qualification statute.

### **9.4.2 Criteria for an aegrotat pass**

- a) An aegrotat pass may be considered in relation to examinations, or other assessment items that are due during the last three teaching weeks of a course or later, for which extensions are not feasible, and where the applicant has completed sufficient assessment relative to the objectives of a course, if:
  - i) their preparation time has been seriously impaired in the three weeks leading up to an examination or the due date for the assessment item;
  - ii) their performance in the examination or assessment item has been seriously impaired; or
  - iii) they were prevented from attending examinations or completing items of assessment for reasons beyond their control.
- b) Impairment must fall into one of the following categories:
  - i) serious illness or injury;

- ii) personal bereavement;
- iii) critical personal circumstance involving the health or wellbeing of a relative or close friend; or
- iv) some other exceptional circumstance beyond the applicant's control.

*Note 1: Students who have been prevented from completing assessment items due before the last three weeks of teaching or mid-year tests for two-trimester courses, or whose performance in them has been impaired, will not be considered for an aegrotat and should instead report their circumstances to the course coordinator without delay. See section 9.2.*

*Note 2: Any student who advises an examiner or other staff that they are medically unfit to sit an examination must be referred to the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office for consideration of options, including sitting in special facilities or referral to the Student Counselling Service or Student Health Service. Under no circumstances should a staff member indicate that a student will gain an aegrotat pass.*

### 9.4.3 Processing aegrotat applications

- a) Students affected by exceptional personal circumstances towards the end of a trimester or during an examination period are encouraged to contact the course coordinator or the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office so that options for extensions or alternative arrangements can be considered (*see* section 9.2). The student should then be advised whether it is appropriate to apply for an aegrotat.

*Note: Staff should be very cautious in providing any advice on the likelihood of an aegrotat pass being approved.*

- b) Applications shall be made on the appropriate form to the relevant Faculty Student and Academic Services Office within 10 working days of the relevant examination or submission date. In exceptional circumstances, the Convenor of the Academic Committee may accept late applications supported by a health professional seen at the relevant time.

*Note 1: Aegrotat application forms are available from Faculty Student and Academic Services Offices or from the Student Counselling and Student Health Services, or can be downloaded from [www.victoria.ac.nz/timetables/aegrotat.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/timetables/aegrotat.aspx).*

*Note 2: There are separate sections to be filled in by the student, the Faculty/School and registered health professional. The 'Academic information for aegrotat application' form can be found at: <https://intranet.victoria.ac.nz/academic/staff-resources/pamphlets.aspx>*

*Note 3: More information about the aegrotat application process can be found at: [www.victoria.ac.nz/timetables/aegrotat.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/timetables/aegrotat.aspx).*

- c) For applications based upon impaired performance in, or absence from, an examination, documentation provided by the health professional must normally be based on a consultation within 24 hours of the examination (preferably before the examination). This period can be extended if it can be shown that this failure to provide the required documentation was beyond the student's control.

*Note: Any information provided by a health professional in relation to an aegrotat application is confidential and may only be disclosed to relevant officers of the University for the purposes of processing or considering the application. Any request by a student for access to such information*

*will be considered under the provisions of the Privacy Act 1993 and the Health Information Privacy Code 1994. Any such request should be immediately referred to the In-house solicitor.*

- d) When documentation of a student's absence or impairment has been accepted by the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office, the application is referred to the School. An application with inadequate documentation will be referred back to the student.
- e) If this has not already been done, the course coordinator should consider whether it is appropriate to respond to the student's circumstances with extensions (*see* section 4.2.1) or any of the provisions for variations to assessment requirements as set out in section 9.2.

*Note: If any alternative arrangements are likely to delay the course grade being finalised, the Manager, Student and Academic Services should be consulted.*

- f) Once the course grade has been finalised, the course coordinator should complete the academic profile. This includes:
- a statement on whether extensions or other variations have been applied to support completion of the relevant assessment items
  - details of the student's progress in the course
  - grade spreadsheet information for a cohort of comparable students enrolled in the course
  - comments to assist interpretation, such as identifying any assessment items that are particularly helpful, as an indicator of students' understanding of the course material.
- g) In making a recommendation the course coordinator should consider the following questions:
- If the student has achieved a passing grade, does that grade reflect impaired performance?
  - If the student has received a fail grade, taking the level of impairment into account, are they clearly worthy of a pass?
- h) The Head of School (or an authorised deputy) considers the information provided by the course coordinator, and makes a recommendation that takes into account the work of the student in the course concerned, or in related courses as appropriate. The application is then returned to the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office.
- i) If the student has achieved a passing grade in the course, no further action will be taken, unless the student applies for an impaired performance comment on their academic record (*see* section 9.4.5).
- j) Normally, the student should have successfully completed at least 30% of the course assessment before a pass can be approved. The final decision is made by the Convenor of the Academic Committee.

#### **9.4.4 Students with aegrotat applications pending**

When a student applies for an aegrotat pass in a course, or the result is otherwise under review, the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office may enter a

temporary Grade Pending (GP) grade. The final grade will be entered when a decision has been made.

#### **9.4.5 Impaired performance comment on academic transcript**

A student who applies for an aegrotat pass but achieves a graded pass has the option of requesting that a comment be added to their academic transcript, stating that the performance in the course was impaired and the grade does not take that into account. Impaired performance comments are approved by the Convenor of the Academic Committee (or nominee).

#### **9.4.6 Aegrotat appeals**

A student denied an aegrotat pass may appeal in writing to the Provost within four weeks of being notified of the decision. This period may be extended by the Provost in special cases.

The appeal letter should be sent to the relevant Faculty Student and Academic Services Office, stating the grounds for the appeal and including any relevant evidence that was not presented in the initial application. The Provost may seek further information from the School or from the Convenor of the Academic Committee before ruling on the appeal.

## 10 Reconsiderations and appeals

### 10.1 Reconsideration of individual items of assessment

It is important that students have the opportunity to query any assessment result that they believe to be unfair.

- a) A student who considers that the mark (or grade) awarded for any particular item of work is unfair 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 who, if they consider that there is sufficient cause, will attempt to resolve the matter with the course coordinator. If there is no Programme Director, the Head of School should be contacted.
- c) If the discussion indicates that the assessment was unfair, the course coordinator will amend the mark or grade for that item of assessment as appropriate.
- d) Even if it is concluded after reconsideration that a lower grade should have been awarded, the first grade determined for the student must stand.

### 10.2 Reconsideration Deadlines

- a) Any requests for work to be reconsidered must normally be made within two weeks of the result being available, except for final examinations where the deadline is four weeks after the result being available. Specific dates for each year are published in the Calendar.

### 10.3 Retention of Student Work

- a) Examination scripts and other work not returned to students should be held in the school until two months after the course grades are released, and then destroyed, unless it is to be retained for longer for formal review or accreditation purposes. Students must be informed if their work is retained for longer than usual.
- b) A student who believes that their final grade for a course has been calculated incorrectly should consult the course coordinator without delay. If appropriate, the coordinator shall request that the grade be amended (*see* section 7.6).

### 10.4 Appeals

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: If the Head of School is also the course coordinator, then they should delegate resolution of the matter to a senior colleague (see section 2.4.5).*

The Head of School should, if satisfied that there is a case to answer, arrange for the item in question to be marked independently by a qualified academic staff member before making a decision. Head of School decisions on appeals relating to the

mark/grade awarded for items of assessment are final, unless academic disadvantage can be demonstrated.

### **10.5 Academic disadvantage**

A student who believes that their grade for a course or award for a qualification was adversely affected by particular circumstances not covered by the aegrotat or special pass provisions should discuss their situation with the course coordinator, the relevant Programme Director or 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.

Members of the relevant faculty must respond to the 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 and Disputes Resolution Advisor](#), the VUWSA Student Advocate or the Academic Office.*

## 11 Compensation passes

### 11.1 General criteria

- a) A compensation pass may be awarded by a faculty on the basis of a good overall performance to a candidate who has failed a course needed to complete an undergraduate qualification (or to complete it with a particular major or specialisation). Unless specified otherwise in 11.4, eligibility criteria are as follows:
  - i) the failure occurred in the final year of the candidate's programme;
  - ii) the grade for the failed course was a D or a K; and
  - iii) the candidate obtained an average of B- or better in the other courses taken over the preceding 12 months or in their overall performance for that qualification.

### 11.2 What is a compensation pass?

- a) The candidate may be given an L grade for the failed course; that will be accepted as meeting major, specialisation or compulsory degree requirements unless the relevant faculty criteria stipulate otherwise. Alternatively, the fail grade may stand with the compensation pass conveyed by either the award of unspecified credit (where completion of the qualification just required additional points) or an appropriate waiver (where completion required a pass in that particular course). In either case, the relevant comment goes on the student's record.
- b) A compensation pass will not be accepted for prerequisite purposes, nor shall a compensation pass, or unspecified credit awarded for compensation pass purposes, be credited to any qualification other than that for which the pass or credit was awarded.

### 11.3 Compensation pass process

- a) No application is necessary, although candidates who think they meet the criteria may draw the faculty's attention to their case. Precise criteria and procedures for awarding compensation passes may vary between faculties (*see* 11.4).
- b) No information about the circumstances giving rise to the fail grade in the course in question will be put before the individual or committee responsible for making the compensation pass decision. If there are special circumstances explaining the failure, an application should be made under the aegrotat provisions.
- c) Compensation pass decisions relating to a conjoint degree programme involving two faculties may be made by either faculty.

*Note: Compensation pass considerations do not justify raising a pass grade to a higher one.*

### 11.4 Faculty-specific criteria

#### 11.4.1 Architecture and Design

- a) Relevant qualifications: BAS, BBS<sub>c</sub> and BDI, and related conjoint programmes.

*Note: Any student completing BArch or BDes should be considered under the provisions in the 2009 Assessment Handbook.*

- b) Decisions will be made by the Associate Dean (Teaching, Learning and Students) in consultation with the relevant Head of School.
- c) A compensation pass will normally be awarded only for courses worth no more than 20 points.
- d) A compensation pass in BAS, BBSoc or BDI does not preclude progression to the associated Master's programme, but:
  - i) If the failed course is a core course, the fail grade is counted in the GPA calculation for entry into the Master's;
  - ii) If the failed course is a prerequisite for a 400-level course, the student will have to re-enrol and pass the failed course before being able to enrol in the subsequent one; and
  - iii) If the failed course is a core course in the relevant BAS/BBSoc/BDI discipline, the student will have to re-enrol and pass the failed course before being able to enter Part 2 of the associated Master's degree.

#### **11.4.2 Commerce**

- a) Relevant qualifications: BCom and BTM degrees, and related conjoint programmes; CertMBus, GDipCom and GDipProfAcc.
- b) Decisions will be made by the Associate Dean (Students).
- c) Compensation passes will not normally be given for any course needed to meet the requirement of 75 points at 300-level for the BCom or BTM degrees or GDipCom or GDipProfAcc, or the 300-level requirements of a BCom major or minor.
- d) Core courses taken earlier than the final year may be eligible for compensation passes at the discretion of the Associate Dean (Students).

#### **11.4.3 Education**

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

#### **11.4.4 Engineering**

- a) Relevant qualifications: BE(Hons) and related conjoint programmes.
- b) Decisions will be made by the committee of examiners that determines the level of Honours for completing BE(Hons) students. To be considered for a compensation 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.
- c) Compensation 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 specialisation.



- d) If a student is awarded a compensation pass, the failing grade 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; the subject and course code may be specified.

#### **11.4.5 Humanities and Social Sciences**

- a) Relevant qualifications: BA, BA/BTeach, BA/BTeach(ECE) and related conjoint programmes.
- b) Decisions will be made by the Associate Dean (Students) in consultation with relevant Heads of School.
- c) A compensation pass for a course will be considered only if a student has satisfied the mandatory course requirements.
- d) Compensation 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).
- e) 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.
- f) If a student is awarded a compensation pass, the failing grade 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; the subject and course code may be specified.

#### **11.4.6 Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music**

- a) Relevant qualification: BMus degree.
- b) Decisions will be made by the NZSM Academic Committee, and will take into account the student's performance in the degree programme as a whole.
- c) Compensation passes will not normally be given for any course needed to meet the requirement of 75 points at 300-level for the BMus degree, and will normally be awarded only for courses worth 20 points or less.
- d) If a student is awarded a compensation pass, the failing grade 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; the subject and course code may be specified.

#### **11.4.7 Law**

- a) Relevant qualifications: LLB and LLB(Hons) degrees, and related conjoint programmes.
- b) 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.

- c) Compensation passes will be awarded only for a failure in a 300-level elective (other than LAWS 334) 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.
- d) To be eligible for a compensation 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.

#### **11.4.8 Science**

- a) Relevant qualifications: all Bachelor's degrees administered by the Faculty of Science and related conjoint programmes.
- b) 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.
- c) Compensation passes will not normally be given for any course needed to meet the 300-level requirements of a major.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Scaling

#### 1. Application

- a) Scaling may only be applied as set out in section 8 of this handbook.
- b) Where scaling results in the overall course mark for any individual student changing by more than two marks, the Head of School should be informed.
- c) In the case of marks for examinations or other unreleased assessment items, scaling may be in either direction (up or down). Marks that have already been released to students may be scaled upwards, but not downwards.
- d) Scaling must be documented and transparent when course grades are reviewed or used as a basis for aegrotat decisions.
- e) The scaling method should be appropriate to the underlying problem, both in terms of which marks are scaled, and by how much.
  - viii) 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 mark;
  - ix) 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;
  - x) If the problem is not clearly linked to a particular piece of assessment, the overall course marks should be scaled.
- f) The scaling method should be fair to all students.
  - i) 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.
  - ii) 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.
- g) After any scaling has been carried out, records of students falling just below a pass should be scrutinised and scripts re-examined to establish that the pass mark has been set appropriately.

#### 2. Common scaling methods

The most common scaling methods are:

- 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.

- 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.)

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

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

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.*

## Appendix B: Course grades and overall qualification results

### 1. Course grade ranges and indicative characterisations

Pass/fail	Grade	Normal range	Midpoint	Indicative characterisation
Pass	A+	90%–100%	95	Outstanding performance
	A	85%–89%	87	Excellent performance
	A-	80%–84%	82	Excellent performance in most respects
	B+	75%–79%	77	Very good performance
	B	70%–74%	72	Good performance
	B-	65%–69%	67	Good performance overall, but some weaknesses
	C+	60%–64%	62	Satisfactory to good performance
	C	55%–59%	57	Satisfactory performance
Fail	C-	50%–54%	52	Adequate evidence of learning
	D	40%–49%	45	Poor performance overall, some evidence of learning
	E	0–39%	20	Well below the standard required
	K	Fail due to not satisfying mandatory course requirements, even though the student's numerical course mark reached the level specified for a pass, usually 50%. 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.		
Pass	P	Overall pass (for a course classified as Pass/Fail)		
Fail	F	Fail (for a Pass/Fail course)		

## 2. Other course grades

In addition to the grades listed above, the following grades may be entered by the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office:

Pass	
G	Aegrotat pass
J	Pass in recognition of prior learning
L	Compensation pass
Z	Special pass
Non-pass	
GP	Grade pending—usually associated with an aegrotat application. The final grade is entered when a decision has been made.
U	Late withdrawal approved by Dean/Associate Dean
WD	Withdrawal during permitted period

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

[www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades)

## 3. Overall qualification results

Where provided for in the relevant qualification statute, an overall qualification result may be awarded as follows:

S	Pass with Distinction
T	Pass with Merit
P	Pass
F	Fail

## 4. Historical grades

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

H	Overall pass (for some course 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

## Appendix C: Grade point averages

### 1. Grade point average (GPA)

- a) A grade point average for Victoria University courses is calculated by assigning numbers to grades as set out in the table below, and weighting by points values and then dividing the sum by the points total.

A+	9
A	8
A-	7
B+	6
B	5
B-	4
C+	3
C	2
C-	1
D, E, K, L	0

- b) 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:
- i) If the intention is to measure the student's overall performance, then all grades (both passes and fails) at Victoria should be included in the calculation;
  - ii) 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.

### 2. Academic progress grade (APG)

The Academic Progress Grade is a modified version of the GPA calculated across all courses undertaken in the relevant trimesters of study, but including a value of 4 for aegrotat passes (G), 2 for special passes (Z) and 0 for withdrawals after the dates set out in appendix E of the Fees Statute.

*Note: These dates are at the end of the second week of teaching for 12-week courses.*



## Appendix D: Award of Honours

### 1. Introduction

- a) The term ‘Honours degree’ can refer to a one-EFTS degree following a Bachelor’s degree; these are also called ‘postgraduate Honours degrees’. Examples are the BA(Hons), BCom(Hons), BMus(Hons) and BSc(Hons) degrees.  
  
‘Honours degree’ may also denote a 4-EFTS (or longer) Bachelor’s degree that may or may not have ‘Honours’ in the title, but which can be awarded with Honours. Such degrees will be referred to more fully as ‘undergraduate degrees awarded with Honours’. Examples are the LLB(Hons) and BE(Hons) degrees.
- b) Both types of degree described above may be awarded with different classes of Honours, and so may some Master’s degrees (usually those that include a year of postgraduate Honours study). Other Master’s degrees may be awarded with Distinction or Merit (*see* appendix E).
- c) Honours programmes may be undertaken on a part-time basis up to any limits defined in the relevant degree statute. Approval for part-time study should be sought from the Programme Director or Associate Dean before the start of the academic year. Courses will normally be examined in the year or trimester in which they are taken.

### 2. General requirements for honours

- a) To be awarded Honours, a student must complete the programme within the time specified in the relevant degree statute. An Associate Dean or Deputy Dean may extend that period on the advice of the relevant Head of School.
- b) 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) All work for individual courses in an Honours programme shall normally be submitted before the end of the trimester in which the student is enrolled in that course (before the end of the second trimester for a two-trimester course). In special circumstances, the relevant Associate Dean (or Deputy Dean) may grant an extension of time on the recommendation of the Head of School, but in no case will an extension be granted beyond the end of the following trimester.

### 3. Postgraduate Honours degrees

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

- a) Each candidate’s programme shall be a coherent course of study, not merely the aggregation of a specified number of unrelated courses. Thus, when a candidate substitutes a course or courses from other programmes, the substituted courses must be relevant to, and complement, the remainder of the candidate’s course of study.
- b) Honours programmes do not merely test mastery of aspects of a subject in successive and separate sections (as an undergraduate degree does), nor should they principally test the qualities demanded by sustained research and the writing of a long dissertation.

- c) Research essays or projects (often coded 489) sometimes make up at least 25% (30 points) of an individual's course of study. If not, then the application of research skills must be embedded throughout the rest of the programme, or at least in the compulsory courses. (As is the case for other courses making up the student's programme, these items should be submitted by the end of the appropriate assessment period.)
- d) An important aspect of assessment in an Honours programme is the careful attribution of individual course marks by examiners, ideally accompanied by a written or oral report covering work habits, contribution to seminars, submission and quality of work and, where relevant, any external factors that might have affected the student's performance. It is crucial that students receive adequate written feedback on their progress throughout their course of study.
- e) Individual courses receive the same grades as specified in appendix B for undergraduate courses. To graduate with a postgraduate Honours degree, students need to pass 120 points. Where a student has failed a course in a postgraduate Honours programme, the failing grade will remain in the student's record. The overall class of Honours will normally be based on all courses taken for the qualification, including courses that resulted in a fail grade.
- f) 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 communicate the mark for that course in writing to the director of the student's Honours programme (or the relevant Head of School). The coordinator of the substitute course may be invited to participate in the meeting of Honours examiners.
- g) The following classes of Honours may be awarded: First Class, Second Class (first division), Second Class (second division), and Third Class (or pass). The decision on the class of Honours should not be determined solely by a mechanical averaging of marks or grades. Rather, it should be assessed by the entire committee of examiners on the basis of the candidate's overall performance, in accordance with the following scale:

Class of Honours	Overall standard
First (1)	A- or over
Second, Division 1 (2/1)	B+, high B
Second, Division 2 (2/2)	B-, low B
Third (3)	C-, C, C+

#### 4. Undergraduate degrees awarded with Honours

This section applies to the following degrees: BE(Hons), and LLB(Hons).

*Note: See the previous version of the Assessment Handbook for information relating to the BArch, BBIS, BDes, BIT and BScTech degrees.*

- a) The following classes of Honours may be awarded: First Class, Second Class (first division) and Second Class (second division).
- b) The decision on the class of Honours should not be determined solely by a mechanical averaging of marks or grades. Rather, it should be assessed by the entire committee of examiners on the basis of the candidate's overall performance, or their performance over a particular range of courses as specified below, in accordance with the following scale:

Class of Honours	Overall standard
First (1)	A- or over
Second, Division 1 (2/1)	B+, high B
Second, Division 2 (2/2)	B-, low B

##### **Bachelor of Engineering with Honours**

- c) The award of Honours to candidates completing the BE(Hons) degree is determined by the Engineering Faculty Committee of Examiners, comprising all academic staff teaching in the programme.
- d) The award of Honours is made on the basis of performance in 300- and 400-level courses from the BE(Hons) schedule.
- e) To be considered for the award of Honours, students would normally have completed those 300- and 400-level courses within three consecutive years.

##### **Bachelor of Laws with Honours**

- f) 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.
- g) The award of Honours is made on the basis of performance in 300-, 400- and 500-level courses. 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 limited time specified for the programme.
- h) To be considered for the award of Honours, students must complete their 400- and 500-level study within three years of first enrolling in the LLB(Hons).

## 5. Award of Honours for Master's degrees

This section applies to all Master's degrees where the relevant qualification statute includes provision for the award of Honours.

- a) These classes of Honours may be awarded: First Class, Second Class (first division) and Second Class (second division).
- b) The class of Honours should be assessed on the basis of the candidate's performance over the entire programme, normally in accordance with the following scale:

Class of Honours	Overall standard
First (1)	A- or over
Second, Division 1 (2/1)	B+, high B
Second, Division 2 (2/2)	B-, low B

- c) Honours may not be awarded where a thesis has been resubmitted.

## Appendix E: Award of Distinction or Merit

This section applies to all qualifications where the relevant qualification statute includes provision for the award of Distinction or Merit.

- a) The decision to award Distinction or Merit is made by the Head of School (or, in the case of FAD and FHSS, by the relevant Associate Dean) on the advice of the relevant Programme Director or Board or Committee of Examiners or, in the case of Law, the Law Faculty Research and Postgraduate Committee.
- b) Unless otherwise specified in the relevant qualification statute, the award of Distinction or Merit should be assessed on the basis of the candidate's overall performance in the programme, normally in accordance with the following scale:

	Overall standard
Distinction	A or A+
Merit	A- or B+

- c) The award should not be based on a mechanical averaging of marks or grades, though it should be supported by the course grades awarded by individual examiners.
- d) Grades for individual courses should be entered into the Student Management System (Banner) immediately following completion of the courses, and will be considered official grades. It is not appropriate to withhold official grades until the decision is made whether to award Distinction or Merit.
- e) Neither Distinction nor Merit may be awarded where a thesis has been resubmitted. In the case of the MEd, neither Distinction nor Merit may be awarded where a candidate has failed a course.

## Appendix F: Guidelines for staff supervising tests

### 1. General

- a) Staff will sometimes supervise tests. It is important that staff taking this responsibility ensure that the University's obligations to students with disabilities are met (as specified in the [Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments Policy](#)) and that the tests are conducted with integrity.
- b) The key requirements of supervising any test or examination are that:
  - i) cheating is prevented;
  - ii) students are given equal opportunity to perform; and
  - iii) stress and distraction for students are minimised.

### 2. Specific measures

Staff are encouraged to take the following measures:

- a) Prevention of cheating
  - i) Strict security of test or examination papers is needed;
  - ii) Students should be spaced apart wherever practicable; and
  - iii) Identification should be required unless each student is known by name to the supervisor.
- b) Equal opportunity to perform
  - i) If students are expected to bring calculators, tables or other items to the test or examination, they must be given ample, clear advice of this requirement beforehand. Unless permission has been given under provisions of the [Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments Policy](#), or specific equipment or documents have been identified as allowed to be used during the test or examination, students should not be allowed to use calculators or other aids (*see also appendix G*);
  - ii) Any clarification of questions made in the course of the test or examination after it has commenced must be shared with all students.
- c) Minimising stress and distraction
  - i) A test or examination location should be chosen that does not expose students to excessive background noise; and
  - ii) To minimise stress, it is important to provide clear, well-written test or examination papers, and clear instructions about the location and time of the test or examination, and about any items required to be brought along by the student.

*Note: For additional procedures, written primarily for external invigilators, see Instructions to Examination Supervisors (available through Faculty Student and Academic Services Offices). Staff are encouraged to read and follow those instructions as appropriate to the nature and particular circumstances of the test or examination being supervised.*

## Appendix G: Management of examinations

*Refer to section 3.2.4.*

### 1. Preparation of examination papers

- a) Preparation of the examination paper for a course is the responsibility of the course coordinator. The paper must be:
  - i) prepared using the current template provided by the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office and according to the specifications set out below; and
  - ii) delivered to the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office for printing by the deadlines advised.
- b) Each examination paper should be accompanied by a Certificate of Examiners (EP3) issued by the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office 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 examination paper. Both the content and presentation of the final version of the paper must be verified as correct.

### 2. Format

- a) All examination papers, including appendices or attachments, shall be of A4 size. The university logo shall appear in the header on the first page, and the end of the paper (i.e. after the last question) shall be indicated by a row of asterisks.
- b) Examination papers must be printed sufficiently clearly to enable them to be photocopied. Schools are responsible for supplying clear originals of any additional material that accompanies a paper. These must be delivered to the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office with the paper.
- c) The following information must be stated clearly in each examination paper:
  - i) the correct course code, title, examination period (i.e. trimester) and year of examination;
  - ii) the duration of the examination (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 the examination is 'open book', 'closed book' or whether some materials are permitted;
  - v) any calculator requirements using the statement included in the examination 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) If an examination 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, BlackBerries, etc. are not permitted. Mobile phones are not permitted. If an examination is defined as ‘closed book’, students will not be permitted to bring any material or resources. The only exception to this is non-electronic, English/foreign language dictionaries for speakers of English as a foreign language. If the course coordinator wishes to permit students to bring limited materials or resources into the examination room (for example, Acts of Parliament, statistical tables), they must designate the examination as ‘closed book’ and specify what is permitted in the instructions at the front of the examination paper. This includes computers or electronic calculators.

- e) Any part of the examination paper that is to be handed in for marking (for example, multi-choice answer-sheets) shall 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.) The student ID number is also written on the top right-hand corner of every page of the answer booklet, as these are often disassembled for marking.

### **3. Security**

- a) Examination papers are to be delivered to the relevant Faculty Student and Academic Services Office in hard copy and in person, or by courier addressed to the appropriate person. Neither the internal mail service of the University nor email should be used.
- b) The security of examination papers must be maintained. Hard copies of drafts should be locked away and securely destroyed when no longer required. Electronic versions (if used) must be kept on a secure University server (i.e. the School M Drive). They may be transmitted between a University computer and a secure home computer using a USB memory stick or similar removable device. They should not be emailed to or from email addresses outside Victoria.

### **4. Errors in an examination paper**

Any error that is detected in examination papers before the examination commences or while it is in progress should, if possible, be corrected by the course coordinator and/or the Faculty Examinations Coordinator making announcements in each of the affected examination rooms and arranging for a notice to be displayed clearly at the front of each room. In the event of serious errors requiring an adjustment to the specified mark allocation, the course examiner should consult the relevant Associate Dean and the Manager, Student and Academic Services on any consequential remedial action.

### **5. Communication of examination paper content**

- a) The course coordinator (or examiner) shall decide what information about an examination paper will be given to candidates. All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that all students enrolled in the course receive the same information on the content of the examination. 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 Blackboard.
- b) Staff should avoid setting the same questions as those used in previous years where that might give some students a significant advantage.



## **6. Computers, electronic calculators and communications equipment**

- a) The use of computers or electronic calculators may be authorised in examinations. 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 examination paper.
- b) All such devices may be subject to scrutiny and the clearing of memory and stored information. Where only some types are permitted, they will be checked by supervisors at the beginning of the examination or tested for conformity to the restrictions in the course outline.
- c) Candidates sitting examinations away from the University must secure approval for the particular make and model of device that is proposed to be used. An authorisation certificate, obtainable from the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office, must be taken to the examination and produced on request.
- d) During any examination, no candidate may have in their possession any equipment (such as a mobile phone) 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.

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

- a) Students whose first language is not English may be permitted to use an English/foreign language dictionary (but not an English-only dictionary) in any examination.
- b) Unless blanket approval is given in the instructions at the front of the examination paper, each student wishing to take a dictionary into an examination room must present at the beginning of the examination written authorisation from the course coordinator.
- c) Electronic dictionaries are not permitted.

## **8. Role of course coordinators during examinations**

- a) It is important that course coordinators be available at the University during examinations for which they are responsible in order to deal with any suspected errors in the paper or questions needing clarification. At such times, course coordinators should be on campus and readily able to be contacted if not in their offices. Where feasible, it is recommended that course coordinators be present in the examination room for the first 15–30 minutes of the examination.
- b) Any course coordinator who is unable to be present at the University during an examination (for example, through being on conference leave or on research and study leave) should arrange for a colleague who is familiar with the examination paper to be present on campus, and should advise the Manager, Student and Academic Services accordingly.

## **9. Special arrangements for individual students**

All decisions on special arrangements are made in the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office.

## 10. Late arrival at examinations

- a) Arrival during the first 10 minutes: Any candidate who arrives after the start but during the first 10 minutes of an examination may be permitted by the supervisor to sit it in the scheduled room, provided that can be arranged without causing serious disruption to other students. No extra time will be allowed for the examination.
- b) Arrival before the mid-point: Any candidate who arrives after the first 10 minutes but before the mid-point of an examination may be permitted by the Manager, Student and Academic Services to sit the examination in a separate room. They will normally be allowed the full time for the examination less 10 minutes.
- c) Arrival after the mid-point: Any candidate who arrives after the mid-point (including after the examination has finished) may be able to apply for a Special Pass (*see* section 8.3), and should contact the Manager, Student and Academic Services immediately.

## 11. Unable to attend an examination or require alternative examination facilities

Candidates who are prevented by exceptional circumstances beyond their control from attending an examination at the scheduled time and place, or who require alternative examination facilities, should get in touch as early as possible with the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office 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 examination in a separate room or in alternative examination facilities
- arranging to sit the examination at a different time or different place
- applying for consideration under the aegrotat provisions.

*See section 8 for information on alternative provisions based on exceptional personal circumstances.*

## 12. Examinations at other locations or times

- a) All candidates are expected to present themselves for examination at the scheduled time and place. However, in exceptional circumstances a candidate may apply to the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office to sit the examination at another location, and/or at another time.
- b) Applications should be submitted in writing to the Manager, Student and Academic Services at least 21 days before the scheduled examination, and must set out in full the circumstances that prevent the candidate from complying, with independent verification included.
- c) Where a candidate suffers serious personal circumstances for which they were unable to give 21 days' advance warning, later applications may be considered. Such circumstances might include sudden serious illness or injury, or bereavement.
- d) Normally, any examination at an alternative location should be sat on the same day and at the scheduled time. However, in exceptional circumstances, the Manager, Student and Academic Services may permit the candidate to sit the examination at another time, normally within 24 hours of the scheduled time, provided that the security of the examination is not jeopardised.
- e) The University reserves the right to determine the suitability of the location and supervision arrangements. Candidates are expected to sit their examinations in

tertiary institutions that are able to provide appropriate examination conditions.  
Permission will be declined if appropriate arrangements cannot be made.

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

## Appendix H: Examination Rules

The University Examination Rules are provided to all students sitting examinations at: [www.victoria.ac.nz/timetables/exam-rules-results.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/timetables/exam-rules-results.aspx)

These rules apply to all candidates sitting centrally-timetabled examinations. Any breach of these rules will be considered a breach of the University's [Student Conduct Statute](#) and may result in the candidate having their examination cancelled or being suspended for one year or more.

Rules for distance examinations may differ from these, so please refer to the Examinations Coordinator.

### 1. Entry and exit from examination rooms

- a) No candidate is permitted to enter an examination later than the mid-point of that examination. No candidate is permitted to leave the examination room earlier than the mid-point of that examination, and then only with the permission of the supervisor, who must be given the candidate's script.
- b) No candidate is allowed to leave the room during the last 15 minutes of an examination.

### 2. Materials used during examinations

- a) When examination books or other writing material is provided, candidates may not use any other printed or blank paper during the examination.
- b) No books or equipment may be used during an examination unless that is specifically stated in the examination paper or the candidate presents an authorisation from the Faculty (for example, to use an English/foreign language dictionary but not an English-only dictionary, or a particular item to assist a student with an impairment).
- c) Examiners may authorise the use of electronic, non-programmable calculators for examinations, and may restrict the types of machine used.
- d) Pencil cases are not permitted unless they are clear and shown to the supervisor before the start of the examination.
- e) Mobile phones and any other electronic communication devices (including any alarms) must be turned off and left in bags at the front of the examination room.
- f) Under no circumstances are candidates permitted to take out of the examination room any examination material, including examination questions, answer books or supplementary answer sheets. No material that has been removed from the examination room will be marked.

### 3. Use of dictionaries

Unless an examination paper specifically excludes the use of dictionaries, a candidate whose first language is not English, and who has obtained prior written approval from the course coordinator or Manager, Student and Academic Services to use an English/foreign language dictionary (but not an English-only dictionary) during an examination, may take such a dictionary into the examination room. The candidate must present their letter of approval and the dictionary to the supervisor for inspection prior to the start of the examination.

*Note: Electronic dictionaries are not permitted.*

#### **4. Timekeeping**

Candidates may commence writing only when instructed to do so by the supervisor. No candidate may continue writing, cross out or modify an answer in any way after the supervisor has announced the end of the examination.

#### **5. Misconduct**

- a) During an examination, no candidate may communicate with any person other than the supervisor (or the course examiner), nor may any candidate copy from another candidate's answers.
- b) No candidate shall cause unreasonable disruption to an examination or exhibit behaviour that unreasonably distracts or impedes other students sitting that or another examination.

#### **6. Identification**

Proof of identity should be provided on entry to the examination room by presentation of Victoria University ID cards or other official document that includes a photograph (for example, a passport). Candidates must print their examination number legibly on their examination answer book and on any supplementary books or answer sheets, as requested.

#### **7. Legibility**

All handwriting by a candidate must be clearly legible. Any written material which the examiners are unable to decipher may be either refused for marking or photocopied (for a fee) with the copy given to the candidate who is expected to supply a clearly transcribed version.

#### **8. Food and drink policy**

Candidates may not consume any food during the examination unless they can present a supporting statement from a medical practitioner to the examinations coordinator prior to the start of the examination. All candidates may drink fluids that are in clear plastic or glass bottles. Other drink containers will not be permitted.

*See sections 9.3 and 9.4 for information on provisions for special passes and aegrotat passes.*

**Appendix I: A student who has accidentally missed an examination (special pass)**

*See section 9.3.*

**1. General**

- a) Because candidates may leave the examination room after the mid-point, there is potential for any student starting the examination after that to have seen or discussed the examination paper. This risk to the integrity of the examination process means a normal grade is not appropriate. A candidate who is granted a special pass will receive a grade Z, which counts as a pass in all respects. Hence it will be accepted for meeting major or compulsory degree requirements, as well as satisfying any prerequisite requirement. A special pass is not restricted to the qualification that the student was enrolled in when it was awarded.
- b) The student must contact the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office on the day of the examination. If the student arrives after the mid-point of the examination or after the examination is over, they must complete an Application for a Special Pass. (Students arriving before the mid-point will usually be expected to sit the exam in a separate room, where they will be allowed the full amount of time.)
- c) The student must complete a Statutory Declaration that they have not seen the examination paper, nor have they discussed its content with anyone who has, and will then arrange with the relevant Manager, Student and Academic Services a mutually agreed time and place to sit the examination.

**2. Students with special pass applications pending**

When a student applies for a special pass in a course, or the result is otherwise under review, the Faculty Student and Academic Services Office may enter a temporary Grade Pending (GP) grade. The final grade will be entered when a decision has been made.