CAD Guidelines

Improving Learning and Teaching

Assessment for Learning

2013 Edition

Centre for Academic Development

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI
VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

CAD Guidelines

Contents

Assessment framework

These guidelines focus on the mechanics of assessment: how to design good assessment tasks, developing marking guides, marking and moderating, providing students with useful feedback and techniques for promoting academic integrity. The university's Assessment Handbook provides the principles, rules and procedures that together represent the University's policy for good assessment practice.

Assessment at Victoria is based on six key principles outlined in the Assessment Handbook (section 1.3):

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.

Reliability

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

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.

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.

Manageability

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

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.

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It is important to view assessment as a process that begins during the initial development of a course. Assessment should be both "of learning" and "for learning". Assessment tasks should provide both evidence of student achievement of course learning objectives and opportunities for feedback aimed at improving future performance within the course.

Attention needs to be paid to ensuring that a clear question or task is set and that teachers and students understand and can implement the assessment criteria.

The following material is presented in seven sections.

1. Designing out-of-class assignments
2. Preparing a marking guide
3. Helping students understand the assessment criteria
4. Marking and moderating student work
5. Assessing student participation in class
6. Peer and self assessment
7. Providing and encouraging students to use feedback
8. Ensuring academic integrity

1. Designing out-of-class assignments

The information given here is generalised to cover most types of out-of-class assignments.

a) Select assessment tasks on the basis of their relationship to the learning objectives of the course. Be clear and specific in the descriptions of the task as to how it will support student achievement of the learning objectives and its relationship to other elements of the course.

b) Reinforce the value of time on task: make sure that the weighting of assessments tasks (grade points and workload) are consistent with the importance and scope of their relationship to the course learning objectives.

c) Ensure that the wording of questions, including all instructions, is clear and unambiguous.

d) To avoid confusion, instructions and questions should be separate from background or context information.

e) Begin each instruction on a new line so that students do not overlook or miss an important part of the task.

f) Emphasise key words (e.g., use bold or capital letters). Any use of a negative word should be emphasised because it may be missed. Never use double-negatives in the

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wording of your questions: these are confusing.

g) Identify the scope of the task. Where appropriate:

- Specify the role to be adopted by students.
- Identify the audience (who the students are writing for).
- Itemise what students are to do.
- Specify the approach expected.
- Identify the medium for the students' answers (e.g., a feature article in weekly newspaper).

h) Include key assessment criteria such as the word length, key dates, and the weight that the assessment contributes to the final grade.

i) Specify the ground rules to students (penalties, word limits, late work, etc.). These should be included in the appropriate place in the course outline).

j) Ensure that a colleague or trusted third party reviews any instructions or material associated with the assessment, including specific questions, to ensure that they are clear to other people.

k) Discuss the details of the assignment with students in class. This will help to ensure that they have understood what is expected of them.

l) If any adjustments are made to the question or criteria, all such notices should also be given as announcements on the course Blackboard site.

m) Provide clear information to students on where they can go for assistance if they are struggling with the assessment task or would like independent feedback. Commonly this will involve the staff of the Student Learning Support Service.

Related resource: *CAD guideline for developing multiple choice and other objective style questions.*

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Figure 1 – Example of the layout for an assignment

Report for Minister of Education

You are a consultant for the Ministry of Education. You have been asked to advise the Ministry on policy development in special education.

Prepare a report identifying three key areas in special education for which new or substantially changed policy is needed. For each area:

1. Recommend policy;
2. Give the rationale and evidence for the need for policy development or change;
3. Indicate the organisational implications for schools of the recommended changes or development in policy.

Note: You are ***not*** expected to provide costings for the changes/developments that you recommend, but the changes must be realistic in this respect.

Your report should be no longer than 1500 words. Keep in mind your audience.

Estimated time to complete: 10 hrs.

Marks: This report is worth 25% of your final grade

Word length: 1500 words

Due date: 5pm 2nd February, submit online through Blackboard

This assignment will contribute to your achievement of course learning objective 1 through your demonstration of knowledge about policy issues in special education, and learning objective 3 through your articulation of a persuasive and effective rationale.

2. Preparing and communicating marking criteria

To help ensure that assessment is a *reliable*, *valid* and *transparent* measure of student learning, a marking guide or rubric should be prepared. This should be made available to students and discussed with them before they begin work on their assessment task. A marking guide is also particularly valuable for situations where the marking is shared between more than one person.

The marking guide should set out the principal points you are expecting along with mark allocation. It may be helpful to prepare an abbreviated model answer. For example, what are the main points students should cover, expectations regarding style and structure along with any other considerations such as originality. The notes you make will help you decide which form of marking guide will be most appropriate. The marking guide should help students and markers understand the qualities of the submitted work that will distinguish elements that are acceptable and elements that are excellent. It should also identify any criteria for unacceptable work.

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Make clear in what way the course learning objectives are being assessed. If several objectives are being assessed, make sure that the guide addresses them. Alternatively, if students are being assessed on how well they are integrating several objectives, make sure the qualities listed in the guide (e.g., 'coherence of arguments') reflect the objectives you want to integrate.

Identify the qualities students are expected to demonstrate in their answer or performance. These qualities may cover knowledge, skills, personal attributes, values, and attitudes.

Qualities that an essay might test

- Relevance to the question
- Organisation of answer
- Coherence of arguments
- Use of primary sources
- Originality of thought
- Fluency in writing (expression, grammar, spelling, etc.)
- Citation and referencing practices

Qualities that a design project might test
(e.g., the logo for a new organisation)

- Integrity and alignment to design rationale
- Clarity/simplicity of design
- Functionality (meets its purpose)
- Cost effectiveness (if used commercially)
- Originality
- Evidence of research in creating the design
- Aesthetic quality, innovation and creativity
- Presentation (the way in which the presentation effectively communicates the design)

Allocate marks in proportion to the relative importance of the objectives and skills being assessed. To achieve validity you need to reflect the importance of the material that has been taught. Where possible, ensure that weighting of marks aligns with the workload experienced by students.

Consider allocating a small proportion of the marks to a category that reflects a holistic judgment of the work. The basis for allocating these marks (novelty of ideas, overall quality) should be clearly explained.

Communicate assessment requirements to students

- You must give out the marking guide to students before they begin their work so that they can know what is expected of them and how they will be assessed.
- Make sure the students have the opportunity to understand the question and the criteria that will be used to assess them, including opportunities to discuss these with staff and other students.
- Provide students in advance of deadlines with examples of work that embodies specific qualities associated with

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excellent, average and unacceptable work in order to guide their own efforts.

- Students must be told fully of every factor affecting marks.

Provide students with a statement on the grading criteria used in your course. This should identify in general terms what a student is required to do to get an 'A', 'B', etc. for the course.

The marking criteria used for each assignment should complement the grading criteria for the whole course.

Make sure to draw students' attention to the School/ Departmental policy on penalties such as lateness and university policies on plagiarism and academic misconduct listed in the course outline.

Students submitting drafts for feedback

Where possible, students should have the opportunity to submit parts of their work for feedback prior to final submission. Submission of drafts for feedback can be either a requirement or an optional support, in either case the ability of students to obtain this feedback should be clearly communicated to all students, preferably in the course outline as well as the assessment documents.

Encourage students to self-evaluate their work

Encourage students to self-evaluate their performance using the marking guide or rubric before they hand in their work. Research (Riordan & Loacker, 2009) shows that the ability to self-evaluate the quality of one's own work is a characteristic of top performing professionals. Consider making self-assessment a requirement: that is, have students hand in the guide containing their own self-evaluation. The spaces for comments can be used by students to justify or explain their evaluation.

3. Marking and moderating student work

Marking

Following assignment submission, there are a range of factors to consider that affect consistency of marking. This section suggests ways in which marking can be made as reliable, consistent and accurate as possible.

These suggestions are divided into sections Pre-marking, Marking and Post-marking.

Pre-marking

- The Assessment Handbook provides clear definitions of the

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meanings associated with specific letter grades (Appendix 2). These should be used as guides for markers in determining the numerical grades for specific work. Everyone involved in marking should be familiar with the official definitions and the specific criteria determined in the marking guide for the particular assessment (section 2).

- Ensure that the marking guide you have provided to students (see section 3 above.) is the same as the set of criteria you will use for marking.
- Establish a process whereby markers, especially tutors, can seek assistance/clarification during marking.

Marking

- Be aware of things that can influence marking. Research has identified that handwriting, writing style, the length of an answer (quality versus quantity), the order of scripts, and halo effects (being impressed or otherwise by earlier student performance) can all affect the reliability of marking.
- Mark one question/topic for all students at a time.
- Take notes while marking. Identify what students do well or do poorly. These notes can be handed to the course coordinator or used for class feedback.
- Ensure that students are not penalised twice for the same error, for example, penalising structural problems again in the style section of the marking guide.

Post-marking

- To ensure consistency, re-assess a few answers from the start of the pile to make sure your standards have not shifted over the period of your marking.

Moderation

To ensure marking consistency across markers, time should be allowed for systematic moderation. Moderation is a process that helps to ensure that marking is consistent, reliable and accurate within a course, among courses within a qualification, among courses within a school programme and across school programmes within a faculty. Strong moderation processes are essential when multiple people are assessing a set of student work. Moderation can also involve the use of external markers as part of accreditation expectations but that process is not a focus of these guidelines.

Refer to The Assessment Handbook (2013) for requirements on post-marking moderation (Section 6.3) and marking processes

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(Section 5.1). Appendix 2 of the handbook gives general grading scale criteria that can be used as a base for discipline-specific grade scales (Grade scales: Section 6.1).

This section gives particulars of a collaborative process among multiple markers for ensuring that comparable decisions are made for a single assessment task within a course. It is divided into sections Pre-marking and Post-marking moderation.

Pre-marking moderation

- It is helpful to keep a record of the moderation process. This could include a list of what, when, who and materials required.
- Before beginning the marking, a shared understanding of assessment and grade criteria should be established. The grade criteria should be a clearly expressed statement which describes what is needed to be achieved for each grade level.
- The marking criteria should be discussed among markers. Two or three completed papers of varying quality should be distributed to each marker and marked against the criteria and the marking reviewed together with all markers. Discrepancies in marks and grades should be discussed with a view to solve varying interpretations of the criteria. To assist with this process advise markers to write marks in pencil.

Post-marking moderation

- Before handing back answers to students, cross-mark a sample of the marked work from each marker to check for variation in marking standards. You may want to choose work of at varying grade levels, especially A+ and failed standards. If discrepancies are found, make sure that marks/grades are adjusted and that your colleagues understand why. In the case of a dispute seek a third opinion to arbitrate.
- Reconsider the performance of students near critical grade boundaries. Remember that you are trying to be fair to students, not to punish them. Have a second look at the answers of students on your failure cut-off line to see that you have not been unjust.
- There may be students' work that an individual marker is unsure of after marking, in this case, discuss these issues with other markers in the group.
- If the re-examination of the student's work would result in

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a lower grade then the higher grade must stand (Assessment Handbook Section 9.1.d).

- In cases where students' work is assessed by one person, moderation should be done with a colleague following a similar process as with multiple markers.

Related resource: Faculty of Education's policy guidelines (2013).

4. Assessing Student Participation in Class

Should participation be assessed?

A number of academics allocate a small percentage of course marks to the contribution of students to class discussion (e.g. in tutorials). In general, CAD is opposed to this practice unless there is clear guidance to students on what is to be assessed and the criteria by which this will be done. The VUW Assessment Handbook (Section 2.2.5 b) specifies that up to 10% of course marks (with exceptions in specific situations) may be based on participation in class with certain provisions including clarity of expectations and record keeping.

Why assess participation?

Reasons frequently given for assessing participation include:

- Encouraging students to prepare for class and to do the background reading
- Encouraging students to think and reflect on issues and problems
- Fostering the development of communication and presentation skills
- Fostering the development of oral and language skills.
- Encouraging social interaction and the sharing of ideas.
- Developing group and team skills (where the assessment focuses on group work).

The comment often made is that tutorials and seminars provide students with the opportunity to develop the communication skills that are part of everyday working life.

Problems in assessing participation

A distinction needs to be made between assessment of participation in class discussion and assessment of performance in a structured task such as a seminar presentation or oral language test. In this section we will deal with the former. The

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following section, Assessing Seminar presentations, deals with the latter.

Potential problems:

- Assessment of participation can create tension thus inhibiting the free flow of discussion.
- Willingness of students to participate may be affected by gender differences, cultural differences, personality, etc.
- Student contributions may also be affected by class size, group dynamics, and other factors external to the purpose of the assessment.
- Participation may be hard to assess objectively: what skills are you looking for and what criteria will you use to judge student performance?
- Teachers may find it hard to assess participation while managing group discussion at the same time.
- Assessment of participation should not be measuring the teacher's own ability (or lack of) in managing group discussion.

Guidelines for assessing in-class participation

Based on the above, the following guidelines are suggested:

- Assess performance on clearly defined tasks and not on vague impressions of the quantity or quality of a student's contribution to class discussion – there are too many uncontrolled variables.
- Specify clearly the criteria for assessing the in-class performance of students; make sure they are in a form that students can translate into action or behaviour.
- Provide students with the opportunity to learn the skills, which are being assessed.
- If you are the course coordinator, make sure that all tutors are skilled in small group teaching; the assessment should not reflect the competence of the person facilitating the class.
- Make sure that the assessment is fair to everyone; it should not discriminate against those with disability, women, different cultural groups, etc. Be aware that students who do not have English as their first language may need more time to process comments and questions from staff or other students and so may appear reluctant to participate.
- Make sure that teachers in the same course apply the

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criteria consistently; this will almost certainly involve training.

Principles underlying assessment of in-class performance

The principles underlying the assessment of performance in class are much the same as those for judging written assignment work.

The main points are:

- identify the qualities that you want students to demonstrate in their performance
- ensure that these qualities are derivable from the course objectives
- identify the criteria that you will use to assess whether students have displayed these qualities
- draw up an assessment guide, which will enable you to record your judgments and give feedback to students.

An example of the *qualities* that might be assessed in a structured task such as a seminar presentation are given in the following section as well as the *kind of criteria* that could be used for judging.

5. Assessing student presentations

This section provides information on the assessment of student presentations. Commonly these will be undertaken in a class setting but increasingly they may be delivered online either synchronously or asynchronously using combinations of video conferencing and presentation technologies. It begins with an overview of the qualities that can be used to assess presentations with an example of a rubric or set of marking criteria that you might use.

Qualities that might be assessed in a seminar presentation

Presentations can be seen as consisting of an intellectual component reflecting its purpose, a set of materials and tools that facilitate or embody the communication of the presentation, and a performance element undertaken by the student. The relative importance and complexity of these three elements will vary in different courses and assessments and this will need to be reflected in the selection of elements from these qualities used in the construction of marking guidelines or rubrics.

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Message

- Clarity of the presentation's intention or purpose.
- Coherence of explanations and arguments.
- Structure, organisation and sequencing of individual elements.
- Originality or insight apparent in the ideas communicated. Achievement of the presentation's intentions.
- Time on task; important elements of the message are given predominance in the presentation.

Materials

- Content clearly contributes to the communication of the intended message.
- Content is easily comprehended by the audience.
- Choices of fonts, images and other media contribute to the communication of the intended message.
- Content and ideas are appropriately referenced.
- Content is free of errors of fact and presentation.
- Production values are consistent with the significance of the presentation and the audience.
- Content is interesting and engages the audience.
- Handouts and supporting materials enhance the experience and/or support follow-up actions.

Delivery

- Timekeeping; presentation uses the available time well and does not go over the specified limit.
- Pace of presentation; sufficient to maintain the interest of the audience while not being rushed.
- The level and pitch of audio-visual content is suitable for the audience and the medium.
- The presenter is engaged and enthusiastic in their delivery. The presenter uses supporting materials to support communication rather than instead of engaging with the audience.
- The audience responds to the delivery and is engaged with the message.
- Questions are solicited and responded to effectively.

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Example of rating criteria for assessing seminar performance

Rating		Description (example statements)
5	Excellent	The quality has been demonstrated to an exceptional level; a professional performance; a performance well above the expected level for a student in this paper.
4	Very good	The quality has been demonstrated to a high standard; the student has reached a level which clearly exceeds 'competency'.
3	Good	The quality is clearly demonstrated without being exceptional in any way; students can be thought of as being competent in respect of this quality.
2	Satisfactory	The quality has been demonstrated to a minimally acceptable level; there may be flaws but these are not serious enough to fail the student on this quality.
1	Poor	The quality is absent or performed to a very low level, or the performance is seriously flawed in this respect.

The relevant qualities can be combined with criteria such as these scales or rubric statements describing your expectations for student work ranked as exemplary, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. This can then be used to communicate expectations to students and also as a tool for assessing presentations and providing feedback.

Grading

Grading in-class seminar presentations

This section looks at the grading of seminar performance using the attached oral presentation assignment (p. 5) and assessment sheet example (p. 6).

During or immediately after the student's presentation, circle the number which best describes the student's performance in respect of each of the qualities being assessed. This need not be your final judgment but you need to keep a record of your impressions at the time. Jot down any observations that will be of use to you in reaching your overall mark or grade for the performance.

Following the seminar, complete a second sheet for feedback to the student; enter your rating for each quality and give comments in the spaces provided.

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Provisional grade

In determining the grade for the performance, look at the pattern of ratings across the qualities being assessed. If the ratings are all 'excellent', the student should be awarded an A or an A+; treat this as a provisional grade. The following table sets out the pattern for other provisional grades:

Provisional grade	Pattern of ratings
A+, A	Predominantly 'excellent' (more so for A+)
A-, B+	Predominantly 'very good' or centred on 'very good'
B, B-	Predominantly 'good' or centred on 'good'
C+, C	Predominantly 'satisfactory' or centred on 'satisfactory'
D, E	Predominantly 'poor' (more so for E)

Final grade

In general, there should be consistency between your ratings and the overall grade. A student with ratings centred on 'good' should not expect a 'C' grade. However, when assigning a final grade, take account of both your overall impression of the student's performance (a global judgement) and the detailed ratings. The research literature on the validity and reliability of marking supports this approach. Global impressions can sometimes be flawed because the marker can be overly influenced by one or two qualities to the exclusion of others; on the other hand, a detailed marking scheme can never take account of unexpected qualities or by what is summarised by the saying 'the whole is greater than the sum of the parts'. Award, for example, a bonus of up to two grades for unexpected qualities.

If you have trouble deciding whether an 'excellent' performance overall should be awarded an A+ or an A (or a 'very good' performance an A- or a B+), consider the performance of all the students at that level; are you able to discriminate between them? If so, give the higher grade to those who performed marginally better and the lower grade to the others.

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Example: Oral Presentation/Seminar

Seminar Presentation & Annotated Bibliography

Due date:	at relevant seminar, weeks 3-7
Length:	15 minute individual presentation; plus annotated bibliography of maximum 16-20 references
Value:	40% of the total mark for LIBRXXX

This assignment relates to Learning Objectives 1 and 2.

Choose a book production technique covered in LIBRXXX during weeks 3 to 7, which interests you. This will be the focus for both your seminar presentation and your annotated bibliography. You should sign up for your presentation at the first meeting; topics are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Choose a book which foregrounds the subject area you have selected. Wai-te-Ata Press has a collection of books suitable for this assignment. Internal students will browse and borrow from this collection in week 1; open learning students can place requests and borrow a book once a topic is chosen, or can select a book from their own private collection or from a local library. Take the book you have selected and be prepared to talk about it to the class for 15 minutes, through the lens of the one book production technique you have chosen. If you have selected, for example, to work on bookbinding, describe the binding style used for the particular book you have chosen, broadening the context slightly to give some indication as to where/ how that style fits into the history of bookbinding and how it contributes to an issue in bookbinding studies noted in our readings. It will be up to you to provide any visual or textual materials IN ADVANCE to support your presentation and to ensure that open learning students have access to them as well as the internal students.

From the background reading done for your seminar presentation, compile a preliminary bibliography of 16 to 20 items of significant resource material (including electronic) available on your subject area in New Zealand. You must have "sighted" each item in order to "cite" it in your bibliography. You will have had some experience sourcing and using these materials for your individual presentation. Decide upon a style of annotation appropriate to the audience for whom you will be writing. The finished bibliography is due BEFORE your seminar presentation and should be posted to the digital drop box so all students have an opportunity to refer to it and so that it becomes part of our shared bibliographic network for the course.

Explanatory notes

The purpose of this assignment is to enable you to research in depth one area of book production.

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Example: Assessment sheet for presentation/seminar

LIBRXXX

Evaluation sheet for oral presentation

Name of presenter:

Topic:

Date:

Please circle the description which in your estimation best fits this presentation:

1. Was the structure of the seminar explained at the beginning?
   not at all OK very well
2. Was the topic adequately introduced?
   not at all OK very well
3. Subject content:
   minimal just right too dense
4. Seminar organisation:
   poor OK excellent
5. Use of hand-outs, images, presentation materials:
   not enough spot on too much
6. Awareness of both internal and open learning audience:
   lacking just right over the top
7. Reading from notes:
   always sometimes never
8. Talking speed:
   too slow perfect too fast
9. Talking style:
   monotone OK interesting
10. Ability to field questions:
    unprepared OK confident

Comments:

If you were grading this presentation, you would give it an: *(circle one)*

Excellent	**A+** 85% or over	**A** 80-84	**A-** 75-79
Good	**B+** 70-74	**B** 65-69	
Satisfactory	**B-** 60-64	**C+** 55-59	
Fair	**C** 50-54		
Poor	**D** 40-49	**E** 0-39	

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6. Peer and self assessment

Peer assessment involves assessment by a student of work completed by another student enrolled in the same course. Self-assessment takes place when a student evaluates aspects of their own performance. Providing an opportunity for students to comment on another's work (e.g., oral presentations, designs, performances, written work, contribution to group work) can assist in the development of a range of learning skills including communication, decision making, analysis and evaluation. As the development of critical thinking abilities is the objective of many University programmes, the use of peer and self assessment as an opportunity to develop those skills not only achieves the graduate attributes, but also engages the students more actively in the assessment processes. (Boud, 2010).

While the research into peer and self assessment has moved from a position of cautious approval (Hanrahan & Isaacs, 2001) to a position of wholehearted support (Boud, 2010), it is also clear that the students need to be helped to understand the process to gain greatest benefits (Vu & Dall'Alba, 2007). It can also be a time consuming process, so it needs to be planned into the assessment process from the start and you need to ensure that it is contributing to the students' learning.

There also continues to be debate in the literature regarding the criteria by which students are to express judgment. Some authors argue that students may be competent to assess the extent to which they and their colleagues have participated effectively in a group, but not to assess knowledge, reasoning or expression in the final product. Similarly, teaching staff are competent to assess substantive aspects of the work, but since they are not group members, they must rely solely on second-hand evidence for assessing group process. Boud (2010) argues strongly that, given practice and clear assessment criteria, students are able to assess all aspects of their own work and that of others however in deciding on the criteria for group work assessment it is helpful to separate the decision into two parts: how will the product be assessed and how will the process of group work be assessed.

Peer assessment can be used so that students provide feedback to other colleagues (peer feedback) and it can be used so that students provide marks or grades for their colleagues (peer marking). **Peer marking can contribute up to 10% of the course grade** (See Assessment Handbook 2.2.2). **Before peer assessment counts formally towards a final grade, students**

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should have the opportunity to practise giving and receiving feedback with their peers in a supportive and structured environment. Some authors suggest that, if self or peer assessment is to be used, students ought to be involved in the development of the assessment method and criteria. Detailed marking schemes may be required.

Peer marking can take several forms and can be applied to individual work or within groups. Please note that all the following examples are accompanied by co-ordinator / lecturer moderation.

Peer marking of individual work

- Random distribution of completed assessment items amongst the class. Students are required to complete a marking sheet. The staff member moderates marks and the marking sheets are returned to the student.
- Completion of an assessment sheet by each student in the class. Tasks include presentations or display. Marks are collated and moderated by the staff member to form an overall mark. The overall mark and the marking sheets are returned to the student. However research shows that there should not be too much adjustment by staff of the peer assessed marks, otherwise students do not bother properly with the activity (Yu, 2011).

Peer marking of group work

- Student marks are used to moderate the group mark. The group as a whole is given a mark and group members (using diary and/or meeting records, feedback from others, etc.) allocate final individual marks. A variety of methods are available to allocate marks between group members (e.g., Crowe & Pemberton, 2000).
- Students provide teachers with marks based on systematic data (e.g., diary records, notes, feedback from others, self-assessment, etc.). Typically these relate to individual contribution within the group. The teacher is then able to use this information to allocate marks to individuals.

NB: If there is peer assessment of the relative contribution of students to a group project, then the process for collecting the ratings should be confidential, clear and simple to use and the process should include self assessment as well as peer assessment.

Where peer marking contributes in any way to a student's final grade it is vital that:

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- the assessed outcomes are a reliable and valid reflection of the quality of student work.
- clear guidelines and criteria are available and fully understood by all students and adequate training given to ensure that criteria are applied consistently.
- guidelines should include predetermined standards and a mechanism for dealing with disagreements or situations where individuals are unable to work as part of a group.

Self assessment

It is often easier for students to comment on the work of their peers before being able to form reliable judgments about their own work. While opportunities for self assessment should be encouraged, currently at VUW, no marks from self assessment can contribute to the course grade. (See Assessment Handbook 2.2.3.)

For further information on peer assessment see the University of Melbourne's Guide to Student Peer Review.

7. Providing and using feedback

Methods of feedback to students must be carefully planned to assist in improving the quality of learning. Feedback is often described as *summative*, providing information on the standard or quality of student work, or *formative*, providing information on how the student can improve.

Effective feedback is *timely*; useful in that it provides information on *strengths and weaknesses*; provides clear information on *how to improve*; and *encourages* rather than discourages the student. Feedback that exposes misconceptions in the students' models of understanding such as Concept Tests (Mazur & Somers, 1999) or activities that explore Troublesome Knowledge (Meyer & Land, 2003) can be very effective. The UK Higher Education Academy has identified seven principles of good feedback practice (Juwah, et. al., 2004) stating that it:

1. Facilitates the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning.
2. Encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning.
3. Helps clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, standards expected).
4. Provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance.

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5. Delivers high quality information to students about their learning.
6. Encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem.
7. Provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape the teaching.

A helpful strategy for designing or improving any assessment activity is to consider how the student might use feedback in a productive way to demonstrate that they have learnt and improved, within the current course context. Where possible, students should be given the opportunity to gain feedback in multiple ways while undertaking an assessment, either through the use of staged tasks or review of draft work. Effective feedback strategies should consider the following guidelines:

- The feedback cycle begins when the students first see the assessment programme. If the information they receive about this is clear and accompanied by details of marking criteria, students are more likely to produce good results. Students and teachers have different perceptions of feedback (Carless, 2006) and it is most helpful if a dialogue between teacher and student can be developed around assessment.
- In order to give very quick feedback on a written assessment, consider giving whole class feedback when you have read a small number of the assessments. Or, you could provide a model answer on Blackboard once all the work has been handed in.
- If more than one person is providing feedback ensure that your comments are consistent in their focus, detail and extent. A useful strategy, particularly when using multiple tutors, is to compile a set of standard feedback statements that all markers draw upon when addressing common issues. This can often be compiled easily after an initial sample of work is marked.
- Summarise your comments and indicate the fact that it is a summary. Try to be as clear as possible in your choice of language and use specific examples instead of generic ones where possible.
- Make sure your comments are legible. Ticks, ? and underlining are not very helpful to the student. They are your shorthand, but explain them to the student. Avoid terms or jargon, which students may not understand unless they are necessarily relevant to the material being learnt.
- Balance the positive with the negative. Both negative and

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positive points should be constructive and provide guidance for further improvements.

- Feedback is more effective if it is provided in multiple formats. As well as written feedback, consider providing feedback in lectures, through tutorials, online and individually. This can include podcasts or video provided through the University's VStream system.
- Giving feedback is not the exclusive domain of the instructor. Encourage students to evaluate themselves and to seek feedback from other sources, including through discussions with other students. Peer feedback (see section 6) can be very helpful and constructive for students and may or may not contribute to, or influence, the final mark. Consider allowing time for this in the tutorial session when assignments are handed back. Students will also obtain feedback through the experience of collaborative tasks undertaken in class, including in lectures.
- When working with smaller classes, postgraduate students or in response to a draft piece of work ask the students what kind of feedback they want. For example, do they want you to provide specific comment on structure, the introduction, etc.?
- Make sure that there is a clear relationship between the grade and the feedback provided. Use of a rubric or guide (see section 2) can help provide context. Ensure your marks and comments are consistent with the criteria and reflect the appropriate weighting (i.e., "not a satisfactory piece of work because… : grade D").
- Distinguish between different skills (e.g., student may have lots of good ideas but may be poor at spelling).
- Give suggestions for possible follow-up to the work where appropriate (e.g., further reading or extending ideas).
- Use technology to make giving feedback easier. You could use Word's "Track Changes" feature to comment on assignments which have been submitted electronically. Or you could post general class feedback on the course Blackboard site so everyone can benefit.
- Consider using a feedback cover sheet or handing back a summary of the most common problems in the class as part of your feedback.
- Keep a copy of your comments for each student. When marking the next assignment check to see that students have improved/taken account of earlier comments.

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- Getting feedback on feedback can help the marker improve their practice, or the lecturer improve the lecture.
- Allow time when you hand back the assignments for students to read your comments. Ask them to identify one point that they will work on in the next assignment. Allocating time signals to students that reflecting on feedback is an valued activity. The following feedback pro forma provides an example of how students can be encouraged to systematically consider their response to feedback. To increase the usefulness of this approach ask students to make two copies of the completed pro forma. One copy can then be handed to the tutor/lecturer for later reference.

RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK - PLAN OF ACTION

(Make two copies. Keep one for yourself and hand the other to your tutor/lecturer.)

Name of student:
Course:
Assignment number/topic:

I want to maintain my level of achievement/improve my achievement (delete as appropriate).

What did I do well?

What does the individual feedback on my assignments tell me to develop/continue/attend to?

What features described in general feedback apply to my work?

Is there anything in the feedback that I would like clarified?

Has anything been said in a lecture/workshop/tutorial/lab, etc. I particularly need to take note of?

What features of grammar, spelling, punctuation, expression are adversely commented upon in my work?

My action plan to improve my work during this academic year is.....

Adapted from Swann, J., & Arthurs, J., (1999).

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8. Ensuring academic integrity

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning, are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. Lying, stealing and misusing others' academic work are not acceptable. All members of the Victoria University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity is an important contributor to the perceived value of our qualifications.

Academic integrity is built on a foundation of knowledge. Students need to learn the importance of placing their own work in a wider academic or disciplinary context, understanding referencing conventions, what paraphrasing is, why it is unacceptable not to acknowledge the work of others and how to do that in an acceptable way.

These are skills which students have to learn so that they understand the academic conventions which are expected at University. These may not be the same ones as were acceptable at school or are acceptable in another context. Therefore penalties should be introduced gradually as they learn and in accordance with the university policy. Effective assessment design will reduce the possibility of students committing academic offences, and provides confidence that any penalties are imposed fairly and in accordance with natural justice, the policies and statutes of the University.

The University licenses the "Turnitin" software, which is available through Blackboard course sites or separately in stand-alone mode. It can be used both as an educative tool as well as a monitoring tool. The Turnitin reports provide an efficient way of detecting many instances of copied text sourced from the Internet or other students, but it depends on academic judgement to decide if that copying is misconduct, including plagiarism.

The following section provides suggestions of ways to educate students in academic integrity, discourage academic offences and assist in identifying them when they occur. Any staff member suspecting student misconduct must follow the processes outlined in the University Student Conduct Statute.

- Make sure that students are clearly informed of the definition of plagiarism as well as the seriousness of

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academic offences and School penalties plus VUW policy. Standard sections on conduct are included in course outlines and additional information is provided on the University website (http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism).

- If your assessments are based on written work, consider the use of Turnitin to check all of the students' submissions. Make sure that the course outline includes the standard section on the use of the Turnitin software.
- Use a variety of assessment modes, which could include drafts, outlines and student presentations.
- Where possible provide students with structured tasks with interim milestones and deliverables aimed at correcting any issues early, supporting effective time-management, and ensuring students feel in control of the work expected of them.
- Consider allocating marks for a submitted draft which could be subsequently revised before final submission. This method has the added advantage of assisting students to take account of feedback (see section 7).
- Develop assessment activities that are significantly different from previous years and that are tailored to the specific course objectives.
- Provide opportunities for students to choose tasks aligned to their own experiences.
- Consider incorporating an interpretive component where assessment is largely based on analysis.
- Ensure that markers are vigilant for signs of plagiarism (e.g., changes in writing style, use of terminology, concepts that are unlikely to be familiar to undergraduate students, references that are unavailable at VUW).
- Ensure that all markers understand the need to forward any suspect assessments to the Course Coordinator.
- Establish thorough moderation procedures (see section 3) and methods for spot checking student work. Ensure that students know that these practices are in operation.
- Require students to attach a draft when submitting the final copy of their assignment. Alternatively students could be required to make drafts available on request.

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Other resources

http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsld/resources/assessment.html

http://www.derby.ac.uk/files/11.pdf

http://phil-race.co.uk/most-popular-downloads/

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