
La Trobe College
Australia

Assessment Policy

Foundation Studies
& Diploma Programs

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1.0 Overview

Assessment is the process of forming a judgment about the quality and extent of student achievement or performance, and therefore a judgment about the learning itself. Assessment shapes the learning that takes place, that is, what students learn and how they learn it, and should reflect closely the purposes and aims of the subject. This policy applies to all students enrolled in the Diploma, Foundation Studies and non-award courses offered at La Trobe College Australia.

1.1 Aim of Assessment

The aims of assessment include:

- Improving the quality of the curriculum (subjects and courses);
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching process and facilitating continuous improvement;
- Improving and promoting subsequent learning through feedback that is clear, informative, timely and relevant;
- Promoting student engagement and understanding to encourage a desire for lifelong learning;
- forming a judgment about the quality and extent of student achievement or performance;
- Formally certifying achievements for external audiences; and
- Accountability to the University, accrediting bodies, employers and the wider community.

Assessment methods may take a variety of forms: the key criterion for choice among methods should be appropriateness to the learning outcomes. Assessment should be criteria based rather than norm referenced, and may include individual or collaborative achievement or both. The requirements for learner success should be made clear, and the overall strategy should be to develop in students the ability to evaluate the quality of their own work in order to equip them to function as professionals with a commitment to life-long learning.

Assessment practices within La Trobe College Australia are based on the general principles of criteria based assessment. These are that the desired learning outcomes for a subject are clearly specified; assessment tasks are designed to indicate progress towards the desired learning outcomes; and the assessment grade is a measure of the extent to which the learning outcomes have been achieved. The standard of performance that is required for the award of a particular grade is a judgment that is based on the professional expertise of the various staff who contribute to the assessment process and is informed by experience with accepted standards, including, where appropriate, standards in other institutions. There is no pre-determined distribution of grades as the outcome of assessing a group of students.

1.2 Assessment Requirements

Student learning is gradual and cumulative, with qualitative changes taking place throughout the process. For this reason, the assessment requirements for a subject should enable the teaching staff to engage in both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment is designed to provide students with feedback and does not contribute to the final mark and grade. Summative assessment does contribute to the final mark and grade. Some forms of summative assessment may also be formative. The academic staff member responsible for a subject exercises their professional judgment in using a variety of methods that are relevant, valid, fair and appropriate to the aims and objectives of the subject.

1.3 Approval of Assessment Requirements and Assessment Tasks

The assessment requirements and assessment tasks for a subject are documented in the submission for approval of the Subject Outline. In approving the Subject Outline, either the La Trobe University Coordinator for Diploma level subjects or the La Trobe College Australia Academic

Director for Foundation Studies subjects will consider the relationship between the assessment methods and the learning outcomes expected for the subject.

The range of assessment tasks to be performed by students and the expected learning outcomes for the subject will be specified in the Subject Outline and should be discussed with students at appropriate times throughout the trimester.

1.4 Hurdle Requirements

1.4.1 Definition

A hurdle requirement within a subject is a compulsory piece or part of a subject that must be met in order for a student to be eligible to receive a 'pass' grade.

Students may be asked to carry out tasks, in class or out, and be provided with feedback as part of the ongoing teaching/learning process. Such activities only constitute a hurdle requirement if a penalty will be imposed for not completing them or reaching the required level of proficiency, that is, the student will fail the subject if they do not complete the activity or reach the required level.

1.4.2 Principles

As with all assessment requirements and assessed tasks, hurdle requirements should:

- a) Clearly be related to the objectives/learning outcomes of the subject;
- b) Consider equity issues and students' varying circumstances.

1.4.3 Types of Hurdle Requirements

There are a variety of assessment hurdles, conditions for passing a subject other than the overall mark, which may be built into the assessment of the learning outcomes of the subject, including:

- A requirement to achieve a minimum mark for a particular assessment task and a total of ~~more than~~ at least 50 marks overall in order to pass a subject. For example, students may be required to gain a minimum of 40% on a final examination in order to pass a subject. If a student fails to gain 40% in the final examination they will fail the subject, no matter how small a proportion of the overall mark it comprises.
- A requirement to pass both a practical and theory component and have a total of at least 50 marks overall in order to pass a subject.
- A requirement to submit all assessment tasks and a total of at least 50 marks overall in order to pass a subject. For example, students may be required to at least attempt all assessment items such as an oral presentation, an essay and a final examination, in order to pass a subject.

1.4.4 Communication of Hurdle Requirements

Where students are required to pass all assessment items, or a particular assessment item, in order to pass a subject, this must be clearly specified in the Subject Outline.

Attendance cannot be required in order to pass a subject without either the approval of the La Trobe University Coordinator for Diploma level subjects or the La Trobe College Australia Academic Director for Foundation Studies level subjects approval. Where approval has been

given this must be clearly set out in the Subject Outline ~~distributed in week 1 of trimester.~~

1.5 Assessment Advice to Students

All teaching staff within La Trobe College Australia are required to provide students with the approved Subject Outline which states the assessment requirements for the subject, including the due dates of assessment items and relevant characteristics such as word lengths for essays and duration for examinations. The Subject Outline must state the criteria against which individual assessment items are judged and their relative weighting. The Subject Outline must also indicate the way in which individual assessment items are combined to give an overall grade.

The Subject Outline must be provided to students before any assessments are due and available on the LMS prior to the commencement of a study period. All teaching staff members should ensure that students are advised of the location of the Subject Outlines at the commencement of the subject.

Where a student enrolls in a subject after the commencement of teaching or for whatever reason is not present when students are given information concerning the assessment requirements of the subject, it is the student's responsibility to locate the information.

1.6 Changes to Assessment Requirements

Proposals to alter the assessment requirements of a subject should be made by the relevant La Trobe College Australia Academic Coordinator by lodging a revised Subject Outline to either the La Trobe University Coordinator for Diploma level subjects or the La Trobe College Australia Academic Director for Foundation Studies level subjects. Proposals for the alteration of assessment should be lodged before the next planned offering of the subject.

The La Trobe University Coordinator or the La Trobe College Australia Academic Director will then determine whether the proposed change to the assessment requirements is consistent with the originally approved assessment requirements and its relationship to learning outcomes and its overall demands on the students.

Changes to assessment requirements will not normally be considered during a trimester, however, in exceptional circumstances, the La Trobe University Coordinator or the La Trobe College Australia Academic Director may approve a variation of detail in the assessment requirements of a subject, providing the relationship between the assessment methods and the learning outcomes expected for the subject are maintained. If change to the published assessment requirements occurs during the course of a trimester students will be notified ~~in written and/or electronic form~~ of the change.

1.7 Submission of Assessment Items

The method of submission of an assessment item will be communicated in the instructions of the assessment.

1.7.5 Paper Based Submission

A La Trobe College Australia Assignment Cover Sheet may be required to be completed and signed by all students involved in completing group assignments.

It is the responsibility of each student to keep an electronic copy of their assignment.

The submission of bulky assignments including models should be submitted as advised by the La Trobe College Australia teacher. Assignment cover sheets may be required to be

completed, signed and attached to these assignments.

1.7.6 Electronic Submission

To submit an assignment electronically students must use the LMS.

Assignments submitted electronically must be in a file format acceptable by the LMS.

When submitting assignments using the LMS, students are acknowledging that they have read, understood and accepted La Trobe College Australia's policy on academic misconduct, and that they are fully aware of the consequences of cheating and plagiarism, including a mark of zero (0) or a reduced mark for this subject or other relevant penalties.

1.7.7 Plagiarism Detection System

~~In many subjects,~~ La Trobe College Australia will also use a plagiarism detection system to electronically scan assessments submitted by students. This tool allows teachers to compare assessment items of students in order to identify instances where work has been copied from another source without appropriate referencing

1.7.8 Late Submission

Failure to submit an item of assessment by the due date without an application for extension of time from the appropriate subject teacher may incur a penalty.

1.7.9 Penalties for Late Submission

Assessments submitted after the due date may be penalised 5% of the TOTAL marks available for assessment (not the grade awarded to the student) for each day the assessment is late.

Weekends and public holidays are not counted in the determination of the penalty for late submission.

1.8 Collection/Return of Assessment Items

Assessment feedback will be returned within 14 working days of the submission date of the item.

All uncollected physical assignments will be destroyed at the end of week two of the following trimester.

All marked assignments should be kept until a final grade is awarded for the subject.

1.9 Extensions of Time for Assessment Items

Before the due date a student may submit a written request to their teacher for an extension of time for the submission of an assessment item on the grounds of serious illness, accident, disability, bereavement or other exceptional circumstances. Applications must be accompanied by valid supporting documentation.

1.10 Appeals Against Outcome

Students who feel that their case for extension has been unjustly considered by their teacher may appeal the decision under the provisions of the Student Grievance Policy.

1.11 Deferred Assessment

A student may apply for deferred assessment if they were prevented from undertaking an assessment item, such as an examination, test, quiz, seminar presentation, or other assessment items scheduled for a particular date, on the grounds of serious illness, accident, disability, bereavement, or other exceptional circumstances.

Please refer to the La Trobe College Australia Special Consideration and Deferred Assessment Policy for further information.

1.12 Assessment Results

1.12.10 Teacher Responsibilities

During the trimester, individual teachers to communicate their evaluations of individual assessment items to students with reference to the criteria against which performance has been assessed. All teachers are expected to communicate the marks awarded for assessment items completed within trimester to students who are enrolled in their class within fourteen (14) days of student submission using the LMS.

1.12.11 Student Responsibilities

Students of La Trobe College Australia will be able to access their results for within trimester assessment items through the LMS within fourteen (14) days of due date for the assessment item.

It is a student's responsibility to monitor their academic performance throughout the trimester and seek assistance from relevant La Trobe College Australia staff. La Trobe College Australia may provide a warning to students whose marks within a trimester are such that the student is at risk of receiving a failing grade if their academic performance fails to improve.

2.0 Special Consideration

See Special Consideration and Deferred Assessment Policy.

3.0 Deferred Assessment

See Special Consideration and Deferred Assessment Policy

4.0 Moderation of Assessment

La Trobe College Australia undertakes internal and external moderation processes as a quality assurance mechanism to ensure validity and reliability of expected learning outcomes, assessment tasks, marking criteria and final grades.

Internal moderation is designed to ensure that teaching staff within subjects are making consistent and accurate assessment decisions in accordance with the criteria defined for the assessment item.

La Trobe College Australia also undertakes extensive external moderation with La Trobe University to verify the validity of assessment instruments and reliability of assessment decisions.

As an overriding principle, La Trobe College Australia Academic Coordinators in Melbourne liaise regularly with their counterparts in Sydney to ensure that La Trobe College Australia remains abreast of subject developments and changes in curriculum and learning and teaching practices and to ensure consistency of practice with design, application and marking of assessment.

Moderation can also include feedback provided by other review avenues such as the Student Evaluation of subjects, and subject reviews undertaken by the relevant Course Committees.

4.1 Internal Moderation of Assessment

As part of the internal moderation of assessment, each Subject Coordinator ensures that a solutions guide and/or marking schema is developed enabling the teaching team to clarify assessment requirements and ensure consistency of expectations. Solutions and marking schema also provide a mechanism against which external moderators can review marking practices undertaken by La Trobe College Australia staff.

During each trimester, the teaching team for each subject meet to discuss the assessment tasks and the marking schema. The team also provides feedback on the schema where requirements are unclear or there is potential for a discrepancy around expectations.

4.1.1 Internal Moderation of Marking

Where there are multiple markers involved in the marking of assessment items within a subject, internal moderation of both formative and summative assessment will occur prior to the publishing of marks. Moderation allows for scrutiny of all marks generated by the marking team in order to verify the appropriateness of the marking and also to bring a second judgement, particularly in relation to very good or very poor performance. Internal moderation may take the form of:

- Detailed and agreed upon marking criteria;
- Detailed and agreed upon exam solutions;
- Cross or shared marking between classes;
- Double marking of at least all fails and double marking of a sample of other grades; and/or
- Any other suitable method that allows for the moderation of marks awarded within a team situation.

In team teaching situations, the La Trobe College Australia Academic Coordinator/Academic Manager is initially responsible for examining the distribution of marks awarded by each of the markers. This process identifies where teachers are awarding marks outside of the average or general trend within in the subject. Where the Academic Coordinator/Academic Manager identifies a problem with a particular marker, they should discuss the situation with the relevant teaching staff member. Where the Academic Coordinator/Academic Manager discovers discrepancies without a valid explanation, they will consult the Academic Director to discuss the options that may be available.

4.2 External Moderation of Subject Outlines

La Trobe College Australia Diploma subjects largely mirror equivalent subjects designed and

delivered at La Trobe University and are therefore subject to curriculum design (content, assessment and delivery) principles as applied within the relevant College or School at La Trobe University. The reliability of assessment practices detailed within La Trobe College Australia subject outlines, as moderated by La Trobe University Course Coordinators is reviewed against relevant discipline and industry standards and expectations.

Foundation Studies subjects may be chosen to be benchmarked against other Navitas Colleges.

Assessment practices at La Trobe College Australia are also moderated by the relevant La Trobe College Australia Course Committee. The committee is provided with summaries of the learning outcomes, content, and assessment schedules and reviews of pass/fail rates and methods of moderation.

4.2.2 External Moderation of Final Examination Papers

Prior to the implementation of final diploma examinations each trimester, La Trobe College Australia Academic Coordinators send copies of proposed final examination papers to the relevant La Trobe University Course Coordinator. La Trobe University Course Coordinators undertake moderation of the examination paper and confirm the validity and reliability of the assessment instrument. Alternately, La Trobe College Australia is given a final examination paper by the partner University and recommendations for change are communicated to the relevant La Trobe University subject Coordinator.

4.2.3 External Moderation of Final Examination Scripts

Each trimester, a minimum of a 10% sample of examination scripts across the spread of grades for two subjects from each Diploma delivered in that trimester is provided to the relevant La Trobe University Course Coordinator. These examination scripts are moderated to ensure comparability of marking standards between La Trobe College Australia and La Trobe University, and consistency within La Trobe College Australia.

This process involves a second marker from La Trobe University examining and verifying the marks of the original marker. Given that the second marker was not associated with the original marking of the examination, this process ensures consistency and fairness with the marking scheme both across lecturers within a course at La Trobe College Australia and in comparison to standards applied at La Trobe University.

La Trobe University Course Coordinators will liaise with the College Academic Coordinator to effect any necessary remarking of examination scripts or adjustment of grades to be awarded, prior to the release of grades, as a result of the moderation process.

4.2.4 External Moderation of Internal Assessments

La Trobe University may additionally request moderation of internal assessment items.

4.3 Benchmarking of Final Examination Scripts

Each trimester a minimum of a 10% sample of final diploma examination scripts across all grades for the courses not moderated in that trimester is provided to the relevant La Trobe University Course Coordinator. These examination scripts are benchmarked to ensure comparability of marking standards between La Trobe College Australia and La Trobe University, and consistency within La Trobe College Australia.

La Trobe University Course Coordinators provide feedback to the La Trobe College Australia Academic Coordinator. The Academic Coordinator liaises with Course Coordinators to discuss possible modifications to assessment practices for future trimesters.

4.4 External Moderation of End of Trimester Grades

Prior to the release of results each trimester, the La Trobe College Australia Academic Review Committee meets to moderate final grades. The Committee membership includes the Academic Director, Academic Manager and Academic Coordinators.

Moderation of final trimester results involves the review of grades distributions to ensure final grades reflect the level of validity and reliability of assessment practices implemented within each course throughout the duration of the trimester.

The Academic Review Committee, as part of the moderation process, will undertake an evaluation of the spread of grades in order to assess whether the assessment tasks and interpretation of marking schema have been appropriate. As a result of this evaluation, the Academic Review Committee may amend grade distributions where anomalies are identified.

The Academic Review Committee reports to the Learning and Teaching committee who will review and analyse grading decisions.

Policy Title	Assessment Policy	
Policy Owners	Academic Director (FSDP)	
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	LTM Executive Committee	May 13 2015
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	LTCA Academic Board	April 29 2022
Relevant Legislation		
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Related Guidelines		
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2/5/17	1.1	1.1 added 'forming a judgment about the quality and extent of student achievement or performance' 4.2.2 Added ' <u>a minimum</u> ' to a 10% sample. Added 4.2.3 External Moderation of Internal Assessments 4.3 Added ' <u>a minimum</u> ' to a 10% sample.
12/7/18	1.2	College name change to LTCA
6/2/19	1.3	Merged separate LTCA Melbourne and Sydney campus policies into one policy.
29/04/2022	1.4	Updates made to the policy document based on new on the ground processes. Removal of paper based cover sheets and changes to sentence structures.