

## ASSESSMENT POLICY

### PURPOSE

Assessment is the process of collecting evidence of a candidate's skill and knowledge in relation to criteria; the judgment made of the level of a candidate's achievement provides their grade for that course. At the Whitehouse Institute, the purpose of assessment is to confirm student's achievements and award their effort with an appropriate grade.

PART A provides a definition of assessment within the context of the Institute

PART B provides the guiding principles for the implementation of assessment within the Institute

PART C provides an introduction to the review of the assessment process

PART D provides information of the matter of 'Special consideration'

PART E provides an introduction to the Whitehouse Institute's stand on ethical behaviour and plagiarism

### POLICY

#### PART A: Definition of assessment

At the Whitehouse Institute:

1. Assessment is designed to measure student's students' achievements against explicit learning objectives, to promote learning and improve student performance
2. Assessment in a subject should involve more than one type of assessment task
3. Assessment methods and the criteria by which work will be judged should be explicit, based solely on academic achievement and reflect the objectives stated for the subject
4. Assessment will be demonstrably fair and every reasonable effort should be made to ensure that it does not discriminate on grounds which are irrelevant to the achievement of the subject objectives
5. Feedback is informative and constructive and, so long as work is submitted by the due date, provided in time to be useful in subsequent assessment in the subject
6. The grading processes are transparent and reflect the extent to which the student has achieved the assessable objectives stated for the subject
7. Students can appeal an assessment decision. Find detailed information on the Assessment Appeal process.

Further, the Institute acknowledges the complex relationship between assessment outcomes and course design and delivery. The ongoing consideration of this relationship, and the evaluation of assessment outcomes provides the Whitehouse Institute of Design with the opportunity to improve its course design and instructional and assessment strategies.

#### PART B: Implementation of the assessment system

In keeping with its status as a non-self accrediting provider of higher education, the Board of Governors has delegated the responsibility for all academic matters to its Academic Committee. In discharging this duty, the Academic Committee has approved course documentation for submission to the relevant higher education accrediting bodies. The course documentation includes a detailed assessment

strategy and assessment for each course. These have been devised taking into account the following principles:

**i. Amount**

There should be sufficient assessment, based on the course goals and predetermined assessment criteria, to ensure reliable and valid judgements about student performance.

**ii. Form**

Forms of assessment should be chosen for their suitability of assessing particular learning objectives. The relative amounts of assessment in different forms should give appropriate emphasis to different learning objectives.

More than one form of assessment in a course must be used (for example, practical performance, oral presentation essay, multiple choice examination, written essay examination, report, literature review). Multi-choice examinations must not be used as the only form of assessment in a course.

The forms of assessment used must be shown to achieve consistent, fair, reliable and valid results.

**iii. Spread and timing**

Assessment should be spread across the semester so that students are able to obtain a benefit in later assessment from feedback obtained on earlier assessment

No single item of summative assessment in a course may contribute more than two thirds of the total summative assessment for the course.

PART C: Review of the assessment system

The Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Committee, under delegation from the Academic Committee are required to review assessment strategies in accordance with the Course Review Cycle, and forward recommendations for change to the Academic Committee for consideration.

PART D: Special consideration

Assessments are designed to provide feedback on performance or to establish that students have achieved an adequate standard to proceed or to graduate. The Institute's assessment system is designed to ensure that conditions are fair to all students, as consistent as possible and that individual students are not disadvantaged by adverse personal circumstances beyond their control or by the activities of other students.

Generally, serious illness or misadventure will be taken into account when considering a student's performance in a course or unit of study. There is, however, a clear distinction between longstanding illness or difficulties which prevent students from attending classes or completing required work or which seriously interfere with their capacity to study for long periods and short-term illness or misadventure that may prevent a well-prepared student from sitting for an examination or completing a

particular assessment.

The Institute's approach to cases of special consideration should be equitable, consistent, procedurally fair, timely, effective and consistent with the Institute's privacy policy.

It should be noted that special Consideration will NOT be given in the following instances:

- Occasional brief or trivial illness of a one or two week duration that occur one week or more before an assessment is due or an examination undertaken
- Workloads from other units of study, except where the request for special consideration is made within the first three weeks of semester
- Employment where the request for special consideration is made less than four weeks before the date of the assessment
- Illnesses and misadventures that have prevented students from acquiring a pass level of knowledge/skills (including all illnesses/misadventures resulting in the student missing six weeks or more of lectures or tutorials)
- Adequate standards of documentation and processes have not been met
- Requests for extensions for assignments made after the assignment is due or an assessment has taken place (except where the circumstances prevented earlier provision)
- No special consideration requests shall be processed if submitted more than one week after the assessment
- The supporting documentation post-dates the period for which special consideration was sought
- The performance of the student was equivalent or superior to that demonstrated in other assessments in the unit of study; and they pertain to planned commitments, such as elective surgery, holiday or work, where the student could reasonably be expected to have scheduled the commitment or their studies to not adversely affect their studies
- Computer-related problems, except where a police report is provided indicating that burglary or calamity has resulted in the loss of both a computer *and* backups from the students' place of residence (NB: it is assumed that students keep regular back-ups of their work, so theft of a laptop is not grounds for special consideration)

## PART E: Plagiarism

Students are expected to undertake assessments in an honest and ethical manner; the Institute does not tolerate dishonesty in this, or any other context.

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### Academic Committee

A committee of the Institute with the oversight of academic programs in higher education at the Institute.

#### Advocate

A person nominated by a student to present their case in an appeal. This person must not be a legal practitioner.

## Assessment

Assessment is the process by which the work of a student produced through an examination, test, essay or assignment or for the purpose of awarding marks that contribute to the final grade of a subject.

### Assessment types

- *Formative* – occurs at the conclusion of a period of study and result contributes to the final grade of the subject
- *Summative* – occurs during the process of skills and knowledge acquisition; does not contribute to the final grade; a type of assessment used to assist in measuring progress to date and requirements still to be met
- *RPL* – recognition of skills and knowledge gained prior to attendance at Whitehouse

### Example of Assessment methods used at Whitehouse Institute of Design

- Observation
- Portfolio
- Examination/tests/quizzes
- Interview/questioning

## Assessment appeal

A student may appeal an assessment decision within five (5) days of the results for that subject being published. Appeals may only be made on the grounds as outlined in the Assessment Appeals Procedure, and be made using the designated template.

## Assessment Appeals Committee

A committee convened by the Academic Committee to hear Assessment Appeals.

## Course

A set of subjects, the completion of which makes the student eligible for the granting of an award by the Governing Board.

## Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Committee

This is a standing committee of the Whitehouse Institute Academic Committee.

## Board of Governor's

The Whitehouse Institute Board of Governors.

## Forms of assessment

Assessment of students enrolled in a subject may be undertaken using any one or more of the following:

- Examination at the conclusion of a subject
- Formal or informal test conducted at any time
- Assignment, project work, essay, report, performance, practicum or any such other activity as required.
- Attendance requirements.

## Hearing

A face-to-face meeting.

## Misconduct

An action by a student that is in breach of any directions specified as part of the Assessment. This includes taking any action with the intention of gaining an unfair advantage.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the action or practice of taking and submitting or presenting the thoughts, writings or other work of someone else as though it is your own work. Plagiarism includes any of the following, without full and appropriate acknowledgement to the original source(s):

- The use, in essays or other assessable work, of the whole or part of a written work from any source including but not limited to a book, journal, newspaper article, set of lecture notes, current or past student's work, any other person's work, a website or database
- The paraphrasing of another's work
- The use of musical composition, audio, visual, graphic and photographic models.

Plagiarism also includes the preparation or production and submission or presentation of assignments or other work in conjunction with another person or other people when that work should be your own independent work. This remains plagiarism whether or not it is with the knowledge or consent of the other person or people. It should be noted that Whitehouse Institute of Design encourages its students to talk to staff, fellow students and other people who may be able to contribute to a student's academic work but that where independent assignment is required, submitted or presented work must be the student's own.

Enabling plagiarism contributes to plagiarism and therefore will be treated as a form of plagiarism by the Institute. Enabling plagiarism means allowing or otherwise assisting another student to copy or otherwise plagiarise work by, for example, allowing access to a draft or completed assignment or other work.

## Result categories

Result	Symbol	Comments
High Distinction	HD	85-100%
Distinction	D	75-84%
Credit	C	65-74%
Pass	P	50-64%
Fail	F	0-49%
No attempt	NA	Indicates that the student has not attempted any assessment after the Census Date.

## Meaning of Grades

Final letter grades shall reflect the extent to which students have achieved the subject

objectives.

## High Distinction (HD)

Exceptional performance indicating complete and comprehensive understanding of the subject matter; genuine mastery of relevant skills; demonstration of an extremely high level of interpretative and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and achievement of all major and minor objectives of the subject.

## Distinction (D)

Excellent performance indicating a very high level of understanding of the subject matter; development of relevant skills to a very high level; demonstration of a very high level of interpretative and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and achievement of all major and minor objectives of the subject.

## Credit (C)

Good performance indicating a high level of understanding of subject matter; development of relevant skills to a high level; demonstration of a high level of interpretative and analytical ability and achievement of all major objectives of the subject; some minor objectives may not be fully achieved.

## Pass (P)

Satisfactory performance indicating an adequate understanding of most of the basic subject matter; partial development of relevant skills; adequate interpretative and analytical ability and achievement of all major objectives of the subject; some minor objectives may not be achieved.

## Fail (N)

Unsatisfactory performance indicating an inadequate understanding of the basic subject matter; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretative and analytical ability; and failure to achieve major and minor objectives of the subject.

## No attempt (NA)

Students fail to submit any assessed work after the FEE HELP census date and who do not withdraw prior to the withdrawal date.

## Withdrawn/no fee payable (WDNFP)

Student withdrew from subject on or before FEE HELP Census date

## Withdrawn/fee payable (WDFP)

Student withdrew from subject after the FEE HELP Census date

## **Distribution of Grades**

The Academic Committee does not allow grades to be distributed to fit a particular predetermined range ('fitting the bell curve' or 'scaling'). The Academic Committee, through its committees monitors the overall grade distribution at the level of the Department to ensure broad comparability from semester to semester and across the Whitehouse Institute of Design.

## Subject Outline

The Subject Outline is the detailed description of the learning outcomes, assessment tasks and other associated information related to a subject issued to the student at the commencement of classes in the subject.

### Summative assessment

Summative assessment may be conducted through such things as assignment, essays, exhibitions, formal tests, performances, projects, practicum and examinations for which marks are awarded that contribute to the final result of a subject within a program of study undertaken by the student.

### Written notice/letter

Unless otherwise specified, written notice/letter can include notification by presentation with a written document, mailed or couriered letter, email and/or fax.

This policy was approved by the Academic Committee on 27 February 2007 and is set out in the Student Handbook, Staff Handbook, Policy and Procedures Manual and published on the Whitehouse Institute website [www.whitehouse-design.edu.au](http://www.whitehouse-design.edu.au)