Student Assessment Policy and Procedure

Policy Owner	Academic Dean
Approving Authority	Academic Board
Implementation Responsibility	Academic Dean
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Part A: Preamble

1. Purpose

This Policy and Procedure of the Sydney Polytechnic Institute (SPI) aims to ensure that all student assessment, including examinations, is designed, completed, and evaluated in accordance with best practice, and in compliance with relevant elements of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.

2. Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to all students and staff at SPI as well as to all assessments carried out within courses offered by SPI.

3. Definitions

Assessment means a process to determine a student's achievement of identified learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration.

Criterion-referenced Assessment is the process of evaluating (and grading) the learning of students against a set of pre-specified criteria, without reference to the achievement of others.

Deferred Examination means an examination held after the scheduled formal examination due to special consideration awarded to a student (in accordance with SPI policy).

Feedback is the information provided to students regarding their learning performance with respect to an assessment, and it should facilitate students' further study within the unit of study. Feedback may be immediate (e.g. an autograded quiz) or delayed (e.g. comments on a marked assignment, designed to encourage reflection).

Formative assessment is an assessment that has been designed for student learning. This is typically achieved through feedback and is prompt, informative and ongoing. Formative assessment can include non-graded self-assessment. Formative assessment assists teaching staff in modifying or extending their teaching and adapting their learning and teaching methods to meet the needs of the students.

Grade Point Average (GPA) is a number representing the weighted average of the final results in all units completed by a student.

Graduate Attributes means the generic learning outcomes that SPI graduates may achieve, which includes the development of transferable and non-disciplinary expertise that may be applied in different contexts. This definition is based on the definition provided by TEQSA.

Learning outcomes means the statement of the set of knowledge, skills and abilities that are measurable and students of SPI should possess and can demonstrate upon completion of learning.

Norm referenced Assessment is an assessment where the performance of individual students is assessed against the relative performance of their overall cohort.

Summative assessment is assessment whose main purpose is to evaluate student learning. Summative assessment is used to make judgements and formally measure student achievement against learning outcomes. It can also be used to assess the unit and teaching effectiveness.

Supplementary Assessment refers to a student who has failed a unit being permitted to submit additional assessment material in order to attempt to demonstrate a level of understanding consistent with having their result adjusted to a passing result.

4. General Statement

This Policy and Procedure has been informed by the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, Section 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment, Section 3.1 Course Design and Section 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement.

Part B: Policy

5. Assessment

5.1 The rationale for assessment is:

1) To foster, enhance, and reinforce the quality of student learning through timely feedback that is clear, informative and relevant to the needs of the student.
2) To measure and confirm the standard of student performance and achievement in relation to specific learning outcomes.
3) To recognise student academic achievement with an appropriate grade.
4) To maintain academic standards.
5) To contribute to the measurement of the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.
6) To ensure the allocated or assigned tasks are reasonable, fair and equitable to all students

5.2 Requirements

SPI has the following requirements for assessments:

- Assessments must align with:
  - levels of courses of study set out in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
  - Graduate Attributes, Course Learning Outcomes and Unit Learning Outcomes
- Assessment tasks must be sequenced in line with progressive teaching and learning.
- Assessments must be appropriate and proportionate to:
  - Unit Learning Outcomes
  - Unit study load
- Assessments should be designed to provide quality and timely feedback to students to let them know how they are progressing in a unit.
- Assessments must not unfairly advantage or disadvantage the range of student cohorts including those based on ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status or beliefs.

- Assessments must be moderated.

5.3 Form and methods of assessment

1) Units of study will usually include both formative and summative assessments.

a. Formative assessments are intended to assist students to identify weaknesses in their understanding, evaluate their learning progress and provide feedback to teachers so they can appropriately modify and adapt the learning activities.

i. Assessments that are predominantly formative, without a significant summative component, should be assigned a minor weighting.

b. Summative assessments are intended to assess the quality of a student's learning, generally in terms of assigned marks and grades.

2) SPI assessment design should be based on Criterion-referenced Assessment and aligned with the learning outcomes. Norm referenced Assessment is not permitted.

3) The forms of assessment used in a Unit of Study must:
   - be appropriate to the nature of the learning being assessed and ensure that all stated learning outcomes of the unit are being evaluated.
   - ensure that the grade being awarded reflects the level of student achievement.
   - be mapped against the Unit Learning Outcomes to ensure that successful Assessments tasks ultimately align with the achievement of graduate attributes.
   - be clearly stated in the Unit Outlines given to students at the commencement of each unit of study.

4) No single assessment task should have a weighting of greater than 50% of the total mark for a unit.

5) Courses must not rely on a single type of assessment and should make use of a range of assessment types in order to accommodate different learning styles.

5.4 Examinations

1) The Unit Outline will specify whether an examination is closed or open book, and online or paper.
   - Lecturers may place other conditions on what items can be used during open-book exams, which will be specified in the Unit Outline or discussed in a class before the exam.

2) Procedures for the conduct and supervision of invigilated examinations during designated examination periods are detailed in the *SPI Examination Policy and Procedure*.

5.5 Deferred examinations

1) The role of deferred exams is to provide fairness of examinations when unavoidable and unforeseen circumstances arise, to allow all students the opportunity to demonstrate their learning.

2) Students who are awarded special consideration covering an original examination may be awarded a deferred examination.

3) The maximum result of a deferred examination is equivalent to the maximum result allowable in the original examination.

4) A deferred examination will not be granted if the Unit Coordinator has justifiable reasons to believe that the student is seeking to gain an unfair advantage through extended assessment; or for:
   a. misreading the unit outline or examination timetable

b. organising conflicting travel arrangements
c. poor time management
d. routine demands of employment and extra-curricular activities.

5.6 Unit Outlines

1) Unit Outlines will inform students on how the results of all assessments contribute to the final overall mark for the unit. In particular, the Unit Outline will make expressly clear:
a. The assessment schedule including assessment type, due date, the weighting of each task in contributing to the overall mark, and unit learning outcomes addressed by each assessment.
b. Assessment instructions including the required referencing convention and requirements.
c. Assessment submission requirements and late submission penalties.
d. Any threshold assessment tasks (i.e. tasks where a specified minimum level of performance is required in order to pass the unit).
e. Unit pass requirements.

2) At least two weeks before the start of each teaching period, each Unit Coordinator must have:
a. Reviewed their Unit Outline to ensure it is up to date and fit for purpose;
b. Made any necessary changes to the Unit Outline; and
c. Submitted the Unit Outline (with any updates) to the Course Coordinator for review and approval.

5.7 Requirements for successful completion of a Unit of study

1) Students must achieve at least 50% of the total marks for the unit of study.
2) Students must achieve the required minimum performance in any threshold assessment tasks.
3) Students must meet any attendance requirements that have been specified for the unit.

6. Extensions and Special Consideration

6.1 Extensions

6.1.1 Reasoning

- In the case of an exam or assignment that is available over an extended period, only circumstances that could not have been reasonably planned for will be considered. An extension will not be granted for any of the following:
    - Misreading the Unit Outline.
    - Organising conflicting travel arrangements.
    - Poor time management.
    - Unit Coordinator has justifiable reasons to believe that the student is seeking to gain an unfair advantage through extended assessment.
- Requests for extensions made after an exam date or assignment due date will not be considered.
- Except in exceptional circumstances, a student will be offered only one extension for any particular assessment task.

6.1.2 Simple extensions

A Unit Coordinator is permitted to allow simple extensions to students of up to 3 calendar days for circumstances that are judged by the Unit Coordinator as being unable to have been foreseen and which will have impacted the students' ability to complete the assessment task.

When considering whether simple extensions shall be granted, the Unit Coordinator may consider the following:

- the student's performance in other assessment tasks in the unit;
- the severity of the event;
- the student's academic standing in other units within the course; and
- history of any previous applications for special consideration.

6.2 Special Consideration

6.2.1 Conditions:

Special Consideration will be awarded to acknowledge compassionate or compelling circumstances that have the potential to affect a student's ability to demonstrate their understanding in assessment tasks, and where a simple extension is not feasible or appropriate.

6.2.2. Form of Application:

A request for Special Consideration must be submitted according to the approved SPI procedures and include supporting documentary evidence in English and, where possible, original forms to support the application (the absence or lack of evidence may result in a non-valid application).

6.2.3. Application period:

An application for special consideration must be submitted as soon as reasonably practical. Any delay beyond 24 hours after a due date, or after an examination, would not be accepted except where a student demonstrates that they were reasonably prohibited from making the submission due to circumstances beyond their control.

6.2.4. Illness during an examination

Where a student becomes unwell during an exam, and subsequently successfully applies for Special Consideration then any original submitted exam will not be assessed.

7. Grading System

During each unit of study, students will be provided with an evaluation of their individual performance with reference to the criteria for each assessment task, in accordance with the following guidelines:

Table 1

Grade	Descriptions
High Distinction **85% - 100%**	Excellent Achievement. Complete and comprehensive understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to an outstanding level; demonstration of an extremely high level of interpretive and analytical
Distinction **75% - 84%**	High level of achievement and understanding. The student exhibits a high level of competence;
Credit **65% - 74%**	Sound achievement. The student has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the unit content and objectives. The student is competent in the processes and skills of the course.
Pass **50% - 64%**	The student has an adequate understanding of most of the basic unit content and objectives. However, some minor objectives not achieved.
Fail **0 – 49%**	Limited achievement in the unit. The student has an inadequate level of competence.

Threshold Fail 0 – 49%	The student has failed the unit as a result of failing a required threshold assessment activity.
Absent Fail (AF)	• Failure to complete one or more compulsory assessment components without approved special consideration. This may include mandatory attendance requirements where specified in the unit outline. • Failure to complete 50% of more of assessment requirements for a unit of study.
Withdraw With Failure (WF)	Withdrew from the unit after census date but before final examination.
Withdraw Without Failure (WW)	Withdrew from the unit after the census date with approved special circumstances.
Result Withheld (RW)	The final result is temporarily unavailable due to unresolved matters, such as incomplete assessment components, pending special consideration or investigations, or administrative holds. It will be updated once the issue is resolved.

8. Supplementary Assessment

1) Students who achieve a final mark of 45% to 49% in a unit may apply for the opportunity to submit supplementary assessments in order to demonstrate a level of understanding consistent with having achieved a passing result for the unit.

2) The Supplementary Assessment may consist of one or more of the following (at the discretion of the Course Coordinator):
   a. Resubmission of a previous assignment
   b. Submission of a new assignment
   c. Sitting a replacement examination
   d. Sitting the final examination during the next teaching period

3) The option to offer a supplementary assessment is at the discretion of the Course Coordinator in consultation with Academic Dean, and is not a right. Except in exceptional circumstances, a student will be offered only one deferral for a particular examination.

4) A student who passes a unit as a result of supplementary assessment will be awarded a maximum result of 50%.

5) An application for a supplementary assessment will not be considered for a student who is not properly enrolled, for example, due to non-payment of fees.

6) Where a Supplementary Assessment is authorised, students may be required to pay a fee specified by the SPI for each unit. Decisions regarding the fee to be paid will be made by the CEO.

Part C: Procedures

9. Appeal Procedures

1) A student may request a review of an assessment decision.
- Certain assessment decisions cannot be reviewed due to the nature of the assessment type (for example, practical tests).

2) In the first instance, students should approach the Unit Coordinator to discuss their concerns about the assessment decision within 5 business days of notification of the assessment result.
3) Where the issue is unable to be resolved directly with the Unit Coordinator, the student may submit a formal Appeal, using the specified SPI form, to the Administration Office with:

a. the grounds that the student believes that an error has occurred in the calculation of the grade; and /or

b. a demonstration that the assessment decision is inconsistent with the published assessment requirements or assessment criteria.

4) The Course Coordinator shall appoint a reviewer from amongst the SPI academic staff to review the appeal and make a determination.
5) The reviewer will usually respond to the request for a review of an assessment decision in writing within 10 business days and may confirm or vary the decision.

10. Special Consideration procedures

1) Special consideration shall acknowlegdge circumstances that include, though are not limited to:

- Severe illness, injury or a medical condition that warrants a medical certificate, stating that the affected student is not able to attend the exam or has prevented the student from completing the exam;

- Loss or bereavement of close family members such as parents, siblings or grandparents, and, where possible, the provision of a death certificate as supporting documentary evidence;

- Emergencies within the international student's home country (including major political upheaval or natural disaster), necessitating emergency travel;

- Experience or involvement in a traumatic event (e.g. involvement in, or witnessing a serious accident, witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime), documented in police or psychological reports.

2) The processing of special consideration requests will involve two steps: (1) an administrative step covering the determination of whether special consideration should be provided; and (2) where special consideration is to be provided, an academic step involving the determination of the form of the special consideration to be provided.

3) The Registrar shall develop and maintain a precedent repository of circumstances that justify approval of special consideration, and the forms of special consideration that can be provided.

4) Except where the circumstances could not have been foreseen, the student must submit the Special Consideration Form no less than 2 weeks prior to the due date of the assessment to the Administration Office.

5) Where the circumstances described in the application are covered by the precedent repository, the Administration Office shall confirm that special consideration should be provided.

6) Where the circumstances described in the application are not covered by the precedent repository, the Administration Office shall seek an amendment to the repository from the Registrar.

7) Where it is determined that special consideration is to be provided, the Administration Office will forward

the special consideration form, along with any information on relevant precedents to the Unit Coordinator for determination of the form of the special consideration to be provided to the student. The Unit Coordinator will communicate their decision to the Administration Office.

8) The Administration Office will notify the student of the outcome of the request for Special Consideration within 1 week of submission of the application.

11. Deferred Examinations procedures

Examinations may be deferred to a later date due to reasons of illness or other unforeseen circumstances as per below:

1) Applications for Deferred Examinations will be made through a Special Consideration Form supported by the relevant documents.

2) If the student becomes unwell immediately prior to an exam due to illness or other unavoidable and/or unforeseen or on compassionate or compelling circumstances that prevent the student from attending the exam, the student must:

   - submit the Special Consideration form within 3 working days, accompanied by a valid reason for not being able to attend the exam in writing with relevant supporting documentation. A new date for examination will be set.

3) If the student becomes unwell during an examination, the student should:

   - notify the exam supervisor before leaving the exam venue.

   - submit the Special Consideration form within 24 hours of the exam with a certified medical certificate, demonstrating that their medical condition affected their ability to complete the exam. In this case, the submitted exam will not be assessed and a new date for examination will be set.

4) For students who are awarded a deferred examination, SPI will notify the student in writing of the date, time, duration and venue of the deferred examination at least one (1) week before the date of the deferred examination, where possible. Deferred examinations will be scheduled at a time determined by SPI, usually within two (2) weeks following the final examination period.

12. Supplementary Assessment procedures

1) To request Supplementary Assessment, a student must contact the Course Coordinator via Student Services in writing within five (5) working days of the release of the final mark. The application must be submitted in the form approved for this use by SPI, and include all relevant supporting documentation.

2) In making a decision as to whether permit a student to undertake a supplementary assessment, the Course Coordinator (in consultation with the Unit Coordinator) will consider:

   - The student's overall academic performance.

   - Whether there is evidence of improved performance by the student over the course of the unit.

   - Whether the student has attempted all assessment tasks.

- The student's demonstrated engagement with the unit, including but not limited to tutorial and/or laboratory attendance.

- Whether the student has been impacted by compelling and compassionate circumstances.

3) Where the Course Coordinator makes a decision to approve an application for Supplementary Assessment, they will then determine the type of Assessment to be undertaken, consistent with policy.

4) Student Services will notify students in writing of the outcome of their request for a supplementary assessment, including the reasons for the decision, within one (1) week of the receipt of a valid application. For approved applications, this notification will also indicate the details of the assessment to be undertaken. Where the assessment includes an examination, the details will include the date, time, duration and venue, and such notification must be at least one (1) week before the date of the examination.

5) When a student successfully passes a supplementary assessment that has been specified, their result for the unit shall be updated to a maximum result of 50 (Pass).

13. Confidentiality

SPI has security measures in place in compliance with the *Records and Information Management Policy* to safeguard personal information from misuse, and unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure, especially that information relating to examination papers and student transcripts or disciplinary records.

14. Assessment Feedback

Feedback should be provided on all formative assessment tasks. For assessment items submitted during the teaching period, Academic staff are expected to provide feedback to students within 10 business days of the assessment being submitted.

15. Assessment Validation

- The Course Development Committee will be responsible to review the unit outlines and course materials in accordance with the schedule approved by the Governing Council with the recommendation from the Academic Board, including the assessment tasks, assessment rubrics and other related assessment information.
- The Teaching, Learning and Examinations Committee (TLEC) will be responsible to validate assessments for each teaching period, including assuring the integrity of assessment tasks and other related assessment information.
- The TLEC will report the validation of assessments for each teaching period to the Academic Board.
- The Course Coordinators will be responsible to map the alignment of the units between the assessment tasks and curriculum and unit learning outcomes. Unit meetings will be organised every teaching period to discuss any curriculum and assessment issues they may have during the teaching periods.
    - The Course Coordinators will regularly provide report to the Academic Dean, accompanied by meeting minutes and the outcome of the discussions.
- To ensure consistency and fairness in assessments, the Academic Dean will invite the Course or Unit Coordinators, Academic Staff, Exam Sub-Committee for an examination of assessment design, and evaluation methods.
- On a teaching period-by-teaching period basis, the Academic Board will review the report from the Academic Dean for assessment assurance in compliance with the Policy.

16. Assessment moderation

16.1 Pre-assessment moderation

1) Prior to the delivery of a new unit for the first time, pre-assessment moderation must review:
   a. Learning resources
   b. Teaching materials
   c. Assessment plan
2) Pre-assessment moderation must ensure that marking criteria are aligned with learning outcomes.
3) Pre-assessment moderation must ensure that marking criteria, learning outcomes, and their alignment are clearly communicated to staff and students.

16.2 Post-assessment moderation

1) Marking moderation is conducted on the marking of assessment tasks/exams for selected units in a study period to ensure consistent and accurate assessment decisions. The marking report is prepared by the Academic Dean at the end of each teaching period to advise the Academic Board on the distribution of marks in the unit.
   a. Blind double marking
      Note: At any time where there is only one class per Unit, this approach is not applicable and the Unit Lecturer will be responsible for the marking of their own students' papers.
      - Two different lecturers mark the same assessments.
      - The original marks, grades and comments of the first marker are not seen by the second marker.
      - The second marker receives a random sample (minimum three (3) assessments per unit across a range of grades).
   b. External moderation
      - The Unit Coordinator will appoint post-assessment internal and/or external moderators for specific units.
        - A moderator external to SPI will receive a random sample (minimum three (3) assessments per subject across a range of grades).

2) Internal moderation of each unit is undertaken once a year.
   - The Course Coordinator nominates an academic reviewer (not the Unit Coordinator) to prepare a report based on the materials collected for the Unit.
   - The academic reviewer shall review the unit assessment against the unit learning outcomes. Additionally, the academic reviewer shall check whether the assessment marks and feedback to students are appropriate.

3) External moderation of units is designed to provide external referencing of assessment methods and standards of student work in comparison to similar offerings by other higher education providers (based on the experience of the external moderator). External moderation of each unit is undertaken once every four years.
   - The Academic Board nominates an external reviewer.

17. Responsibilities

17.1 The Academic Dean

The Academic Dean will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the Assessment Policy.

17.2 The Course Coordinator

The Course Coordinator will review and validate all examination papers at least one week before the Final Examinations. The Course Coordinator is also responsible for ensuring that the relevant assessment

components are available and align with relevant SPI Policies.

17.3 The Unit Coordinator

The Unit Coordinator will be responsible for specifying the assessment structure of their Unit and including appropriate details in the Unit Outline (which will be approved by the Course Coordinator). They will also be responsible for writing (possibly with the Unit Lecturer) any final examinations and coordinating the making of all assessment tasks.

17.4 Teaching, Learning and Examinations Committee (TLEC)

The TLEC is a sub-committee of, and reports to, the Academic Board. TLEC will conduct a review and validate all assessment components. The Course Coordinators are responsible for providing the relevant forms and documents for the validation process. TLEC will meet 1 – 2 times per Teaching period (either prior or during, TBA by the Academic Dean) to ensure the quality of all assessment components.

Notes

Related Document:

SPI Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure
SPI Examinations Policy and Procedure

Amendment History:

Version No.	Approved by	Effective date	Amendments
1.0	Academic Board	25/08/2021	New Policy
1.1	Academic Board	23/09/2022	New paragraph added in Section 6.1
2.0	Academic Board	16/11/2023	Added information on supplementary and replacement exams.
2.1	Academic Board	14/08/2025	Minor change made to Section 7 with the addition of the 'Result Withheld' grade.
2.2	Academic Board	29/05/2026	Minor change made to Section 7 with the addition of the 'Absent Fail' and 'Withdraw with Failure' grades.