COVID-19 Revised Assessment Approach to Facilitate Online Delivery

Version one: Released: 26 March 2020

1. Purpose

The COVID-19 situation is dynamic and fast moving and causing significant disruption internationally. As a consequence the University has been required to cease on-campus delivery of teaching and learning and move to off-campus, online delivery. Changes will need to be made to student assessment in many courses to accommodate this.

This Assessment Approach document outlines:

- Where requirements outlined in the Assessment (Coursework, Tests and Examinations) Policy can be varied to support the move to online delivery.
- Decisions made regarding semester one examinations and teaching delivery
- Advice on academic integrity and equity considerations.

Policy variations noted here apply only where changes are required to support online delivery, for example, because invigilated assessment is no longer available, and only during the period impacted by COVID-19.

2. Overarching principles

Modifications can be made to assessment tasks within courses within the following parameters:

- Changes to assessment tasks should only be made where those announced in course outlines are no longer possible because of the move to online delivery.
- Unless an exception is noted below, the requirements outlined in the Assessment (Coursework, Tests and Examinations) Policy continue to apply. Consideration must be given to the Principles of Assessment.
- The modified assessment must be equivalent to the previous assessment and the same learning outcomes must be able to be achieved (there should be no changes to learning outcomes).
- There will be one assessment model for all students in a course, including those students who were given a Study Plan earlier in the semester.
- Equity must be a consideration, and modified assessment should not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any group of students within a course.
- Tasks that replace tests should be held on the days specified in course outlines but adjusted to take account of the impact of the Teaching Free Week. For example, tests scheduled originally for week 4 will now be held in the fifth week after the beginning of
the semester. Where tests now fall on public and University holidays, they should be re-scheduled for the nearest teaching day. Staff should finalise these arrangements in consultation with their academic head and Associate Dean (Academic). It is important to minimise assessment bunching where that is possible.

- Tests should be open for 24 hours to allow for variable quality internet access, students outside New Zealand who will be in different time zones and those sitting under Special Conditions. The 24-hour timing condition means that students have the entire 24 hours in which to complete the assessment. A shorter time limit cannot be prescribed within the 24-hour window.
- Off-site assessment will be administered digitally.
- Opportunities for meaningful and timely feedback to students should be maintained, and not reduced because of modified assessment.
- Where possible assignments should be submitted through Turnitin.
- Changes to assessment must be approved and communicated to students as soon as possible (details of this are outlined below).

3. Allowable exceptions to the policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy reference</th>
<th>Current Policy</th>
<th>Updated requirement</th>
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| 35               | Substantive changes to assessment arrangements that have been approved and published cannot be made without unanimous agreement from students, and approval by the Academic Head or delegate and Dean of Faculty.: Substantive changes (i.e. changes that affect task weighting, timing or the nature of the assessment tasks) to assessment arrangements must be agreed and publicised to students within the period of deleting the course from a student’s enrolment without penalty. | Substantive changes to assessment tasks within a course may be made after the add/drop cut-off date with (1) the approval of the Academic Head or delegate and (2) notification to all students in the course. The Academic Head or delegate must ensure that the following criteria are met before approving any such changes:  
- The changes are necessary to facilitate off-campus assessment  
- the modified assessment is equivalent and the same learning outcomes can be achieved  
- the modified assessment does not unfairly benefit or disadvantage any particular group of students within a course |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td>Students must have the opportunity to complete an early appropriately-weighted or formative exercise.</td>
<td>Formative assessment remains valuable; if this was planned for weeks 4 or 5 and becomes impractical then this requirement can be waived. Consideration must be given to how students can receive formative feedback prior to their more substantive assessment tasks.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td>Tests which count towards the final result of a course will be conducted under examination conditions</td>
<td>The requirement for a secure invigilated component in courses will be waived as the University cannot confirm that it will be able to provide invigilated settings. Course Directors must consider the advice for incorporating academic integrity into alternative assessment tasks as outlined below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td>For stage one courses at least 50% of course assessment must occur in invigilated settings.</td>
<td>The requirement for secure invigilated components in courses will be waived as the University cannot confirm that it will be able to provide invigilated settings. Course Directors must consider the advice for incorporating academic integrity into alternative assessment tasks as outlined below.</td>
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</table>
The University’s assessment policy defines plussage as:

...a method of calculating marks a student has gained in a taught course by counting either: an examination or test mark; or a combination of exam, test and coursework marks; whichever is to the student’s advantage. Additional requirements for eligibility for plussage may apply, including for example: a minimum result required in the examination; a minimum standard for completion of coursework; and/or attendance at laboratories or tutorials.

Under the Assessment Policy, the use of plussage must be approved by an Associate Dean with responsibility for learning and teaching; and a minimum of 30% of the final grade must be derived from coursework unless an exception is approved by the Associate Dean.

The University Policy does not stipulate conditions for eligibility for plussage; these are regulated through Associate Dean approval and may vary according to the particular requirements of a course.

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| a) Where courses ordinarily employ plussage (and have had the use of plussage approved previously) the requirement that 30% of the final grade is derived from coursework stands, unless other modifications to assessment mean that this impractical. In these cases, the Associate Dean must approve an exception to the policy requirement. |
| b) Where assessment modifications make it impractical for students to satisfy pre-set conditions of eligibility for plussage (e.g. attendance at tutorials) these conditions may be modified or removed. |
| c) Where courses have not used plussage it may be included as a new feature of assessment on a course for all students with the approval of the Academic Head. The conditions set out above in (a) and (b) apply. |

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| Tests with a weighting higher than 20% must not be conducted in the final week of teaching |
| This requirement may be waived if the course does not include an examination. |

4. **Equity considerations**

A range of support is available to students with disabilities to enable them to participate in teaching and to be assessed fairly. These include:
- Notetaking support in lectures
- Special conditions in written tests and examinations
- Alternative assessment options
- Development of access plans for students
- Advocacy (e.g. lab attendance, alternative text formats)

It is important to take into account the support needs of students with disabilities in any proposed changes to teaching delivery and assessments.

Any changes to teaching delivery and assessments must align with the University’s Inclusive Learning and Teaching of Students with Impairments Guidelines and avoid creating barriers to learning for students with disabilities. Note that the Guidelines refer to ‘providing choice in assignment topics and formats where appropriate to provide different but equivalent assessment options’.

Teaching staff should refer to existing Canvas resources to support inclusive course design.

**Notetaking**

- Students with a physical or cognitive impairment rely on notetaking support in lectures. Notetakers and permanent staff in Student Disability Services need Canvas access at a course level to provide notes to students within 24 hours of the lecture.

**Special conditions**

- The University’s Policy on special conditions currently applies only to written tests and examinations.
- Students with approved special conditions need to understand if and how their special conditions will apply to online assessments. The Equity Office’s view is that any approved special conditions should still apply if the test remains a timed assessment or if a student requires support such as a reader or writer.
- If a student is unable to sit an online test due to the nature of their disability and support needs (e.g. for a reader or writer), students should be given alternative assessment options instead of being advised to apply for an aegrotat.
- Faculties need to be aware of, and supported to make, adjustments to online assessments in Canvas to meet student support needs (e.g. extra time, enlarged fonts, colour contrast changes, text to speech, spell check).

**5. Academic Integrity**
In an online environment we must communicate regularly about academic integrity and its importance to student learning and for academic standards.

- Include academic integrity statements on all Canvas assignment pages and on assessment documentation
- Consider including an academic integrity statement as a question in online quizzes that students must select ‘I agree’ to answer (0 point value for that question).
- Ensure that online quizzes are not reusing questions (or entire test papers) used in previous deliveries of the course.
- Randomise questions and don’t use questions that merely require students to recall facts. Tightly-timed tests and quizzes will not be able to be used due to equity considerations, particularly around access to fast internet services.
- Provide links to learning support resources hosted by Libraries and Learning Services
- Ask students to submit drafts of their assignments or evidence of their planning

When issues are identified:

In-person interviews with students will not be possible. Students must have an opportunity to respond to allegations of academic misconduct, either in an online meeting (with the usual provisions for an additional staff member to attend and the option for students to include a support person), or in writing.

6. Examinations

<table>
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<tr>
<th>On-site examinations</th>
<th>On-site examinations for Semester One have been cancelled and where an examination was scheduled, this must be replaced with an alternative assessment task. This will take the form of a “take home”, off-site, end-of-course assessment.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>The off-site assessment will be administered digitally during the exam period.</td>
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<td>Students will have 24 hours to complete the assessment, to allow for time differences, students who need special conditions, and issues related to access and environment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The assessment tasks will be scheduled centrally to ensure that they are scheduled in a balanced way over the examination period.</td>
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</table>
### Format

Replacement assessment tasks may take a number of forms but should not rely on the recall of information.

### Aegrotat and compassionate consideration

Requirements for aegrotat and compassionate consideration will be reviewed and communicated to staff and students.

### End-of-course assessment papers and marking

Depending on the format and digital delivery mode of the take-home end-of-course assessment, there may be several ways in which students can submit their final assessments.

Where possible, consistent processes should be established within academic units for the return, acknowledgement, recording and digital storing of submissions from students.

### Special conditions

Further information will be provided on this.

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7. **Grading**

In order to mitigate adverse GPA impacts of disruptions to students’ studies, undergraduate students whose overall performance is in the C- to C+ range will have the option of having a pass grade noted on their transcript and having these results precluded from the GPA calculation for their undergraduate programme.

8. **Delivery**

Live streaming should not be used for the delivery of core components of courses, including lectures. Not all students have access to a consistent and fast internet service so recorded components need to be available.

All recorded teaching needs to be stored in the Canvas media store repository.

9. **Practicums and clinical placements**

There will be additional issues related to practicums and clinical placements. Further information will be provided.

10. **Other considerations**
Scaffolded assessment tasks: Course Directors should be conscious of any scaffolded assessment tasks and how they might be affected if one of the tasks cannot be completed online, or if significant numbers of students are unable to complete the task. It may be better to amend the assessment now.

Transcripts: Information will be included on transcripts to reflect that there was a global pandemic in 2020 which required changes to coursework and led to unusual enrolment patterns and grades.

11. Changes not permitted

For the avoidance of doubt, the following cannot be changed:

- All assessment cannot be based on a single task. There must be a variety of assessment.
- No more than 70% of the final result can be based on tests or examinations.

12. Process for recording changes and notifying students

The process for the approval and recording of changes will be advised shortly.

- Changes to assessment must be notified to all students in a Canvas announcement with the relevant changes made to Canvas course outlines and documents outlining assessment details and expectations.
- Where used, the concept of plussage (and conditions for eligibility where they apply) must be explained in assessment documentation and on the Canvas course outline.

13. Information and support for students

A communications plan is being prepared to make sure that information is provided to staff and students.