DSC Learning & Teaching Parameters

Updated October 2021

RMIT UNIVERSITY

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to guide high quality, student-centred teaching practices in HEd coursework programs in DSC to inform curriculum, assessment and course design and academic workload planning.

The DSC Learning & Teaching Parameters set expectations for good learning and teaching practice and are aligned to RMIT University policy.

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Curriculum and Assessment Design

DSC provides students with relevant learning experiences and authentic assessment tasks to prepare them to be work-ready and effective contributors to the global workforce and community.

Program and Course Design

Programs and courses are designed to include:

- authentic learning activities and assessments that are deliberately designed to be work-relevant by engaging with real problems and artefacts in contexts rich in collaboration and feedback (Ashford-Rowe et al., 2014)
- a range of features consistent with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) for the relevant qualification level and RMIT's learning and teaching priorities including:
    - RMIT's Program Principles
    - RMIT's Program and Course Policy
    - RMIT's Graduate Attributes (GAs)
    - inclusion of Indigenous content
    - Career Development Learning (CDL)
    - Work Integrated Learning (WIL)
- activities and experiences that provide a sense of Belonging and engagement
- assessment design that builds academic integrity and reduces opportunities for plagiarism
- validation and moderation processes to assure assessment consistency, fairness, accuracy and reliability for student learning
- support for participation in any required group work activities through feedback and by scaffolding necessary skills for working in teams and collaboration
- capstone courses that consolidate learning and demonstrate achievement of program learning outcomes. More than one course may contribute to the capstone experience. WIL may be included.

Assessment Tasks

Course assessment conforms to RMIT Assessment Policy, procedures and processes, and comprises:

- assessment tasks that are clearly articulated and presented to students
- PLOs mapped to core courses to provide context to assessment e.g. PLO for collaboration indicates that group work needs to be assessed
- a variety of authentic tasks that are driven by learning outcomes and application of skills and knowledge [Program Principle 3]. Authentic tasks should incorporate at least two Authentic Assessment characteristics: challenge, collaboration, deep thinking and critical reflection, artefact or performance, transferrable knowledge and skills with real-world application, feedback that develops evaluative judgement
- assessment tasks where the artefact, topic or theme is revised to some degree each offering unless restricted by requirements for specific competencies for reasons of accreditation or safety, i.e. the task may stay the same over offerings but the topic or context can change
- the embedding of Turnitin where appropriate for written/text assessments, and other suitable software for images
- no hurdle requirements except where safety or professional registration requirements must be met or demonstrated, and these are clearly identified in the course guide as a requirement to successfully complete the course [Assessment Policy 1.8; Process 1.3]

- no assessment tasks weighted greater than 50% (except research, studio-based, capstone or WIL or approved by DPVC L&T)
- capstone assessments that include summative assessment tasks that evidence program level learning outcomes and graduate attributes, including relevant communication skills
- marks and feedback for assessments provided in time for students to improve their performance in related assessment tasks later in the course (RMIT assessment processes). Assessment deadlines are scheduled in intervals to allow students to action feedback
- for 12 cp courses, no more than 4 assessment tasks (as per policy), but ideally 3 tasks (DSC recommended). For 24 cp courses, no more than 6 assessment tasks, but ideally 3 tasks (DSC recommended), and not including microcreds embedded in courses [Assessment Processes 1.1]
- tasks that can be a cumulative compilation of similar items e.g. blog posts, reading summaries, design iterations
- an early assessment task in introductory core courses in the first 4 weeks (first ⅓ of teaching in intensives) [Program & Course Approval process 6.18]. DSC recommends by week 6 in all other courses
- a criterion-referenced assessment tool (rubric) with clear descriptions of performance standards using the HE Grading Scheme for all criteria made available to students in Canvas for all graded assessment tasks weighted above 20% [Assessment Procedures 1.6.1]
- clear advice on how any group work processes and group-based products/outcomes will be assessed
- assessment design for group work that ensures students can transparently demonstrate individual capacity to meet course learning outcomes [Assessment Processes]
- submission, tracking, management and assessing of all assessments through Canvas (including marking)
- support by appropriate digital technologies where relevant, including opportunities to develop and demonstrate digital literacies

Word length or size of assessment tasks is not specified in policy, however review across DSC schools shows standard word lengths lie within the following expressed ranges:

- 12cp undergraduate: 4000 – 4500 words count
- 12 cp Postgraduate: 4500 - 5000 words count
- 24cp course – assessment may not be double in size but more complex

Note that consideration is needed for ‘word equivalence’ of authentic tasks and outcomes e.g. video, presentation, artefact, and there should be consistency of length across courses and year levels in a program.

Feedback

In addition to rubrics, the following feedback practices are required:

- formative feedback regularly provided formally and informally to support ongoing learning throughout a course and to future tasks and courses
- interlinked tasks that are supported by timely feedback throughout the learning period
- rich feedback from a range of sources, including staff, peers and industry in written and verbal formats to encourage self-reflection and dialogue about learning

It is also recommended that students are provided with an explanation (e.g. verbal reminders, Canvas communications or guideline on Canvas shell) of what formative and summative feedback looks like in the course, and the forms of communication that can be considered ‘feedback’.

Course information and resources

RMIT and the external regulatory body Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) expect clear information demonstrating where program course learning outcomes are taught, practiced and assessed. To ensure effective, transparent and timely information on program and course requirements and activities, all courses will include:

- course guides that address students in plain English, clearly outlining what they will be able to demonstrate on successful completion of the specific course (unit) of study
- an approved and published Course Guide (Part A) that outlines relevant course and program learning outcomes and an overview of how they will be taught and assessed
- Part As that provide a broad description of assessment tasks and indicate the following for each task:
    - weighting
    - alignment with course learning outcomes
    - if they include group work, work integrated learning or other specific features that are a key element of the assessment task
- a detailed Part B course guide published **no later than one week before** the commencement of classes including details of assessment tasks and submission dates
- a published Canvas shell consistent with University criteria and timelines such as RMIT Elements and Online Learning Guidelines and **available to students one week before** commencement of teaching as per publishing guidelines.
- entry and publication of all assignments, feedback and grades results using the Canvas Grade Centre tool (staff view of grades) and Results Processing Online (RPO)

Course Delivery, Learning Modes and Environments

Online Learning Environments

To ensure the quality of blended and online experiences for students, courses will be designed to provide:

- a clear narrative of the student learning journey through the course via Canvas and what is required week to week to successfully participate in the course
- a variety of equitable learning activities for both face-to-face and online cohorts such as virtual classes (teacher-led via Collaborate Ultra or MS Teams), facilitation of discussions and student led tasks
- specific learning tasks that support and scaffold assessments
- a range of diverse and accessible learning resources that are appropriately attributed and copyright compliant
- utilisation of appropriate technology e.g. required to use Canvas for learning materials and assessments
- facilitation of additional educational technologies to enhance engagement and collaboration, e.g. MS Teams for group collaborations such as discussions, virtual meetings via Teams meetings, Channel sharing etc

To further support student engagement and learning in online activities and interactions, the following approaches are encouraged:

- self-paced sequenced asynchronous learning activities for students to engage and participate online
- regular scheduled synchronous activities delivered face-to-face or via a live virtual classroom
- opportunities for student-teacher interactions

- explicit activities to foster the learning community as well as establish relationships and connections
- collaborative educational technologies to engage students in individual and group activities
- peer feedback
- student generated content
- online communities, student portfolios, online studios, etc.

Student Workload and Teacher/Learner Directed Hours

As a general guide for HE courses, the student workload in each multiple of 12 credit points should be 120 hours over a semester [Program and Course Configuration Requirements].
The 120 hours comprise 'Learner directed' and 'Teacher directed' hours which are outlined in the Part B course guide. 'Learner directed' typically refers to the expected amount of independent engagement required by students to fulfil tasks and prepare assessments, either on-campus using facilities or offsite doing study. 'Teacher directed' refers to the time that students can expect contact with teachers in facilitated learning activities (workshops, studios, seminars, tutorials, discussion and so on) in either face to face or online delivery modes. Learner directed hours are generally greater than teacher directed hours and together equate to the equivalent of a full-time workload for a student over a semester.

Delivery modes and Parameters

Thoughtful and creative course design provides students with a well-designed mix of on campus and online activities based on a range of appropriate learning modes. DSC courses use various learning modes including seminar, tutorial, workshop, laboratory, master class, studio, lectorial, lecture and exhibition to support disciplinary and pedagogical intentions for learning. These modes can be taught on and off campus, within and outside Australia, in a standard semester delivery or flexibly delivered intensive in face-to-face, blended, or online modes. Exceptions to minimum class sizes should be approved by Deans in cases where courses are required to support student progress and completion.

See Appendix 1 for recommended AWAM workload for DSC program and course development, including curriculum architecture initiatives.

Mode	**Class size recommendations**
Lecture *Online, asynchronous (not timetabled)*	minimum class size of 20
Lectorial *Face to face or online*	minimum class size of 20 If face to face, average sizes of 60 and 120, given room availability#
Tutorial, Seminar *Face to face or online*	minimum class size of 20
Studio *Face to face or online*	minimum class size of 20
Workshop, Laboratory, Master Class *Face to face or online*	minimum class size of 20
Intensive *Face to face, blended or online*	minimum class size of 20

#Note that where COVIDSafe practices reduce space capacities, options to achieve a minimum class size of 20 may include splitting the class into smaller groupings across the scheduled time.

Mode	**Definitions**
Exhibition	Exhibitions are organized displays and performances of student work. Including graduate exhibitions, WIL and industry exhibitions for student experimentation, peer and industry feedback. Student work is set up for presentation, assessment, moderation and peer to peer learning. Most often, these are public events.
Intensive/Flexible Course Delivery	Intensives compress and repackage course content to enable students to study a course outside the standard 12 week semester model. Intensives are designed in block mode to support learner engagement and teacher direction, incorporating blended, face to face and online delivery. Intensives should ensure equivalency of learning to the standard semester delivery format of the course.
Laboratory	A laboratory enables discipline specific skills development through practice, observation, or testing where students experiment, rehearse or perform experiments often requiring specialised equipment and materials.
Lectorial	A lectorial is a blended learning, hybrid mini lecture/tutorial mode conducted in a large technologically enabled class setting using collaborative, interactive and enquiry-based learning methods. Lectorials are underpinned by a student-centred learning philosophy and include three elements: • The creation of an active, engaging, enquiry-based large class environment where students work in small groups to maximise peer-to-peer and student-to-teacher learning. Most significantly, through the preparatory online, students develop discipline content knowledge which deepens higher cognitive domains of creating, applying, analysing, synthesising and evaluating. • The provision of the course discipline content knowledge online, using an interactive guided instructional design, for students to access before the lectorial at a time and place that supports their life/study/work patterns. • The use of New Generation Learning Spaces (NGLSs) where available, which provide a flexible room design, and access to enhanced technology, to increase active learning. Lecture A lecture is a large interactive and multimodal presentation normally given by an expert in the area or discipline content. It is expected that all lectures will be recorded where lecture capture facility is available.
Master class	A specialist class led by an expert for a cohort of typically advanced students.
Seminar	A seminar includes a formal presentation by one or more experts followed by a discussion of the presentation or a question and answer session. This normally includes online material, enrichment, involvement, and interaction with students and topic.
Studio	The essence of a studio focuses on integrative design in the context of a project that involves creative and reflective thinking and making. Learning emerges through action and self-directed learning – an investigative and creative process driven by research, exploration and experimentation, critique and reflection.
Tutorial	A tutorial is facilitated by a tutor/teacher where a group of students interact, discuss ideas, develop concepts and exchange information. It typically involves rich tasks and critical reflection on key ideas and strategies. (Also see Seminar)

Workshop	A workshop is a hands-on class that focuses on demonstration and application of techniques and skills. In some disciplines this comprises a combined lecture presentation with tutorial-like technical and creative exercises and activities including tasks and group critiques. In the 'making' and 'doing' disciplines, workshops can be technology enhanced, or have manufacturing/production or specialist focus. Specialist workshops support mainstream teaching, innovative project development and the preparation of full-scale exhibition pieces for installation offsite. These workshops will be held in spaces with technical facilities for students to practise and apply skills.
Global intensive (Study tour)	Global intensives or study tours are short periods of study and travel away from the University that aim to give students insights into cultural experiences and practices related to their discipline, career or industry. A global intensive is generally conducted over two to three weeks and designed so that students engage through a range of approaches such as face-to-face classes, site visits and presentations. As in all courses, assessment should be aligned with the learning activities and outcomes of the course. Students should also attend workshops prior to departure and upon return to explore issues relevant to the tour.
Online Learning	Learning and teaching that is completed fully online without on campus face-to-face interactions. The learning activities can be a combination of synchronous and asynchronous delivery.
Blended Learning	Blended Learning is an intentional combination of active face-to-face and enhanced online learning experiences across Courses and Programs. These experiences are intended to be meaningful, transformational and student centred.
Asynchronous	An asynchronous learning experience allows students to access content and activities and satisfy learning requirements within a flexible time frame.
Synchronous	A synchronous learning experience allows students to engage and interact with others in real time. The learning experience is designed to be dynamic and engaging.
Concurrent	Concurrent teaching is when you deliver a class to both face-to-face students and online students at the same time.

Resources

Academic Integrity – TEQSA Guidance Note
https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-academic-integrity

Authentic Assessment
Ashford-Rowe, K., Herrington, J., & Brown, C. (2014). Establishing the critical elements that determine authentic assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 39(2), 205-222. doi:10.1080/02602938.2013.819566

Belonging
https://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/teaching-supporting-students/belonging

Canvas Elements | '14 elements'
https://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/teaching-supporting-students/canvas-at-rmit/14-elements-qa/14-elements

Capstone Support Site (Office of Learning & Teaching. 2015)
https://www.capstonecurriculum.com.au/

Career Development Learning
https://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/teaching-supporting-students/student-employability/career-development-learning

Course Publishing Guidelines
guidelines

Graduate Attributes
https://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/teaching-supporting-students/teaching-at-rmit/professional-learning/program-design-and-delivery/graduate-attributes

RMIT Assessment Principles, Policy, Procedure and Instructions
https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/governance-and-management/policies/assessment-policy
https://www.rmit.edu.au/content/dam/rmit/documents/about/policy/assessment/assessment-processes.pdf

RMIT Program Principles
https://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/teaching-supporting-students/teaching-at-rmit/professional-learning/program-design-and-delivery/program-principles

RMIT Course Guide System
https://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/teaching-supporting-students/student-program-course-admin/program-course-admin/course-guide-editing

RMIT Program and Course Policy
https://www.rmit.edu.au/content/rmit-ui/en/about/governance-and-management/policies/program-course-policy.html

RMIT Online Learning Guidelines
https://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/teaching-supporting-students/enabling-online-learning-and-teaching/online-learning-guidelines

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)
http://www.teqsa.gov.au

Work Integrated Learning
RMIT WIL Hub and Spoke(s) site: https://rmiteduau.sharepoint.com/sites/WILHubSpoke.
WIL Procedure https://policies.rmit.edu.au/document/view.php?id=119

Appendix 1

Curriculum architecture, program development and course redesign workload

If you are applying Redesign and Intensive workload modes (ie 70 to 100 hours), the course enhancement activities should be strategically aligned, agreed within a project delivery schedule and engage support from the College L&T team.

Refresh: 40 hours (minimum requirements)	Redesign: ~70 hours	Intensive: ~100 hours (e.g. new course)
1. Map course to new PLOs – identify and minor changes required (CLOs, assessments) 2. Identify integrated skill/s that are (or will be) embedded – make any minor changes required (CLOs, assessments) 3. Determine blended/hybrid approach and apply – apply changes to resources, Canvas etc as required 4. Complete Part A Course Overview Template and return to your Program Admin Officer or similar, complete Part B change process and update Canvas site	1. Refresh activities, plus: 2. Working with the L&T team where major changes might be required, e.g. – re-write CLOs (and re-map to PLOs) – re-write assessment tasks, rubrics, instructions – develop new or additional resources for some or all of the weeks – embed industry, digital agility, integrated skills in the curriculum 3. Complete Part A Course Overview Template and return to your Program Admin Officer or similar, complete Part B change process and update Canvas site	1. Re-design activities, plus: 2. Academic determines course purpose, learning outcomes etc. 3. Working with the L&T team (and others where applicable) to embed industry, digital agility, integrated skills etc. into the curriculum 4. Complete Part A Course Overview Template and return to your Program Admin Officer or similar, complete Part B change process and update Canvas site