

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Section	Academic
Contact	Office of the Provost
Last Review	New
Next Review	November 2029
Approval	AB25/25
Effective Date	June 2025

Purpose:

The Assessment Policy articulates the values and principles that govern assessment principles and practice at Te Kūnenga Ki Pūrehuroa Massey University (hereafter Massey). This Assessment Policy is designed to be aligned with Treaty of Waitangi: Kaupapa Here Tiriti o Waitangi – Tiriti o Waitangi Policy, Paerangi: Massey University Learning and Teaching Plan, and the University Graduate Profile. Taken together, these documents provide general principles to guide assessment activities and to enable valid, reliable, relevant, and fair assessment interpretations and decisions.

Rationale:

Assessment is an integral component of learning and teaching that serves a number of important purposes for both the individuals and the university.

Assessment practice(s) and assessment of learning outcomes affect the lives of students and have important implications for the university and wider society. The university takes seriously its responsibility to ensure assessment practice has integrity, such that assessment meaningfully supports the purpose(s) to which it is put, and unintended consequences are minimised. Enactment of this responsibility ensures that students, staff, the university, employers, professional bodies, and the wider community can have confidence in the meaning of feedback and grades and awards, to support the multiple purposes of assessment.

Purposes of Assessment:

1. To support teaching and learning of individual students, by assessing progress and providing feedback for, and on learning.
2. To inform teaching practices and curriculum design, by assessing the progress of groups of students and providing feedback on the quality of instruction and the support needs of particular groups of students.
3. To draw conclusions about outcomes achieved by individual students to document, attest and certify learning.
4. To inform decisions about individual students such as admission to, progression within, and attainment of qualifications; and achievement of awards, prizes and scholarships.

Assessment Values and Principles:

Learning and teaching at Massey, and the accompanying assessment principles (Table 1) and processes, are aligned with Anga Paerangi, the values framework which underpins Paerangi: Massey University Learning and Teaching Plan. This means that:

- Massey holds guardianship of qualifications and awards, as well as a role in caring for our students, enabling positive student experiences, development, and success.

- Massey encourages excellence, acknowledges progress, and celebrates success through scaffolded learning, teaching and supervision,
- Assessment processes reflect Massey's commitment to respect, care, and support of others.
- Assessments are ethical, relevant, fair and inclusive.
- Assessments support academic integrity.
- Assessments support student agency and develop students' abilities to self-assess, self-monitor, and self-evaluate.
- Processes are designed to monitor student progress, identify successes or challenges, and implement actions that provide opportunities for students to grow and develop and maximise their achievement.
- Assessment practices used in the university and by teaching staff are informed by research, reflective practice, and feedback from the assessment process.

The principles which uphold these values are interconnected and as such, there is some level of overlap in their explanations. All principles apply but the emphasis of each may differ depending on the context. Principles need to be balanced, and a decision needs to be made about an appropriate balance of those principles for the context. For example, the principle of 'support every student to perform their best' might indicate that offering a student an extension is an appropriate response. However, context-specific considerations may limit the extent to which an extension is feasible in the light of the principle, 'ensure manageable workloads'.

Discipline and contextual considerations:

In alignment with the above values, it is recognised that assessment practice also needs to reflect discipline-specific and contextual considerations which may differ across the university, including:

- Discipline-specific perspectives on what it is to know (ontologies), and the way knowledge and skills are acquired (epistemologies), how to motivate students to succeed, the ways progress against desired outcomes is evaluated, and the quality frameworks applicable.
- Professional practice dispositions that influence pedagogy and assessment practice.
- Differences in the main purpose (e.g., primarily formative) or context (e.g., timing, weighting) of particular assessments which affect the relative importance of quality assurance practices (e.g., moderation, double marking).
- Feasibility of certain types of assessment approaches (e.g., oral assessment in large classes).

Table 1: Assessment Principles

Principle	Explanation	Examples of application
1. Assess important learning	To focus on assessing what is important and meaningful, we consider the desired learning outcomes that build towards a coherent graduate profile, our expectations for what learning will occur, and how that learning may be achieved. Assessment is designed to align student activity appropriately towards desired learning outcomes and is therefore relevant, engaging, and, where appropriate, authentic. Assessment is designed to minimise the effect on the grade awarded of learning or factors that are not important to the achievement of learning outcomes	Alignment with learning outcomes, and graduate profile; meaningful (relevant/authentic) assessment activities; construct relevance; surfacing hidden curriculum.
2. Develop student evaluative judgement (Help	Assessment practices are designed to build student skills in self-evaluation to support lifelong learning. We make clear the criteria on which students will be evaluated and the standard of	Develop student understanding of quality standards and contextualised discipline expectations; self-assessment;

Principle	Explanation	Examples of application
students learn what 'quality' looks like)	attainment expected at different grade levels. We provide instruction, feedback, and opportunities for self-evaluation that help students understand what these criteria mean and how to demonstrate performance at different standards.	peer evaluation; feedback; rubrics; exemplars; engaging students in conversations about quality.
3. Convey discipline expectations	Assessment activities help students become members of the discipline and profession they are studying in, through their alignment with discipline-specific ways of thinking and working and discipline expectations, including expectations for behaviour, performance, and quality. This alignment is demonstrated both in the type of assessment activity and the evaluation frameworks used.	Foster active learning through assessment activities that embody disciplinary perspectives and values in the context of assessment; relevant and/or authentic assessment activities; incorporate discipline-specific requirements for example, the management of deadlines.
4. Ensure manageable workloads	Assessment is designed to engage students in relevant activity for sufficient time to promote learning while keeping within the time allowance for the course when all learning activity is taken into account (10 hours per credit). We consider both the time required for students to develop skills to do quality work, and the time required to assimilate and learn from feedback received. As far as possible, assessment activity is balanced with other learning activity to distribute time for learning evenly across the duration of the course. Assessment is also designed to ensure there is sufficient time for quality evaluation practices by staff.	Manageable workloads for students and staff. Time to do the assessments; avoiding assessment clashes; balancing student time required for summative assessment with other learning tasks; time to respond to feedback in subsequent tasks (i.e., learning and growth inform assessment); assessments are spaced to avoid overload. Minimising time spent doing irrelevant or unimportant activities (busywork)
5. Support every student to perform their best	Assessment practice is an integral part of, and aligned with, teaching practice that supports student self-efficacy, motivation, and active engagement, regardless of ability and background, within each course and along the path of a student's educational journey. We recognise that factors outside the learning environment can help and hinder student learning and performance. We work to enhance helpful and minimise unhelpful effects so that students can do their best learning and demonstrate their best achievement	A range of possible practices that include culturally appropriate assessment, including submission of assessments in Te Reo Māori and NZSL, inclusive assessments, universal design for learning; clarity of assessment instructions/ requirements/expectations to ensure the purpose of the assessment is clearly articulated and identifiable to students; scaffolded assessment that supports students to learn; variety of assessment approaches; enabling students to have some choice in assessment; consistency of expectations with clarity about when and which expectations may be different in a particular context; accommodations including extensions where appropriate; student agency and participation in assessment design, evaluation and

Principle	Explanation	Examples of application
		feedback; supplementary and deferred assessment options where possible; diverse student backgrounds recognised and supported.
6. Apply judgement fairly	Assessment practice supports the credibility and validity of feedback and grades through processes that (1) align assessment scope and demand with the learning domain through peer review of assessment and marking scheme designs; (2) calibrate marking to ensure judgement against an agreed standard and effectively discriminate levels of achievement through peer moderation; and (3) support the consistency of judgements between students, cohorts, occasions, and markers through marker training, use of marking schemes, and statistical review.	Practices to ensure credibility and validity of assessment judgements including moderation of assessment design and content; peer review, task requirements and marking schemes; moderation and calibration of marking; use of rubrics; clear articulation of standards (for different grade bands); blind marking where appropriate; quality assurance steps; use of external examiners (where appropriate).
7. Provide (for) meaningful evaluations	Evaluations of student performance, as communicated by feedback and grades, are related to the quality of student work and learning achieved, such that feedback and grades provide meaningful information to inform the purposes of assessment. To achieve this there is attention to all aspects contributing to evaluation: determining what is assessed, how grading is done, how standards are determined, how fair judgments are ensured, and what the consequences of assessment are for learners. Assessment practices emphasise authenticity and relevance to real-world problems as well as to the learning outcomes; include a mix of assessment types to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in different ways; and provide opportunities for feedback on the learning process so that students can clarify their goals, develop their critical thinking and reflection processes, and prepare for subsequent parts of a course or program.	Meaningful to the student (i.e., feedback that focuses on learning, is timely so it can be acted upon, is transparently linked to assessment criteria and learning outcomes, is strengths-based, makes sense to students, encourages self-assessment and reflection, uses a variety of assessments, and has positive motivational benefits); is meaningful to the world (i.e., valid grades, aligned with standards); contributes to students' current and future learning; self, peer and teacher evaluation and feedback.
8. Adapt assessment practice based on reflection and evaluation	Assessment practice includes a regular cycle of reflection, evaluation and adjustment of assessments to improve their effectiveness. Research, moderation (of task and of grades), and student performance and outcomes are used to identify trends and support changes in assessment types, rubrics, or formats to better meet student needs.	Research-, feedback- and reflection-informed assessment practice; is responsive to developments in the field of study/discipline and contemporary ways of assessing; incorporates supportive development process (e.g., peer support); deliberately gathering feedback and evidence to inform our reflections about the quality of assessment and then making plans for continuous

Principle	Explanation	Examples of application
		improvement based on what we have found.
9. Uphold ethical practice	Assessment practices ensure fairness, integrity, and respect for all students. Assessments are framed by clear expectations and criteria and accommodate student diversity. They recognise the importance of privacy and the responsible use of student data, provide constructive feedback, and minimise the potential for bias (in both the assessment content and marking). Assessment practices facilitate integrity and ethical student behaviours.	Ensure transparency via clear connections to learning outcomes, clear instructions, rubrics etc; model and promote academic integrity in designing and undertaking assessment.

Policy:

1. College Boards will establish processes, procedures and rules (see Appendix 1) through which to ensure that:
 - a. The principles of assessment are adhered to and reflected in all assessment offered in courses managed by the College.
 - b. Calendar rules regarding Assessment and all other University Policies, Procedures and processes that relate to assessment are adhered to, including the Equivalence Policy, Academic Integrity Policy, Specific Circumstances Framework, Use of Artificial Intelligence in Assessment Policy etc . See related Procedures/ documents section.
 - c. There is consistent assessment practice across the College achieved through collaborative academic decision making, and that, where differences occur, that these are well-justified and are clearly identified and explained to students on course Stream sites.
 - d. Cultural values are respected and, where possible, able to be reflected in either the design or content of the assessment, providing that the validity or reliability of the assessment is not compromised.
 - e. Authority for assessment decision making and ratification of results is delegated to appropriately experienced and qualified academic staff, including the duties of (as relevant) offering coordinators, course coordinators, grade reviewers, examination committees, and chief examiners.
 - f. There is regular monitoring of the quality of assessment practice (including regular moderation and peer-review of assessment practices) and reflective, evidence- and research-based approaches to continuous improvement, with regular reporting to College Board by chief examiners.
 - g. There is regular professional development of teaching staff in relation to effective assessment practices, as well as policies, procedures, and rules.
2. Academic Committee will establish rules and procedures for the operation of Centrally Administered final examinations.
3. The Learning and Teaching Committee, as a sub-committee of the Academic Committee, will provide advice on whole-of-university issues related to assessment.
4. This Policy applies to all courses including student research supervision courses and micro-credentials.

Definitions:

Assessment: The process of judging how effectively learning is occurring through a process of generating and collecting evidence of a student's attainment of knowledge and skills and comparing that evidence against the assessment criteria.

Assessment criteria Refers to different dimensions of performance that may be assessed.

Assessment for learning: The process of seeking and interpreting evidence of a student's performance for use by students and their teachers to identify where the students are in their learning, where their next learning goals are, and what they need to do to achieve them.

Assessment Standards: Refers to different levels of quality of the performance on a given criterion. Generic university assessment standards for each grade band are given in Appendix 2 Tables 2 and 3.

Construct relevance: How well the knowledge and skills being assessed reflect the knowledge and skills an assessment is intended to evaluate.

Credibility: Assessment credibility refers to the trustworthiness and reliability of the methods and outcomes used to evaluate student performance.

Feedback: Qualitative information about their performance given to students during a course and typically after an assessment. Unlike a mark, feedback is explicitly developmental, i.e., oriented towards further progress on the part of the student.

Formative assessment: Assessment that provides developmental feedback to a student so that they can adjust their plan for future learning. Formative assessment is often called 'Assessment for learning'.

Grade: A code, often a letter, given to describe the level of achievement. Possible grades are reported in the Glossary of the University Calendar.

Learning outcomes: Statements of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that students are expected to demonstrate as a result of successfully completing a course of learning. Learning outcomes are usually stated in terms of observable and/or measurable behaviour.

Moderation of assessment: The process of establishing comparability of standards between assessors to ensure the validity, reliability and practicality of an assessment. Moderation involves peer review and should occur in relation to the assessment design before implementation and to the application of marking after implementation.

Peer assessment: Assessment of a student by a fellow student or students. Peer assessors apply criteria and standards of judgment as other assessors do.

Reliability: In assessment, the extent to which assessment results are repeatable between students, cohorts, occasions, and markers.

Rubric: A guide listing specific criteria that specify the qualities required for each level of achievement.

Self-assessment: A judgment a student makes about his/her work or level of attainment in relation to the assessment criteria or learning outcomes for an activity. Self-assessment is generally used to develop the individual's ability to think critically about his/her learning.

Summative assessment: Assessment, typically undertaken at the end of a learning activity or course, which is used to make a judgment about the student's overall attainment. A key purpose of summative assessment is typically to record the student's performance in relation to the stated learning outcomes.

Validity: How well the outcomes of assessment, such as grades, are supported, whether the meaning attributed to them and their use for a particular purpose is credible, and whether the social consequences of their use is justified.

Audience:

All staff and students

Relevant legislation:

Education Act and Training Act 2020, especially section 4 and 453(3) (a) and s34
Human Rights Act 1993
New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990
New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006
Māori Language Act 2016
Privacy Act 2020
Official Information Act 1982
Consumer Guarantees Act 1993 especially section 29
Fair Trading Act 1986 especially section 13

Legal compliance:

NZQA Programme Approval, Recognition and Accreditation Rules 2022 (New Zealand Gazette)
CUAP Handbook
The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021
Kia Ōrite: The New Zealand Code of Practice for an Inclusive Tertiary Education Environment for Students with Impairments
Health Information Privacy Code 2020

Related procedures / documents:

Academic Progression Policy and Procedures
Advising and Communications Privacy Guidelines
Amelioration Procedure
Approval Pathways and Quality Assurance Guidelines for Domestic and International Subcontracting of Teaching Activity
BVSc Supplementary Assessment Policy
CoCA Retrieval Policy
Conflict of Commitment and Interest Policy
Data Management Policy
Delegations of Authority Policy
Equity of Access to Educational Opportunities Policy
Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) Usage Guidelines for Staff
Information and Records Management Policy
Massey University Calendar
Massey University Qualifications Framework
Massey University Qualifications Policy
Matua Kaupapa Reo – Māori Language Policy
Paerangi: Massey University Learning and Teaching Plan
Policy on Paper Information and Study Resources
Privacy Policy
Procedure for Managing Breaches of Academic Integrity
Qualification Review Policy and Procedures
Recording of Scholarly Work and Student Work Policy and Framework

Report of the 2023 academic audit of Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa
Specific Circumstances Framework
Student Academic Integrity Policy
Student Complaints and Grievance Procedures
Subcontracting of Teaching Activity Policy
Te Kunenga Ki Pūrehuroa – Massey University Strategy 2022–2027
Teaching and Learning Framework
Teaching and Learning Policy
Treaty of Waitangi: Kaupapa Here Tiriti o Waitangi – Tiriti o Waitangi Policy
Use of Artificial Intelligence in Assessment Policy

Replaces:

Massey University Assessment Strategy Principles and Guidelines

Document Management Control:

Prepared by: Learning and Teaching Committee
Authorised by: Provost
Approved by: AB25/25
Date issued: June 2025
Last review: New
Next review: November 2029

Appendix 1

Within Colleges, programmes must have clear rules for the following :

1. The timing of assessment events throughout courses including the exam period
2. The spread of assessment workload.
3. The provision of assessment information at the start of the course.
4. Use of Turnitin etc. for academic integrity
5. How work will be marked (e.g. against criteria linked to learning outcomes)
6. Expectations around the provision of feedback.
7. Assessment of group work.
8. Participation-based assessment
9. Return of marked work
10. Moderation of marking/grading of students' work
11. Moderation of assessment tasks
12. Scaling
13. Extensions
14. Late assignments
15. Reassessment/resubmission opportunities

Appendix 2

Table 2. Massey University grading system – Passing grades with band descriptors

Grade	Mark	Band descriptor – Passing Grades
A+	90 - 100	<p><i>Exceptional, Outstanding (greatly exceeds satisfactory-level response)</i> Evidence of a high level of attainment of learning outcomes. As applicable, this may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistent evidence of deep and critical understanding, with outstanding students evidencing the integration, application, and evaluation of critical ideas, principles, concepts, and theories in the field of study • critical evaluation and analysis of problems, solutions, and implications of solutions
A	85 - 89.99	
A-	80 - 84.99	
B+	75 - 79.99	<p><i>Very Good, Good (exceeds satisfactory-level response)</i> Evidence of learning that goes beyond replication of content knowledge or skills relevant to the learning outcomes. As applicable, this may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solid understanding of fundamental concepts in the field of study, with few omissions or inaccuracies • ability to apply concepts, principles, and theories in a variety of contexts relevant to the discipline and level of study • use of convincing arguments with appropriate coherent and logical reasoning
B	70 - 74.99	
B-	65 - 69.99	
C+	60 - 64.99	<p><i>Satisfactory, Adequate (satisfactory-level response)</i> Evidence of sufficient achievement of learning outcomes. As applicable, this may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • replication of content knowledge or skills relevant to the learning outcomes, understanding, and application of fundamental concepts of the programme, with some noncritical omissions or inaccuracies • discernible argumentation and analysis, with acceptable reasoning and justification, but limited or lacking coherence • adequate communication of information and ideas in terms of the conventions of the discipline
C	55 - 59.99	
C-	50 - 54.99	

Note: competency is the minimum standard to be achieved in order for a student to pass; a C minus grade would indicate a student is competent

P		Ungraded Pass (individual assessment item) To be awarded when a student demonstrates achievement of the learning outcomes at an acceptable standard on an assessment where student achievement is measured as a pass or fail only (without a mark).	Ungraded Pass (final course grade) To be awarded when a student demonstrates the learning outcomes at an acceptable standard in a course where student achievement is measured as pass or fail only.
AG		Aegrotat Pass (individual assessment item) To be awarded when a student, who is unable to attend a compulsory fixed time and place assessment, submits a valid Aegrotat application, and the course coordinator deems a pass appropriate, but there is insufficient evidence to assign a letter grade.	Aegrotat Pass (final course grade) If an Aegrotat pass has been awarded for an individual assessment, the final course grade would subsequently be AG (unless there is sufficient evidence to award a final letter grade, in which case the course coordinator can agree a final mark and associated letter grade).

Table 3. Massey University grading system – failing grades with band descriptors

Grade	Mark	Band descriptor – Failing Grades
D	40 - 49.99	Fail (falls short of level required to pass) Evidence of lack of attainment of learning outcomes, or insufficient evidence of achievement of learning outcomes. As applicable, this may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • missing, partial, superficial, or faulty understanding and application of the fundamental concepts in the discipline • missing, undeveloped, inappropriate, or confusing argumentation • largely irrelevant material or incoherent structure or lack of logical development for analysis and argumentation • insufficient evidence of critical awareness, insight, or independent thought • unclear or imprecise organisation and accuracy of language and expression • weakness or substantial errors in syntax, grammar, and spelling • lack of ability to apply appropriate skills, techniques, and methods with satisfactory levels of precision and accuracy • little evidence used for analysis and argumentation or serious misinterpretation of evidence • incomplete, confusing, or lacking communication of ideas in ways that give little attention to the conventions of the discipline
E	0 - 39.99	Low Fail (falls very short of level required to pass) Evidence of lack of attainment of learning outcomes, or insufficient evidence of achievement of learning outcomes. As applicable, this may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seriously inadequate knowledge and understanding, with little or no command of material or awareness of relevant literature and major issues surrounding a topic • major omissions, misinterpretations, or inaccuracies with respect to analysing evidence or applying fundamental concepts in the discipline • wholly irrelevant material or incoherent structure or lack of logical development for analysis and argumentation • unclear or imprecise organisation and accuracy of language and expression • serious weakness or substantial errors in syntax, grammar, and spelling • near or complete absence of ability to apply appropriate skills, techniques, and methods with satisfactory levels of precision and accuracy

		near or complete absence of attention to the conventions of the discipline, critical awareness or insight, or independent thought	
F		<p><i>Ungraded Fail (individual assessment)</i> To be awarded when there is evidence of lack of attainment of learning outcomes, or insufficient evidence of achievement of learning outcomes for an assessment task, where student achievement is measured as pass or fail only (without a mark).</p>	<p><i>Ungraded Fail (final course grade)</i> To be awarded when a student, who has marks for submitted assessments totalling 50% or more, has failed to meet the required marks for a compulsory course requirement.</p>
DC		<p><i>Did Not Complete (individual assessment)</i> To be awarded when a student does not submit an assessment (including a final examination) or is not granted an Aegrotat pass.</p>	<p><i>Did Not Complete (final course grade)</i> To be awarded when a student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not submit or meet the minimum requirements of a compulsory assessment (including a compulsory final examination), <i>or</i> • is not granted an Aegrotat pass for a compulsory assessment (including a final examination) following the submission of an Aegrotat application, <i>or</i> <p>withdraws from a course after the specified date for withdrawing without academic penalty.</p>