THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Submission To	Academic Board
Date	16 November 2021
Item No	3.1

Non-Confidential

Proposal Title	Thematic Review 2021 – The Quality of Assessment at the University of Sydney
Recommendation	That the Academic Board approve the Thematic Review 2021 into the Quality of Assessment at the University of Sydney and the following recommendations arising from the review:

1. Develop procedures and structures to enable staff to share best practice in constructing valid and reliable authentic assessment tasks, and increasing their use, across all disciplines within the University.

2. Implement collegial peer review and peer collaboration capacities at faculty and discipline level. Incorporate assessment and feedback into peer reviews of teaching, to ensure assessment advances student learning and is valid, equitable and reliable.

3. Include professional learning commitments in the Governance, Leadership and Engagement (GLE) component of teaching staff workload. Strongly encourage all teaching staff to complete the MPLF module 5.1 'Assessment and feedback for learning' and to learn from exemplars from across the institution.

4. Cultivate understandings of feedback as an essential part of assessment design. Encourage the use of assessment designs that build in a feedback component prior to marked assessment.

5. Use the tools available to manage staff and student workload management around assessments. Avoid over-assessment across majors and courses, including total unit, component and course volume of assessment.

6. Reduce the number of assessments in units and ensure that the maximum weighting for any assessment is 60%, with reasonable exceptions such as research projects.

7. Introduce students to the wider concept of feedback in the early part of their degree. Include this broader understanding of feedback in staff developmental activities.

8. Include a teaching portfolio that includes demonstration of assessment and feedback literacy, and the nexus between the two, in all touchpoints of academic career progress such as recruitment, APD and the case for promotion.

9. Continue with the work to assess the graduate qualities to provide feedback to relevant program directors on the success of embedding the graduate qualities across undergraduate degrees.

10. Develop a business plan to convert the assessment plans into a more sustainable, digital format housed in Sydney Curriculum.

11. Develop a portfolio of evidence for teaching staff to assist them to demonstrate the alignment between assessment and outcomes. Ensure that professional learning opportunities are available for staff to develop the skills to create alignment and provide evidence of alignment.

12. Continue to develop a Universal Design for Learning approaches to teaching and assessment.

13. Continue in the Quality Verification System (QVS) at an institutional level, and explore the possibility of expanding our involvement in that process.

14. Encourage participation in discipline-based peer reviews of assessment networks outside of the QVS, as well as professional accreditation-based reviews, and have those reported to AQC.

15. Produce biannual quality summaries at an institutional level that include: fail rates, assessment weighting, numbers, types across faculties, and a University-wide report to DVCE on trends in rates of retention, progression and completion.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Submission To	Academic Board
Date	16 November 2021
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Proposal Presenter	Rachael Weiss, University Quality Manager
Consultation Pipeline	Academic Quality Committee → Academic Board

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The thematic review into the quality of assessments was undertaken at a critical time for learning and teaching at the University. In 2020, COVID-19 necessitated a rapid shift to online teaching and assessment. Data from student surveys around assessment and feedback have consistently rated the University below its Go8 competitors and significantly below the average rating for all Australian universities. The move online brought some deficiencies in the University's assessment practices sharply into focus. This review looks at the current state of the University and asks what is required to achieve a step change in the quality of our assessments.

The University's Assessment Framework integrates the policies, procedures and guidelines related to assessment to provide staff with a holistic guide to assessment principles, design and practice. The framework is designed to improve educational integrity and support the University's strategic goals in assessment. It was updated in December 2020 to reflect the University's acute shift to online assessment as a result of COVID-19. Key documents are the University's Coursework Policy 2014, the Assessment Procedures 2011, the Academic Honesty in Coursework Policy 2015 and the Exams Process Guide.

Assessment is an essential skill for teachers: it drives student learning and is designed as a learning moment for students. The University supports professional development for teaching and learning, including assessment. Formal programs include the Sydney Professional Certificate, the Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies, the Foundations of Research Supervision and the Modular Professional Learning Framework (MPLF). Launched in July 2019, the MPLF learning and teaching modules are open to all educators and education support staff. Staff have undertaken 21 modules with 2746 completions in total; the assessment and feedback module has been completed by 221 staff.

The Sydney Educational Fellowship Program University is accredited through Advance HE and awards four categories of fellowship: Associate Fellowship (AFHEA), Fellowship (FHEA), Senior Fellowship (SFHEA) and Principal Fellowship (PFHEA). Staff who become fellows of the HEA are leaders in learning and teaching at the University, providing a community of knowledgeable and expert teachers to provide support and guidance to all teaching staff at the University (see **Appendix 4**).

Through the Teaching Resources Hub on Canvas, the University provides practical guidance on assessment design, commenting on students' work, providing feedback information, engaging in peer observation and review, and educational integrity. It also provides a knowledge base of learning and teaching resources for online tools, educational innovation workshops, and updates on learning and teaching at Sydney through the teaching@sydney blog and the Educational Innovation Yammer page. In addition to central University resources, Education Innovation and Design teams within faculties provide one-on-one support in using online teaching and assessment tools, storyboarding units of study for constructive alignment, and assessment and feedback.

The Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment (CEMA) is a university Research Centre with expertise in modern assessment which develops capacity in assessment informed by research. It provides professional literacy tools to assist staff to develop and refine their professional teaching skills, including assessment.

While there is much excellent assessment practice at the University, and a wealth of support for advancing assessment practice, the University has yet to reconcile how staff and students view assessment. Problems identified by staff and students are the volume of assessment, the quality of feedback, and the difficulty of ensuring integrity of assessment. Potential solutions identified are authenticity of assessment, design of assessment and feedback, teacher expertise and professional development. In addressing its terms of reference, this report asks what effective assessment looks like and provides some recommendations for achieving a step change in providing effective assessment University-wide.

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Commendations

The Review Panel was advised of work by the Education Portfolio and the Academic Board in the development, testing and validation of rubrics for the assessment of graduate qualities, reviewing the Coursework Policy 2014 principles of assessment, the approval of assessment plans for degrees and degree components and the development of authentic assessment tasks across the university.

The Assessment Advisory Committee (co-chaired by A/Prof Peter McCallum and A/Prof Melissa Hardie) has been reviewing the principles of assessment embedded in the Coursework Policy 2014, with a view to updating them and recognising the complexities of the on-line at scale examination environment.

The Assessment Advisory Committee is validating the graduate qualities assessment rubrics over semester 2 2021 and semester 2 2022, using the expertise of the University's Higher Education Academy Fellows, the Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment and the DVCE portfolio.

Clause 22A of the Learning and Teaching Policy 2019 requires that assessment plans for degrees and degree components be approved by the Academic Board when the degree or degree component is initially approved. The Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Assessment Advisory Committee recently reviewed 124 undergraduate assessment plans for majors, programs, streams and degrees approved prior to 2019 which were reported to the Academic Board on 8 June 2021.

Several exemplars of authentic assessment were reported to the Review Panel. Performance in music and work placements, internships, and industry and community-based projects (ICPUs) are obvious examples. The 2019 Academic Board/UE Thematic Review into the Quality of Student Placements, Internships and Research Projects noted that 40,908 students enrolled in 1422 research project and placement units in 2019. Other notable examples were provided from the Faculty of Medicine and Health involving virtual medical procedures, leveraging technologies such as virtual reality, to allow students to treat virtual or mannequin patients authentically, without risk to live patients. The ability to access these technologies remotely was noteworthy.

1. The Panel commends the examples of best practice in assessment being developed across the University, especially authentic assessment, and assessment practices which build feedback into the assessment.
2. The Panel commends the immense amount of work of faculties and, in particular, unit of study coordinators, in changing rapidly and effectively to large scale on-line assessment in semester 1 2020.
3. The Panel commends the continuing work revising and enhancing on-line assessment in semester 2 2020, and in 2021.
4. The Panel commends the University's participation in the Go8 Quality Verification System (recognising that some of this work across the sector has been paused as a consequence of the extra demands of the COVID pandemic).
5. The Panel commends the ongoing work reviewing assessment plans being undertaken by the Assessment Advisory and Academic Board Undergraduate Studies Committees.
6. The Panel commends the review and updating of the Coursework Policy's principles of assessment being undertaken by the Assessment Advisory Committee.
7. The Panel commends the development of the assessment of graduate qualities being undertaken by the Assessment Advisory Committee.

Recommendations

	Recommendation	**Responsibility**
1	Develop procedures and structures to enable staff to share best practice in constructing valid and reliable authentic assessment tasks, and increasing their use, across all disciplines within the University.	AAC
2	Implement collegial peer review and peer collaboration capacities at faculty and discipline level. Incorporate assessment and feedback into peer reviews of teaching, to ensure assessment advances student learning and is valid, equitable and reliable.	ADEs
3	Include professional learning commitments in the Governance, Leadership and Engagement (GLE) component of teaching staff workload. Strongly encourage all teaching staff to complete the MPLF module 5.1 'Assessment and feedback for learning' and to learn from exemplars from across the institution.	Deans, ADEs, HOS

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	Recommendation	Responsibility
4	Cultivate understandings of feedback as an essential part of assessment design. Encourage the use of assessment designs that build in a feedback component prior to marked assessment.	ADEs
5	Use the tools available to manage staff and student workload management around assessments. Avoid over-assessment across majors and courses, including total unit, component and course volume of assessment.	HOS, Program Directors
6	Reduce the number of assessments in units and ensure that the maximum weighting for any assessment is 60%, with reasonable exceptions such as research projects.	Program Directors
7	Introduce students to the wider concept of feedback in the early part of their degree. Include this broader understanding of feedback in staff developmental activities.	DVCE, EI, ADEs
8	Include a teaching portfolio that includes demonstration of assessment and feedback literacy, and the nexus between the two, in all touchpoints of academic career progress such as recruitment, APD and the case for promotion.	Provost
9	Continue with the work to assess the graduate qualities to provide feedback to relevant program directors on the success of embedding the graduate qualities across undergraduate degrees.	AAC
10	Develop a business plan to convert the assessment plans into a more sustainable, digital format housed in Sydney Curriculum.	DVCE
11	Develop a portfolio of evidence for teaching staff to assist them to demonstrate the alignment between assessment and outcomes. Ensure that professional learning opportunities are available for staff to develop the skills to create alignment and provide evidence of alignment.	EI
12	Continue to develop a Universal Design for Learning approaches to teaching and assessment.	DVCE, EI, Disability Services, ADEs
13	Continue in the Quality Verification System (QVS) at an institutional level, and explore the possibility of expanding our involvement in that process.	DVCE
14	Encourage participation in discipline-based peer reviews of assessment networks outside of the QVS, as well as professional accreditation-based reviews, and have those reported to AQC.	Deans
15	Produce biannual quality summaries at an institutional level that include: fail rates, assessment weighting, numbers, types across faculties, and a University-wide report to DVCE on trends in rates of retention, progression and completion.	EI

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1   Thematic Review 2021 report into the *Quality of Assessment at the University of Sydney.*

Approver	Professor Anthony Masters, Chair Academic Board
Faculty/Proposal Sponsor	Rachael Weiss, University Quality Manager

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Academic Board/University Executive Thematic Review 2021

The Quality of Assessment at the University of Sydney

7 October 2021

Contents

Note on links

The report makes extensive use of links to direct readers to resources. All links have been checked but if users are unable to open links successfully, ICT advice is to sign into the Intranet within the default web browser that the links open in, using the Okta Verification application and re-try the link. Alternatively, users can copy and paste the link directly into the web browser search bar.

SECTION I: PREFACE

Introduction

Comprehensive annual Academic Board/University Executive (AB/UE) Thematic Reviews assess academic activities across the University which contribute to, and are impacted by, a key driver of quality at the University. They are jointly commissioned by the Academic Board and the University Executive. The 2021 AB/UE Thematic Review investigates the quality of assessment at the University.

The University committed in the 2016-2020 strategic plan to improve the effectiveness and integrity of assessment while decreasing its volume; and to develop a University-wide approach to assessing the degree to which graduate qualities have been attained.

The terms of reference for the Thematic Review into the Quality of Assessment (**Appendix 1**) mandate the review panel to:

1. Examine and report on the quality of assessment, its authenticity and effectiveness, including online assessment
2. Examine and report on the quality of feedback to students
3. Examine and report on the assessment of learning outcomes
4. Examine and report on assessment benchmarking
5. Report on the extent to which the University meets the relevant Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) standards
6. Make recommendations for improvements to the quality of assessments at the University

Review Panel Membership

Thematic Reviews are chaired on alternate years by the Chair of the Academic Board and the Provost. In 2021, the chair of the Thematic Review was Associate Professor Anthony Masters, the Chair of the Academic Board.

The review panel comprised senior University leaders, senior academic leaders in faculties, external and internal academic subject matter experts, and undergraduate and postgraduate student representatives.

Review Panel Membership

Member	Biography
Professor Anthony Masters (Chair)	Chair of the University of Sydney Academic Board, **biography**.
Professor Pip Pattison	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education), University of Sydney, **senior leadership team (scroll down).**
Professor Phill Dawson	Associate Director, Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning (CRADLE), Deakin University, **biography**
Associate Professor Peter McCallum	Registrar and Academic Director, Education, Lead on Assessment Improvement Initiatives, University of Sydney, **biography**.
Professor James Tognolini	Director, Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment (CEMA), The Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, **biography**
Professor Annamarie Jagose	Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences **biography**.
Professor Anna Reid	Head of School and Dean, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, **biography**.

Member	Biography
Professor Pauline Ross	Professor of Biology and Deputy Head of School, School of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Sydney, **biography**.
Professor Inam Haq	Associate Dean, (Education), Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney, **biography**.
Dr Raffaella Mammucari	Scholarly Teaching Fellow, School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, University of Sydney, **biography**.
Associate Professor Elaine Huber	Director of Business Co-Design unit and chair of Unit of Study Approval Committee, University of Sydney, **biography**.
Dr Natalie Silver	Lecturer, Law School, University of Sydney, **biography**
Dr Cecily Oakley	Manager, Curriculum and Quality, **Faculty of Science**, University of Sydney.
Ms Ishrar Tabenda Hasan	Student representative, **SUPRA**
Mr Swapnik Sanagavarapu	President, **SRC**

Data

The panel reviewed qualitative and quantitative data from annual student surveys, assessment literature, University policies, University reports, course reviews and external resources. A full list of documentation is attached in **Appendix 2**.

Staff feedback was sought through an online survey, an Academic Board session, two interview sessions with the panel and faculty contributions (see **Appendix 3**).

The relevant Higher Education Standard Framework (**HESF**) standards and the University policies, procedures, guidelines and other related provisions are outlined in the section dealing with the **Relevant HESF Standards**.

Reporting Requirements and Implementation

The review commenced on January 30, 2021, when the Thematic Review panel received the first data pack, and was completed on October 6, 2021 when a final report, including commendations and recommendations, was approved by the panel for endorsement by UE and Academic Board. The Academic Quality Committee (AQC) will review the report before recommending it to the Academic Board. The outcome will be reported to Senate via the report of the Academic Board and may also be presented to Senate by the Review Chair, if deemed appropriate.

Responses from relevant academic units and portfolios will be sought prior to implementation of the recommendations. Faculties, University schools, portfolios and/or Professional Service Units (PSUs) will report to the University Executive and the Academic Board on the progress of implementation of recommendations on an annual basis until all recommendations are complete.

The Quality Unit will monitor overall recommendation implementation progress and report annually to the University Executive and Academic Board.

SECTION II: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The thematic review into the quality of assessments was undertaken at a critical time for learning and teaching at the University. In 2020, COVID-19 necessitated a rapid shift to online teaching and assessment. Data from student surveys around assessment and feedback have consistently rated the University below its Go8 competitors and significantly below the average rating for all Australian universities. The move online brought some deficiencies in the University's assessment practices sharply into focus. This review looks at the current state of the University and asks what is required to achieve a step change in the quality of our assessments.

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Recommendations

	Recommendation	Responsibility
1	Develop procedures and structures to enable staff to share best practice in constructing valid and reliable authentic assessment tasks, and increasing their use, across all disciplines within the University.	AAC
2	Implement collegial peer review and peer collaboration capacities at faculty and discipline level. Incorporate assessment and feedback into peer reviews of teaching, to ensure assessment advances student learning and is valid, equitable and reliable.	ADEs
3	Include professional learning commitments in the Governance, Leadership and Engagement (GLE) component of teaching staff workload. Strongly encourage all teaching staff to complete the **MPLF** module 5.1 '**Assessment and feedback for learning**' and to learn from **exemplars from across the institution**.	Deans, ADEs, HOS
4	Cultivate understandings of feedback as an essential part of assessment design. Encourage the use of assessment designs that build in a feedback component prior to marked assessment.	ADEs
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7	Introduce students to the wider concept of feedback in the early part of their degree. Include this broader understanding of feedback in staff developmental activities.	DVCE, EI, ADEs
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9	Continue with the work to assess the graduate qualities to provide feedback to relevant program directors on the success of embedding the graduate qualities across undergraduate degrees.	AAC
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12	Continue to develop a Universal Design for Learning approaches to teaching and assessment.	DVCE, EI, Disability Services, ADEs
13	Continue in the Quality Verification System (QVS) at an institutional level, and explore the possibility of expanding our involvement in that process.	DVCE

	Recommendation	Responsibility
14	Encourage participation in discipline-based peer reviews of assessment networks outside of the QVS, as well as professional accreditation-based reviews, and have those reported to AQC.	Deans
15	Produce biannual quality summaries at an institutional level that include: fail rates, assessment weighting, numbers, types across faculties, and a University-wide report to DVCE on trends in rates of retention, progression and completion.	EI

SECTION III: REPORT

TOR 1: The quality of assessment, its authenticity and effectiveness, including online assessment

Purpose of assessment

An Australian Government **Office for Learning and Teaching**[1] project defines the **purposes of assessment** as:

- Supporting student learning
- Meeting the requirements of some form of certification
- Enabling students to calibrate their learning

Not all assessment tasks are designed or required to meet all three criteria, nor to meet them all equally.

Current data

The University collects data on the quality and effectiveness of assessment through several channels. Student experience of the quality of assessment is measured directly through two surveys:

a. Unit of study survey (**USS**) is an internal survey administered to all coursework students in all units which asks students to rate their satisfaction with assessment (Q.5 "The assessment tasks challenged me to learn") and feedback (Q6. "I have been guided by helpful feedback on my learning").

b. The Student Experience Survey (**SES**) is an external survey that asks a sample of first and final year undergraduates and all postgraduate coursework students the extent to which they agree with the statements "Teachers set assessment tasks that challenge you to learn", "Teachers provided clear explanations on coursework and assessment" and "Teachers commented on your work in ways that help you learn".

While our USS data has been steadily improving on all metrics, the University has typically ranked last in the Go8 on SES assessment and feedback metrics, and performs poorly against the average for all Australian universities. These differences in trend on the internal and national surveys are difficult to explain with any confidence. On the one hand, it is pleasing that the very systematic data collected at unit of study level shows that, within the context of units of study, students have reported increasing levels of satisfaction with assessment and feedback. On the other hand, the persistence over time of lower levels of satisfaction may be due to the lasting impact of a poor experience of assessment or feedback and/or a magnified impact of one or more poor experiences. For the purposes of this section, the data discussed below relates only to coursework students, not to research students.

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[1] Bearman, M., Dawson, P., Boud, D., Bennett, S., Hall, M., & Molloy, E. (2016). Support for assessment practice: developing the Assessment Design Decisions Framework. *Teaching in Higher Education, 21*(5), 545-556. doi:10.1080/13562517.2016.1160217

Direct measures

USS data

Unit of Study Surveys - student satisfaction

USS Item	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Q1 - Teaching quality	4.04	4.09	4.11	4.14	4.15	4.17
Q2 - Intellectually rewarding	4.03	4.08	4.10	4.12	4.14	4.18
Q3 - Thinking Skills	3.97	4.04	4.07	4.09	4.12	4.16
Q4 - Learning Resources	3.98	4.04	4.07	4.09	4.12	4.13
Q5 - Challenging Assessments	4.06	4.12	4.14	4.16	4.18	4.23
Q6 - Helpful feedback	3.75	3.83	3.87	3.89	3.94	3.96

SES data

Teachers set assessment tasks that challenge you to learn

Year	USYD	GO8	All Australian universities
2015	74.29%	75.44%	78.10%
2016	75.84%	75.78%	77.42%
2017	74.00%	74.94%	76.42%
2018	74.27%	75.35%	77.59%
2019	74.59%	74.91%	77.35%
2020	74.45%	73.86%	77.40%

Teachers provided clear explanations on coursework and assessment

Year	USYD	GO8	All Australian universities
2015	63.22%	66.79%	66.08%
2016	64.94%	66.31%	66.11%
2017	63.34%	66.22%	65.39%
2018	64.34%	67.59%	67.57%
2019	64.60%	66.71%	67.95%
2020	61.93%	63.83%	67.67%

Teachers commented on your work in ways that help you learn

Year	USYD	GO8	All Australian universities
2015	46.65%	47.38%	52.93%
2016	50.80%	49.05%	54.11%
2017	48.26%	51.30%	54.28%
2018	49.91%	52.83%	56.73%
2019	51.74%	53.40%	57.21%
2020	50.01%	51.23%	57.16%

USS and SES - Assessment comments

In the five-year period 2016-2020, University of Sydney students provided 734,000 written comments through the Student Experience Surveys (SES) and the Unit of Study Surveys (USS). Of those, 31% related to assessment. Thirty-seven percent of assessment comments were positive and 63% were negative. To understand more completely the student comments, a random sample of comments was chosen from SES and USS assessment-related comments in 2019 and 2020. These two years were chosen because of the distinct differences between the student experience in 2019, the last 'normal' year of study and 2020, the first COVID-19-affected year of study.

Five percent (n=4570), of the USS comments were sampled, and 50% (n=2090) of the SES comments were sampled. Of these, 64% of the comments were negative, and 36% positive.

2019-2020 USS and SES data - random sample of assessment comments

	Positive assessment comments	Negative assessment comments	Total Assessment comments	% positive	% negative
SES (50%)	640	1450	2090	31%	69%
USS (5%)	1789	2781	4570	39%	61%
Total	**2429**	**4231**	**6660**	**36%**	**64%**

Student comments on assessment matters in USS and SES surveys prioritise receiving feedback in a timely manner, appropriate weighting of assessment tasks, and relational and engaging content.

Indirect Measures

Indirect measures of the effectiveness of assessment include the Graduate Outcome Survey (**GOS**) and the Employer Satisfaction Survey (**ESS**). The GOS is a census of all recent graduates from undergraduate, coursework postgraduate and research postgraduate degrees. Relevant coursework degree questions are:

   a.   Good Teaching scale:
        Q1. The staff put a lot of time into commenting on my work
        Q2. The teaching staff normally gave me helpful feedback on how I was going
   b.   Generic Skills scale:
         Q5. As a result of my course, I feel confident about tackling unfamiliar problems
   c.   Graduate qualities scale:
         Q4. I learned to apply principles from this course to new situations

While employment outcomes are good for University of Sydney students, and employers are more satisfied with our students compared to the G08 and all other Australian universities (see ESS data below), our students rate us lower, uniformly, than the students of our G08 and other Australian competitors.

GOS data (2019)

Good teaching scale

Q1. The staff put a lot of time into commenting on my work

Year	Undergraduate			Postgraduate		
	USYD	GO8	All Aus unis	USYD	GO8	All Aus unis
2018	52.53%	55.03%	57.37%	54.97%	59.59%	61.53%
2019	53.07%	55.44%	58.17%	54.04%	59.03%	61.18%
2020	57.42%	58.62%	60.37%	59.82%	60.75%	62.72%

Q2. The teaching staff normally gave me helpful feedback on how I was going

Year	Undergraduate			Postgraduate		
	USYD	GO8	All Aus unis	USYD	GO8	All Aus unis
2018	59.99%	63.03%	66.56%	65.87%	69.83%	72.15%
2019	61.09%	63.67%	67.10%	64.53%	69.37%	72.14%
2020	62.35%	65.51%	68.54%	69.13%	70.63%	73.17%

Generic Skills scale

Q5. As a result of my course, I feel confident about tackling unfamiliar problems

Year	Undergraduate			Postgraduate		
	USYD	GO8	All Aus unis	USYD	GO8	All Aus unis
2018	68.09%	68.88%	71.18%	71.37%	74.21%	74.28%
2019	68.04%	70.35%	72.24%	73.47%	75.07%	75.36%
2020	69.99%	70.70%	72.82%	74.89%	75.89%	76.12%

Graduate Qualities scale

Q4. I learned to apply principles from this course to new situations

Year	Undergraduate			Postgraduate		
	USYD	GO8	All Aus unis	USYD	GO8	All Aus unis
2018	76.90%	77.23%	79.91%	81.02%	82.47%	83.18%
2019	78.40%	78.68%	81.32%	83.59%	83.64%	83.69%
2020	79.22%	79.29%	81.98%	84.05%	84.27%	84.14%

ESS data

The Employer Satisfaction Survey (**ESS**) interviews employers of graduates who completed the GOS to rate their satisfaction with the skills and attributes of their graduate employees, and their preparedness for their current employment, perhaps the metric most closely aligned to the effectiveness of assessment. In 2020, 95.5% of employers reported that their University of Sydney graduate's qualification had prepared them 'well' or 'very well' for their current employment, compared to the national figure of 94.2%. Despite our assessment being rated by our students as the worst in the Go8, our employers are satisfied with the outcome.

Employer Satisfaction Survey

Graduates are well or very well prepared for their current employment

	USYD	All Australian Universities
2018	93.7%	92.0%
2019	91.9%	92.4%
2020	95.5%	94.3%

In addition to these reports, the University provides teaching staff with a mechanism to seek feedback on their teaching, the Feedback for Teachers (**FFT**) survey. Teaching staff may order a survey for any class.

QVS Data

The University also participates in the Go8 Quality Verification Scheme (QVS), which provides some external benchmarking and quality assurance of undergraduate units of study. Since 2011, 35 disciplinary areas have been evaluated, with reviews typically focusing on capstone or core final year units. The reviews are conducted by academic staff from Go8 Universities and focus on the unit materials, learning outcomes, and assessment tasks of the unit provided for review. For the majority of units, the QVS reviews provide positive feedback that considers the unit materials to be appropriate for the level of study. Moreover, the reviews indicate that the University's assessment tasks and marking criteria generally compared favourably with analogous or relevant units at other universities.

Documenting and quantifying assessment

Faculties review assessments through their course quality reviews and professional accreditation reviews, both of which are on 5- to 7-year cycles. Faculty-based examination committees investigate assessment closely but do not have a systematic way of collecting data which would give a better insight into effectiveness of assessment.

All faculties have mapped their undergraduate assessments to the course and unit learning outcomes, and these maps are available in Sydney Curriculum (Akari) [2]. The Assessment Advisory Committee (**AAC**) and its predecessors have produced a number of reports on assessment, including reports on **authentic assessment** and **volume of assessment** at the University; and have commenced work on mapping the curricula to assessment of the graduate qualities. Recent work uses the mapping data now available in Sydney Curriculum to understand the form and distribution of assessment tasks across our various award programs.

Integrity of assessment is a critical issue for the University. The **Educational Integrity Annual Report** details the work undertaken across the University to consolidate and build upon the University-wide approach to the prevention, detection and reporting of breaches of academic

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[2] This information is available via the **Sydney Curriculum Assessments Dashboard** Power BI report. For access, contact **adam.bridgeman@sydney.edu.au**.

honesty in the previous year, and includes data on online examination breaches and contract cheating

Following the move to online assessment in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University audited the online assessment procedure environment and established the Online Assessment Working Group to propose an approach for examinations post-2021 and to identify preferred online assessment options.

The current state of assessments at the University

The University's **Assessment Framework** integrates the policies, procedures and guidelines related to assessment to provide staff with a holistic guide to assessment principles, design and practice. The framework is designed to improve educational integrity and support the University's strategic goals in assessment. It was updated in December 2020 to reflect the University's acute shift to online assessment as a result of COVID-19. Key documents are the University's **Coursework Policy 2014**, the **Assessment Procedures 2011**, the **Academic Honesty in Coursework Policy 2015** and the **Exams Process Guide**.

The assessment framework is underpinned by the assessment principles:

1. Assessment practices must advance student learning.
2. Assessment practices must be communicated clearly to students and staff.
3. Assessment practices must be valid and fair.
4. Assessment practices must be continuously improved and updated.

The AAC reviews assessment principles and practice and provides support and advice on the policy, practice and management of assessment issues.

The University provides **support** in developing assessments and assessment skills to teaching staff through:

- Professional development through the Modular Professional Learning Framework (**MPLF**).
- Practical guidance and feedback through the **Teaching Hub** on Canvas
- Support from the Educational Innovation Team to discuss feedback from the **Feedback for Teachers** survey and provide advice on developing improved assessment strategies.
- A learning and teaching blog, **Teaching@Sydney**
- The **Educational Innovation Knowledge Base** offering training on the University's online tools for teaching, including Canvas, the Sydney eLearning Account Management system (SEAMS), TurnItIn, Echo360 and Zoom.
- **Supporting off-campus learning Canvas site** guides for effective assessment online.
- The Educational Innovation Helpdesk
- **30-minute online consultation** with an educational designer to discuss designing effective online assessment and feedback
- A community of Higher Education Academy (HEA) fellows
- Faculty level educational designers.

Issues

Despite the wealth of data and support, one of the key characteristics of the University of Sydney is that central data and support is not translating effectively to faculty- and school-level assessment practice of a uniformly high quality, as is arguably demonstrated by the University's poor performance on assessment and feedback metrics against the Go8 and all Australian universities. Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment should form a reinforcing whole but students report that assessment is overwhelming, poorly communicated and not clearly linked to learning outcomes.

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Volume of assessment

The problem of too much and too little assessment was a common theme in staff and student feedback during this review and through the USS comments.

As a result of work undertaken by the AAC, we understand the range of assessment types used in the university across different faculties and their distribution. A report to the AAC (Krishnaraj, 2020) on the volume of assessment used the Sydney Curriculum data to understand the broad features of University assessment in Semester 1, 2020. The analysis showed that:

- the modal number of assessments per unit of study was 3 in Semester 1 in 2020;
- in S1 2020, the number of units with a single item of assessment was 7% and the number of units with 7 or more items of assessment was 15%;
- in S1 2020, 57% of units had between 3 and 5 items of assessment and 24% had 6 or more;
- in S1 2020, the distribution of primary types of assessment was: 39% submitted work (mostly assignments); 11% skills-based assessment; 25% in-class assessment; 10% group work; and 15% examinations;
- there are marked differences across faculties in their use of different assessment types;
- although comprising only 15% of assessments, examinations carry a heavier assessment weight; and
- out of 928 final exams in Semester 1, 2021, 20 have a weighting of more than 70% and 84 have a weighting of more than 60%.

Workload

Staff workload is an issue which was cited frequently by academic staff as a barrier to improving assessment practice during this review, as were technological and administrative complexity. Effective management of workload needs to be a consideration in any approach to improving assessment and feedback, particularly in large classes where staff report feeling challenged by the need to provide authentic, effective assessment.

Transparency

A recurring theme in all the panel review forums was a call for greater collegiality in tackling assessment, feedback and learning outcomes. Staff want more holistic insight into assessment across their discipline, and more support from colleagues who are assessment experts to design optimal assessment and feedback packages. A number urged that the collegial, peer review process they were seeking is developmental in focus and operates in an open, flexible and transparent assessment ecosystem that is supportive of improving knowledge and skills within each discipline.

Integrity

Since 2016, the Office of Educational Integrity (Office) within the Education Portfolio has produced annual, semesterly reports and special-issue reports on integrity based on faculty and central data. The reports have analysed data, identified trends, highlighted weaknesses and informed educational development, risk management, policy and technological development and strategic response. These reports are considered by the Academic Board, the University Executive and the Senate. The annual reports are available on the intranet **here**. Key themes within the reports have been plagiarism, combatting the growth of contract cheating, file sharing sites and, most recently online examinations. The University's strategy to mitigate risk and enhance the culture of educational integrity within the University has been education-focused, with assessment design, detection, reporting, investigation and other technological tools also playing crucial roles. The Office developed **a risk assessment matrix** to assist academics to undertake an integrity risk evaluation each time a unit is offered as required by University policy. In 2020 this was supplemented with an additional matrix dealing with **online examinations**. To facilitate this process a tool has been developed within the Sydney Curriculum System which is due for release in late 2021.

Assessment design is heavily discipline and context dependent but among design approaches which have been recommend as reducing incentives for cheating are:

- assessment tasks use a scaffolded approach with meaningful feedback from academics;
- authentic tasks particularly in project, placement and clinical settings;
- complex contextualised tasks that involve critical thinking, problem solving, synthesis of diverse perspectives;
- the inclusion of regular, possibly automated, low-stakes formative assessment and feedback;
- design tasks and oral assessments where students are asked to identify key issues and questions rather than provide learned answers.

Mitigation strategies for online exams include:

- Use of complex questions that assess critical thinking and integrated understanding;
- Questions requiring personalised or contextualised response;
- Use of a mix of question types with limited use of multiple choice questions (MCQs);
- Randomisation of questions and, in MCQs of responses;
- Familiarity by examiners with the **indicators of contract cheating**;
- Appropriate time constraints.

Authentic assessment

The *Coursework Policy 2014* articulates the principle that assessment tasks should be authentic and appropriate to disciplinary and or professional contexts (clause 64 (1)) and defines authentic assessment in the following terms:

> *authentic assessment means assessment tasks that relate the application of knowledge to problems, skills and performances that are found in general or disciplinary practices or professional contexts. It includes but is not limited to projects, investigations and report writing.*

The Learning and Teaching Policy 2019 (19) requires that the curriculum framework for new and revised undergraduate curricula include authentic problems and assessments alongside collaborative group-based learning, interdisciplinary and interprofessional learning and project-based learning as a means of developing the graduate qualities.

Achieving this educational framework was a major focus of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 which set out an educational basis that would balance depth of disciplinary expertise with "broader intellectual landscapes, offering more authentic 'real-world' education challenges, and promoting the integration of knowledge with professional and personal ethics and values" (p. 35). These strategic goals were implemented in a range of ways within liberal studies, professional and specialist undergraduate degrees including:

- the inclusion of interdisciplinary project units in every major in undergraduate degrees;
- the embedding of a 4000-level interdisciplinary project within the final year of the Bachelor of Advanced Studies and associated combined degrees;
- new units in the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, the Faculty of Science and the Business School focusing on interdisciplinarity and project work;
- the enhancement and expansion of interprofessional learning within health-based disciplines goals and within professional learning programs;
- the creation of a specialised unit within the Education Portfolio to partner with faculties, the community and industry in the development of Industry and Community Project Units in which students worked on problems set by the industry or community partner.

The initiatives built on a wide range of existing placements and project work in professional and clinical programs that developed and tested professional and specialist skills, knowledge and understanding in authentic contexts.

Interdisciplinary project work has generally received strong student evaluations. Some issues have been encountered in the scaling up of authentic assessment to large cohorts and these are being addressed on the basis of student feedback.

The Educational Measurement Hub is developing a rubric-based framework for authentic assessment to provide the basis for self-reflection and development by unit coordinators and program coordinators. Once developed and trialed, the tool may also provide an objective means for evaluating the effectiveness of authentic assessment by measuring student performance and evaluation of authentic tasks against other assessment types.

Student Comments – USS and SES

Student comments around assessments relate to receiving feedback in a timely manner, appropriate weighting of assessment tasks and relational and engaging content.

The transition to exclusive online learning and assessment in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic had mixed responses. In general, the success of the online transition was dependent on individual faculty staff, with students citing unit organisation, constant communication, staff engagement on Canvas and appropriate modifications to assessments as the main factors for a positive experience.

Weighting and Marking

The weighting of assessments was a consistently recurring theme. Students did not respond well to excessive memorizing and assessments weighted 80%-100%. They preferred multiple assessment tasks throughout the semester, and for content heavy units, tools such as weekly quizzes were praised with helping to consolidate learning. However, the marks allocated to these smaller assessments also needed to be proportionate to the amount of work that was required, with some reports of 2-3% assessments resulting in work-loads equivalent to assessments weighted 40-50% within the same unit of study.

> *"The structure of the assessments and their weighting was great, and well thought out. They also allowed us to get feedback from our supervisors and examiners frequently which has been invaluable in honing in our research skills to prepare us for our professional careers."*
>
> - USS Life and Environmental Sciences Student Response, 2020

Consistency

Students expressed concerns about the variability in assessment and the need for improvements in the consistency of grading and feedback.

> *"It would be good if there was more of a standard when it came to marking our assessments. Many lecturers and tutors had differing views about what was considered a decent and a good submitted paper. I would have liked more of a focus on practical teaching settings. More practice, examples of teaching and learning strategies/ activities and more videos and real-life settings."*
>
> - SES Arts and Social Sciences Student Response, 2019

Content

Students engaged deeply with assignments that reflected real-world situations and relevant issues. Freedom to choose their own topics or research areas of interest for assignments were highly motivating factors for students and garnered greater engagement and course satisfaction. Assessments that built on knowledge from the lectures and tutorials were also important. Students found it disappointing when most of their grade came from content not

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learnt in class and where the lectures were not pertinent to the majority of the marks from the course.

> *"The varied and interesting content and the assignments … challenge me to gain a deeper understanding of concepts and their applications."*

> > \- SES Science Student Response, 2019

> *"The assessments actually challenged me to learn and carefully look into what I've already learnt throughout the course. The tasks were very centred around our own input and ideas which I really appreciated because I felt like my thoughts and ideas were valued/encouraged as opposed to making us regurgitate pre-existing information. There was no looming sense of right/wrong which was really refreshing and exciting for a change. I felt the activities were designed in a way that encouraged us to engage and uplift the other students in the course which was very valuable (especially without face to face communication). Overall I felt this unit really wanted us to succeed and do well which I really appreciated."*

> > \- USS Writing Studies Student Response, 2020

Organisation and Accuracy of Reporting

Students appreciated faculty who understood the stresses of Covid-19, were flexible with deadlines, and modified assessments to compensate for the pandemic.

> *"Also, as this year is out of the ordinary, the tutors and unit coordinators have been very understanding of personal circumstances impacting due dates and workload."*

> > \- SES Medicine and Health Student Response, 2020

Careless mistakes and a lack of attention to detail on assessments were strong negatives for students. Multiple comments noted unit grades with incorrect dates and assignment details or exam questions with spelling and grammatical errors. These errors are perceived as hypocritical when such high standards are demanded of students, and as demonstrating lack of effort towards the unit and care for the students' learning. This translated into a lack of motivation for students to engage with the course fully.

Greater timeliness, clarity, consistency and transparency around assessment marking guidelines were repeatedly commented on. There were many occasions where students were provided with marking rubrics less than a week before the due date of an assignment. Assignment questions that were vague or too broad were also heavily criticised.

> *"Detailed outline of assignments, particularly due dates are difficult to find."*

> > \- SES Arts and Social Sciences Student Response, 2020

> *"The assessments should be explained better. There should be more preparation for an assessment."*

> > \- SES Business School Student Response, 2020

Method of Assessment - Groupwork

Groupwork was a consistent feature in student responses. Students did enjoy group work as a way to make friends and build a professional network, noting that working in diverse groups was especially rewarding. It was also helpful to have regular or even final check-ins from tutors for major group assignments. The success of conducting group work via zoom during Covid-19 varied between students, with some praising the ability to still connect with fellow students as a great asset to the unit, while others found it harder to generate meaningful discussion, resulting in awkward and tedious exercises. Additional difficulties were found in units with a large proportion of international students, with language barriers and difficulties with English speaking and writing skills resulting in a negative experience. Fluent English-speaking students frequently reported feeling the need to shoulder a larger burden of the workload to ensure a high mark.

"The group presentation is a really good part of this unit. We develop great teamwork and improve the knowledge about the health challenge of Indigenous Australians"

- USS Nursing and Midwifery Student Response, 2019

"Group work in a predominately online environment is extremely difficult and whilst it develops skills for life outside of uni, for those who are already employed and well on their way in careers and is managing teams, the detriment of group work with students who aren't engaged is felt."

- SES Engineering Student Response, 2019

Areas for development to be addressed in this report

Ultimately, assessment is an integral part of the practice of teaching, along with curriculum design and delivery. These three aspects intersect to create a coherent learning experience for students. Aligning course content, learning outcomes and assessments into an integrated whole is essential for authentic and effective assessment and optimises students' chances of achieving unit and course learning outcomes. Integration of these three elements provides a structure which supports diverse assessment, designed to meet the needs of the student.

Improving assessment across the University

This report aims to provide a bridge between evidence on effective assessment practice and its practical application at faculty level. It will provide granular specificity around key concepts to allow staff and committees to orient themselves with confidence to norms and expectations. This does not mean creating a University-wide definition for the overarching concepts of 'authentic' and 'effective'. An authentic dentistry assessment will be very different to an authentic philosophy assessment. Authentic and effective assessment is an outcome of coherent pedagogy and principles. What it does mean is creating meaningful tools to bridge the gap for concepts which are more practical. For example, diversification of assessment is recommended to enhance authenticity and effectiveness, but there is uncertainty, at faculty level, around what it means and why it is important. This report will recommend the implementation of processes such as peer review and tools such as a bank of example assessments appropriate to the discipline which will give more granular guidance on what is meant by diversification and how it might be applied. Similarly, a problem that all faculties have in common is the difficulty of designing and administering authentic assessments at scale. The report aims to provide tools and processes to assist faculties in addressing the problem of scaled effective assessment. The data from USS and SES is a broad guide to our success with respect to authenticity of assessment. The University would benefit from better methods for assessing the authenticity of assessments.

Workload and volume

Having skills and knowledge of assessment is essential to effective teaching. Despite this, assessment is often discussed as though it were a workload issue separate from, and in addition to, teaching. Rather, assessment design is an aspect of the broader educational design of a unit that includes all of the learning activities designed to achieve curriculum and learning outcomes. It certainly needs to be understood as a component of workload, however, and the resource demands of assessment need to be factored into guidance on effective assessment practice.

Holistic approach

A holistic approach to assessment at course level is required to provide assurance that course learning outcomes are achieved. Ideally, course committees engage in improved data collation and interrogation to address assessment issues, including peer review and mapping.

Recommendations

Recommendation	Responsibility
Develop procedures and structures to enable staff to share best practice in constructing valid and reliable authentic assessment tasks, and increasing their use, across all disciplines within the University.	AAC
Implement collegial peer review and peer collaboration capacities at faculty and discipline level. Incorporate assessment and feedback into peer reviews of teaching, to ensure assessment advances student learning and is valid, equitable and reliable.	ADEs
Include professional learning commitments in the Governance, Leadership and Engagement (GLE) component of teaching staff workload. Strongly encourage all teaching staff to complete the **MPLF** module 5.1 '**Assessment and feedback for learning**' and to learn from **exemplars from across the institution**.	Deans, ADEs, HOS
Cultivate understandings of feedback as an essential part of assessment design. Encourage the use of assessment designs that build in a feedback component prior to marked assessment.	ADEs
Use the **tools** available to manage staff and student workload management around assessments. Avoid over-assessment across majors and courses, including total unit, component and course volume of assessment.	HOS Program Directors
Reduce the number of assessments in units and ensure that the maximum weighting for any assessment is 60%, with reasonable exceptions such as research projects.	Program Directors
Produce biannual quality summaries at an institutional level that include: fail rates, assessment weighting, numbers, types across faculties, and a University-wide report to DVCE on trends in rates of retention, progression and completion.	EI

TOR 2: The quality of feedback to students

Despite improving results since 2015 on feedback metrics in the USS and SES, student satisfaction with feedback is consistently the lowest-ranked element in the USS and University of Sydney has ranked below our Go8 competitors and all Australian universities every year of the two surveys. While feedback is a perennial issue for students, these comparative data show that there is room for improvement at the University.

SES data:

Teachers commented on your work in ways that help you learn

Year	USYD	GO8	All Australian Universities
2015	46.65%	47.38%	52.93%
2016	50.80%	49.05%	54.11%
2017	48.26%	51.30%	54.28%
2018	49.91%	52.83%	56.73%
2019	51.74%	53.40%	57.21%
2020	50.01%	51.23%	57.16%

USS data:

Unit of Study Surveys - student satisfaction

USS Item	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Q1 - Teaching quality	4.04	4.09	4.11	4.14	4.15	4.17
Q2 - Intellectually rewarding	4.03	4.08	4.10	4.12	4.14	4.18
Q3 - Thinking Skills	3.97	4.04	4.07	4.09	4.12	4.16
Q4 - Learning Resources	3.98	4.04	4.07	4.09	4.12	4.13
Q5 - Challenging Assessments	4.06	4.12	4.14	4.16	4.18	4.23
Q6 - Helpful feedback	3.75	3.83	3.87	3.89	3.94	3.96

Student comments on assessment in the USS and SES open comment section highlight their frustrations with feedback. Receiving assessment feedback in a timely manner was a high priority for students - there was frustration when they were required to complete assessments without knowing how they had performed on the previous assignment. The need for greater clarity, consistency and transparency around assessment marking guidelines was commented on repeatedly: there were many occasions where students were provided with marking rubrics less than a week before the due date of an assignment. Assignment questions that were vague or too broad were heavily criticised. Students responded positively to clear instructions and clear communication on expectations from the assessment. Provision of adequate sample practice questions before exams was also important to students.

> *"The tutors chosen for this course needs to be better selected. Certain tutors, although very knowledgeable and presumably good at their jobs, were not the right type of people to teach students. Tutor often put up a passive aggressive attitude, criticising student's work without giving them constructive feedback in any way."*
>
> - USS School of Architecture, Design and Planning Student Response, 2019

"What made the subject more engaging was the teachers support of student learning in her efficient provision of detailed feedback for assignments, guidance for the completion of tasks, and motivation in her weekly recognition of students' work."

- USS Arts and Social Sciences Student Response, 2019

"The formative assessments were a fantastic idea, and I was really excited about the chance to put the work in to get feedback before the big assignment, but it took so long to receive any feedback from the first formative assessment that I was put off from doing the second one, as it seemed a waste of time ..."

- USS School of Health Sciences (Communication Sciences) Student Response, 2019

Teaching staff, in responses to the assessment practice survey and through the Academic Board workshop, agreed with the students that feedback is critical to student learning, and that there needs to be a connection between formative and summative assessment, with assessment designs providing the opportunity for formative feedback which improves student performance on summative assessment. There was broad agreement that the breadth and definition of feedback needs to be better understood by both staff and students. For feedback to be effective, it needs to be used. Staff considered that students need to be helped to recognise, accept and use formative feedback even when it is not recorded or associated with a mark. In fact, it is known that when students are given feedback with a mark, the mark gets attention and the feedback is discarded, especially when the feedback is mismatched with the mark. A crucial problem is coupling formal assessment and formal feedback and thinking that is all there is to feedback. Initial assessment without a mark is far more effective as feedback than an assessment with a mark.

Staff recognised the relational value of feedback, and the requirement for both staff and students to understand that feedback comes in many forms: dialogue between teacher and students; video feedback; peer, experiential and real-time feedback. In particular, the difficulty of giving meaningful feedback to a large class was a concern of staff. There is a clear need to train teaching staff in giving different types of feedback: verbal, written, audio, video, peer, and to help staff to increase student feedback literacy by being clear about what feedback is and signposting it.

"Assessment needs to be able to provide very quick and informative feedback to students. In large cohorts, this can be very difficult with high pressure on staff...Reliable access to electronic input would be a great improvement."

FMH staff member

"Assessments are first about FEEDBACK to learners. Grades / marks/ etc should be secondary consideration"

FASS staff member

"I also use peer feedback as a resource to improve student reflection. This supports an iterative approach to assessment."

FASS staff member

Feedback should be a journey undertaken with the student, not simply something that is done to the student. It should contribute to the development of their skills in the wider course and their careers: staff and students should view feedback through the lens of holistic and professional development rather than something siloed within a unit. There needs to be less assessment and more feedback and formative feedback needs to be given to students early in their studies.

Feedback needs to be constructive and meaningful to students. This, as many staff have noted, presents a problem in the context of a large class. When working with many students, feedback which tells students how and what to improve are comments on which the student is

going to act, and which will build a sense of trust and belonging between academics and students. Video feedback and forums both are technical solutions to the time taken for feedback. Audio and video feedback takes a small fraction of the time it takes to provide written feedback. Phil Dawson noted an example to deal with this problem: students are given a cover sheet and asked what kind of feedback they want.

The language of feedback is important – the intensity, tone, and the way it is framed. Staff, students and panel experts all recognised the important relational aspect of feedback. Feedback needs to be incorporated into a whole-of-assessment design, given in a variety of ways and in language and timing that helps students improve. It needs to be an essential part of assessment, perhaps by having an initial unmarked assessment specifically designed to feed into the later, and/or decoupled but connected to marked assessment.

Current structures of assessment encourage siloing assessment into units. We need to reconsider feedback within a whole-of-course assessment regimen, and consider whole of program feedback – not just feedback which is valuable for one unit. We need to re-think feedback at the major or stream level and try to encapsulate the whole student experience.

The student feedback suggests that there is a reliance on giving only written feedback and only after an assessment. Within the context of new synchronous ways of learning, giving iterative feedback in real time and using a variety of media deepens the relationship between teacher and student, increases trust, and allows students to implement immediate changes. Greater engagement from students in the feedback loop, supported by interactive learning design, discussing, debating and learning from one another, creates the richer learning environment we strive to achieve.

Feedback is the most powerful part of assessment and can be most effective and yet its provision by academics is highly variable. Students value feedback that tells them where to go next and how to improve. More often than not the feedback we provide is about how close they are to where they should be. Students improve as a function of "where to next" feedback. It is not about how much feedback is given – but whether the feedback is heard, understood and actionable, i.e., whether students can use it. When students receive the style of feedback which tells them where to go next, it builds a sense of trust and belonging. There is a reluctance to provide feedback to students before they put in their final assignment because, some argue, this lacks integrity. Others argue that this is learning[3].

Recommendations

Recommendation	Responsibility
Introduce students to the wider concept of feedback in the early part of their degree. Include this broader understanding of feedback in staff developmental activities.	DVCE, EI, ADEs
Include professional learning commitments in the Governance, Leadership and Engagement (GLE) component of teaching staff workload. Strongly encourage all teaching staff to complete the **MPLF** module 5.1 '**Assessment and feedback for learning**' and to learn from **exemplars from across the institution**.	Deans, ADEs, HOS
Cultivate understandings of feedback as an essential part of assessment design. Encourage the use of assessment designs that build in a feedback component prior to marked assessment.	ADEs
Include a teaching portfolio that includes demonstration of assessment and feedback literacy, and the nexus between the two, in all	Provost

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[3] See, for example, **Boud and Molloy**, Hattie and Timperley (2007), and Brooks et al (2008)

touchpoints of academic career progress such as recruitment, APD and the case for promotion.

TOR 3: Examine and report on the assessment of learning outcomes

A strong theme arising in the staff responses to the survey was the necessity to assess the skills of critical analysis, professional reflective capacity and command of content/concepts, using different forms of assessment to examine a learner's depth of knowledge, application and understanding.

> *"Exams which require students to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts taught in class and applying those concepts to a novel problem."*
>
> – FASS, School of Economics

The importance of discipline-specific assessments was also a common feature throughout staff feedback, with staff highlighting the need for freedom to design assessments appropriate to their subject area, cohort size and specific unit requirements. Integrating tasks that assess against the graduate qualities was also important to staff when assessing learning outcomes.

The Academic Board workshop on this term of reference raised questions rather than solutions or observations, which may be indicate that the University is not as successful as it could be in achieving constructive alignment of the curriculum, teaching strategies and pedagogy with assessment to ensure learning outcomes are achieved. There is a lack of feedback in our data on our students' success in achieving learning outcomes, partly because we garner feedback on units through the Unit of Study Surveys (USS) before exams, and partly because we do not think of assessment as part of an eco-system.

The University operates largely at the level where the unit coordinator defines the learning outcomes, sets assessments and the only feedback as to the achievement of the learning outcomes is the students' work. This is not a process rich in feedback needed to build a broader understanding of learning outcome achievement at the level of course component or whole course, and reflects the lack of richness in the assessment ecosystem. A unit should sit within an assessment ecosystem of major, program and course/degree learning outcomes, with the graduate qualities sitting at University level.

Learning outcomes are periodically reviewed by the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee and the assessment principles support staff in effectively assessing learning outcomes. The assessment plans implemented by the Assessment Advisory Committee will help the university to view the learning outcomes more holistically than just at unit level. Learning outcomes should be scaled according to how advanced a student is through their degree.

It is important to distinguish between the learning outcomes for a unit, major or degree, and the graduate qualities. In 2018, faculties were asked to map learning outcomes for the curriculum component such as the major or degree, to the graduate qualities, to ensure that not only the narrow degree learning outcomes were being met but that students were graduating with abilities in critical overarching qualities such as critical thinking and communication.

The University has developed draft rubrics for the graduate qualities and is conducting a second round of trials to map graduate quality assessment within the assessment plans and to validate the rubrics. If the validation process is successful, the University will develop a way of reporting back to students their achievement of the graduate qualities across the curriculum to give them a cumulative view of their progress. We envisage a prose-based assessment based on rubrics. This is in line with the direction taken in the sector.

These broader capabilities are taught in many places. The purpose of the graduate qualities assessment plan is to identify where in the curriculum it is most appropriate to develop and thus

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assess these capabilities. The graduate qualities are not assessed in every unit, but in key units, such as many of the capstone units and later in the curriculum where students are expected to be able to integrate what they have learned. While most assessment is directly related to the thematic content of each unit, the University expects that across several units of study, students are developing the graduate qualities.

Rubrics create a common language for staff and students to understand the expectations for the graduate qualities. Students should be able to understand their own achievement of the graduate qualities at early and later points in their degrees.

Recommendations

Recommendation	Responsibility
Continue with the work to assess the graduate qualities to provide feedback to relevant program directors on the success of embedding the graduate qualities across undergraduate degrees.	AAC
Develop a business plan to convert the assessment plans into a more sustainable, digital format housed in Sydney Curriculum.	DVCE
Develop a portfolio of evidence for teaching staff to assist them to demonstrate the alignment between assessment and outcomes. Ensure that professional learning opportunities are available for staff to develop the skills to create alignment and provide evidence of alignment.	EI
Continue to develop a Universal Design for Learning approaches to teaching and assessment.	DVCE, EI, Disability Services, ADEs

TOR 4: Examine and report on assessment benchmarking

Benchmarking is an evaluation of teachers' practice, rather than an assessment of students. It is an evaluation of our institutional practice.

The University participates in the Go8 Quality Verification Scheme (QVS), which provides some external benchmarking and quality assurance of undergraduate units of study. Since 2011, 35 disciplinary areas have been evaluated, with reviews typically focusing on capstone or core final year units. The reviews are conducted by academic staff from Go8 Universities and focus on the unit materials, learning outcomes, and assessment tasks of the unit provided for review. For the majority of units, the QVS reviews provide positive feedback that considers the unit materials to be appropriate for the level of study. Moreover, the reviews indicate that the University's assessment tasks and marking criteria generally compared favourably with analogous or relevant units at other universities.

Course reviews conducted every five to seven years include a benchmarking component and accreditation exercises for professional courses provide an external benchmark against professional standards.

There is a hierarchy to institutional benchmarking that takes place at the University. In the first instance, the Academic Quality Framework (AQF) sets the standards that all degrees are required to meet. The next institutional benchmarking in place is in the form professional benchmarks for accredited courses, or accredited schools. These formal benchmarks are couched within informal benchmarks – teachers benchmarking individually within their disciplinary contexts.

Benchmarking is labour intensive, and although the light touch the University has with the QVS is valuable, it is worth considering whether any of these reports provide direction beyond the unit of study. Benchmarking reports identify issues which may be applied beyond a particular unit, and there may be value in being more systematic in identifying these issues. Benchmarking exercises do not always achieve improvements in outcomes, assessments or institutional practice. Therefore, ensuring a clear purpose before embarking on any benchmarking processes, especially QVS, should be implemented.

The Higher Degree by Research (HDR) external examination is a form of benchmarking in which the obligation to use external assessors, as well the engagement of international assessors, provides a national and international benchmark of assessment.

Although the University engages in multiple formal benchmarking processes, there needs to be better understanding of and opportunities for benchmarking. Benchmarking may help the University to drive improvement, particularly in relation to more authentic assessment, and more engaged or directly relevant assessment.

Recommendations

Recommendation	Responsibility
Continue in the Quality Verification System (QVS) at an institutional level, and explore the possibility of expanding our involvement in that process.	DVCE
Encourage participation in discipline-based peer reviews of assessment networks outside of the QVS, as well as professional accreditation-based reviews, and have those reported to AQC.	Deans

TOR 5: Report on the extent to which the University meets the relevant HESF standards

The HESF standards are mapped to a responsible and accountable office at the University and a risk-based approach is used to monitor and report on HESF standards through the Quality Unit. The responsible and accountable map (RAM) is included in the next section and includes the legislation and relevant University instruments and provisions. The following sections outline compliance with the relevant HESF standards.

1.3.2 – Specific strategies support transition, including:

b) undertaking early assessment or review that provides formative feedback on academic progress and is able to identify needs for additional support

Following the 2018 Student Experience Program, every course at an undergraduate level now includes a transition unit. A similar approach is planned for postgraduate courses.

As a result of the English Language Thematic Review 2020, the Student Language and Communication Strategy (2021) includes a requirement for an English language screening tool for students upon commencement, to gauge student support needs and make follow up recommendations for specific support programs to meet these needs throughout their studies, with particular attention given to academic English ability. These results will be used to triage solutions for students, with ongoing and exit tests to provide students evidence of how much their language proficiency has improved. Students who fall into the highest need band will be provided adjunct tutorials alongside their unit of study focused on developing their academic language and learning skills. The English Language screening tool will be rolled out from semester 2 2021 to semester 2 2023, commencing with two units and ultimately reaching all students.

Assessment guidelines and assessment procedures prescribe early assessment for all students, either formative or summative. The University is conducting a pilot in S2 2021 with the Faculty of Science to identify students at risk before census date through one or more indicators across multiple units of study. Indicators include non-completion of first assessment, not logging into Canvas, and not attending lab. Students identified will be provided additional support and advice.

1.3.3 - Methods of assessment or monitoring that determine progress within or between units of study or in research training validly assess progress and, in the case of formative assessment, provide students with timely feedback that assists in their achievement of learning outcomes.

The Coursework Policy 2014 (Part 14, s 62,4 and Part 14 s 70, 8b) sets out feedback requirements for teaching staff, instructing feedback to be constructive, timely and respectful, and improves their learning and performance. Using a cascaded approach, unit coordinators and ADE's monitor individual student progress and determine the success of assessment. Progression data is available in two purpose-built Power BI reports, with dashboards APA2000 and APA2100 providing in-depth analysis of progression statistics. Importantly, student progression itself is an indicator of successful methods of assessment.

The University uses student feedback collected through the Unit of Study (USS) and the Student Experience Survey (SES) to provide indicators of successful assessment. Specifically, question 6 of the USS survey asks students if they have been 'guided by helpful feedback' and demonstrates that this is an area for improvement, with Sydney University consistently scoring under 4 out of 5 in this area.

The Learning and Teaching Policy gives faculties the responsibility of monitoring (Pt 5) and administering (Pt 6) the progression of students and assessment feedback to the education committees within faculties. Course reviews conducted every seven years comprehensively review methods of assessment to ensure suitability and relevance.

1.3.5 - Trends in rates of retention, progression and completion of student cohorts through courses of study are monitored to enable review and improvement.

Trends in rates of retention, progression and completion are monitored through the Course Pulse Reports and Power BI Reports, specifically the APA2000 and the APA2100, enabling analysis of progression outcomes related to faculties, courses, units of study, demographic characteristics, specific progression triggers. These reports enable faculties to track student engagement, providing analysis of progression over time.

Individual efforts undertaken by separate faculties include a range of initiatives to monitor progression rates, which are reflected on internally and assessments are adjusted accordingly. The University would benefit from a University-wide report to DVCE on trends in rates of retention, progression and completion.

The Sydney School of Business monitors trends under the portfolios of the Associate Dean (Student Success and Mobility) and the Associate Dean (Programs) (Co-Chair Education Committee) within the Business School. When required, areas identified for improvement are actioned by relevant Program Directors as members of the Education Committee. The Faculty of Medicine and Health also looks at progression rates as part of their progression requirements, which is additionally reviewed in an annual quality review.

Although the Sydney Law School does not systematically review these trends, there has been some analysis undertaken of the Juris Doctor 1 results from the academic board reviews, to review the success of international students. It was found that native English-speaking domestic students were at as much risk as non-native English speakers. There is also close oversight of students at risk, but this is not linked back to overall cohort performance. Coordinators also regularly review the unit of study to ensure assessments are resulting in the best outcomes. For example, the reduction in the volume of assessment for the Juris Doctor compulsory first year unit and reduced weighting for unseen assessment tasks resulted in fewer fails.

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences have investigated barriers to student success, which have been implemented across other faculties. An additional enquiry of the costs and benefits of providing good support to students in relation to retention was also undertaken. The local FASS team are currently working on a series of dashboards that will be shared with the Associate Dean (Student Affairs) and Associate Dean (Student Life). These results will be discussed at the Student Life Committee and Education Committee where relevant.

Progression warning to students is implemented in three stages (see Part 15 of the **Coursework Policy**). Correspondence to a student is automatically initiated when their performance results in a progression trigger, increasing in intensity as performance worsens. Improvements to make this automated system more relational are currently being undertaken. Academic progression policy is currently in development, which involves a new reporting requirement to be biennial, allowing for more adequate time to deliver longer forms of continuous improvement projects and initiatives. Additionally, the Jobs Ready Graduate Bill 2021 (JRG) has created an urgent need to ensure that under the 50% pass rule, appropriate assistance is provided to students early enough in the process.

The University defines success to be the proportion of those who receive a pass or better as a proportion of those enrolled, completion to be the proportion of students who complete a degree, expressed as a proportion of those enrolled, and retention to be the proportion of those who are enrolled in a semester, expressed as a proportion enrolled from the previous year, except those that have completed their degree.

1.4.1 – The expected learning outcomes for each course of study are specified, consistent with the level and field of education of the qualification awarded and informed by national and international comparators.

The Learning and Teaching Policy 2019 stipulates that the learning outcomes for each course of study are specified, consistent with the level and field of education of the qualification awarded and informed by national and international surveys. This is overseen by both the Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Committees, who advise the Academic Board.

As part of the course approval process, assessment plans are integrated so that they map assessment to learning outcomes for undergraduate courses.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) monitors evaluations of the standards of educational experience and education environments and provides reports to the University Executive and Academic Board. The Academic Board and the University Executive then provide reports of reviews to the Senate.

Expert advice should be included in the Course Management Template and sought at course approval stage. Measurement of graduate qualities and learning outcomes are mapped to one another with assessment plans to show how they are met. Additionally, as a result of the Curriculum Management Project, commencing in June 2021, a new electronic course management template will be developed, replacing the current template. The new template has been designed after extensive stakeholder feedback to be more user friendly.

1.4.2 - The specified learning outcomes for each course of study encompass discipline-related and generic outcomes, including:

a) **specific knowledge and skills and their application that characterise the field(s) of education or disciplines involved**
b) **generic skills and their application in the context of the field(s) of education or disciplines involved**
c) **knowledge and skills required for employment and further study related to the course of study, including those required to be eligible to seek registration to practise where applicable, and**
d) **skills in independent and critical thinking suitable for life-long learning.**

As part of the course approval process, assessment plans are integrated so that they map assessment to learning outcomes for undergraduate courses.

The Learning and Teaching Policy 2019 stipulates that the learning outcomes for each course of study are specified, consistent with the level and field of education of the qualification awarded and informed by national and international surveys. This is overseen by both the Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Committees, who advise the Academic Board.

The University has a set of graduate qualities for undergraduate courses and research degrees which are the equivalent of generic learning outcomes. Specific learning outcomes are set in accordance with the AQF level of qualification and to AQF specifications which are set out in the Course Management Template. The University does not have these sets of graduate qualities available for postgraduate coursework.

When making modifications to a course, including assessment, expert advice should be included in the Course Management Template and sought at both the course approval and amendment stage.

As a result of the Curriculum Management Project, commencing in June 2021, a new electronic course management template is in development, replacing the current template. The new template has been designed after extensive stakeholder feedback to be more user friendly.

1.4.3 – Methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, are capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment.

The Coursework Policy 2014 states that "students' assessment will be evaluated solely on the basis of students' achievement against criteria and standards specified to align with learning outcomes" (Part 14, section 64, 3). This is achieved through rubrics, assessment mapping and the assessment plan. Assessment tasks must be mapped to learning outcomes. The University expects to see constructive alignment between curriculum, learning outcomes and assessment. The Coursework Policy and Procedures stipulate that assessment should be set by standards and not by norms.

Reporting is achieved through assessment plans, with all faculties required to have assessment plans which they are responsible for monitoring. The University also participates in the Go8

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Quality Verification System which provides external benchmarking for some units. Course reviews conducted every five to seven years include a benchmarking component. Accreditation exercises for professional courses provide an external benchmark against professional standards.

There needs to be more staff understanding that assessment and feedback is a part of their expected skill set, with development opportunities made available to improve these skills to assist staff. The implementation of a peer review process is required to evaluate assessment tasks from various points of view (content validity, construct validity, moderation of marking, etc.) and provide feedback that leads to improved validity of the assessment tasks.

1.4.4 – On completion of a course of study, students have demonstrated the learning outcomes specified for the course of study, whether assessed at unit level, course level, or in combination.

Trends in rates of retention, progress and completion of student cohorts are monitored and enable review and improvement. These data are collected by IAP and monitored through Course Reviews, which are reported to the Academic Quality Committee.

The University Executive Education Committee should monitor the data against pre-specified criteria that align with the requirements of quality assessment. Assessment of learning outcomes need to be of the required standard.

1.4.5 – On completion of research training, students have demonstrated specific and generic learning outcomes related to research, including:

> **a) a detailed understanding of the specific topic of their research, within a broad understanding of the field of research**
> **b) capacity to scope, design and conduct research projects independently**
> **c) technical research skills and competence in the application of research methods, and**
> **d) skills in analysis, critical evaluation and reporting of research, and in presentation, publication and dissemination of their research.**

The University articulates research capability through the Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2020 and the reporting of research findings through the University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule 2011, the Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2013 and the Thesis and Examination of Higher Degree by Research Policy 2015. Examiners of HDR theses are also required to independently assess the capabilities of the student in reporting against sections a, b, c and d of this standard. These examiner reports are then independently assessed by the chair of the particular examination.

In the event examiners and the chair of examination all recommend that the degree be awarded, the examination outcome is decided by the faculty committee. All other examination outcomes are considered by the HDR Examinations Subcommittee of the Academic Board.

The DVC (Education) and DVC (Research) jointly chair the UE Research Education Committee.

1.4.6 - Assessment of major assessable research outputs for higher degrees by research, such as theses, dissertations, exegeses, creative works or other major works arising from a candidate's research, incorporates assessment by at least two assessors with international standing in the field of research, who are independent of the conduct of the research, competent to undertake the assessment and do not have a conflict of interest, and:

> a) **for doctoral degrees, are external to the higher education provider, and**
> b) **for masters degrees by research, at least one of whom is external to the higher education provider.**

The research capability and assessment requirements are articulated through the Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2020 and the reporting of research findings through the University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule 2011, the Supervision of

Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2020 and the Thesis and Examinations of Higher Degree by Research Policy 2015 In the event of a recommendation by any examiner other than to award the degree, the outcome of the examination is decided by the HDR Examinations Subcommittee of the Academic Board. To improve our compliance with this standard, better detection and management of conflict of interest among supervisors and examiners of the same student is needed.

The DVC (Education) and DVC (Research) jointly chair the UE Research Education Committee.

1.4.7 – The outputs arising from research training contribute to the development of the field of research, practice or creative field and, in the case of doctoral degrees, demonstrate a significant original contribution.

Examiners assess the criteria specified by this standard and through the Thesis and Examination of Higher Degrees by Research Guidelines for Examiners 2020 and University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule 2011.

Examiners are required to describe how the research findings from the thesis represent a contribution to knowledge.

The DVC (Education) and DVC (Research) jointly chair the UE Research Education Committee.

3.1.1 - The design for each course of study is specified and the specification includes:

   a) **the qualification(s) to be awarded on completion**
   b) **structure, duration and modes of delivery**
   c) **the units of study (or equivalent) that comprise the course of study**
   d) **entry requirements and pathways**
   e) **expected learning outcomes, methods of assessment and indicative student workload**
   f) **compulsory requirements for completion**
   g) **exit pathways, articulation arrangements, pathways to further learning, and**
   h) **for a course of study leading to a Bachelor Honours, Masters or Doctoral qualification, includes the proportion and nature of research or research-related study in the course.**

The Undergraduates Studies Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee assist the Academic Board in ensuring each course of study has the specifications outlined within this standard.

Both committees receive reports from, and provide advice to, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and, where appropriate, the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Global Engagement) on quality assurance and other matters relating to undergraduate and postgraduate coursework study. The committees also obtain information or reports from faculties, schools, the Board of Interdisciplinary Studies, departments, the library and other academic units on academic matters relating to undergraduate studies. Both committees provide regular reports on their activities to the Academic Board. The Curriculum and Course Planning Committee reviews all new course proposals and course amendments.

Including a question relating to the proportion and nature of research specifically for master's courses within the Course Management Template will help improve compliance of this standard.

3.1.2 – The content and learning activities of each course of study engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study and the expected learning outcomes, including:

   a. current knowledge and scholarship in relevant academic disciplines
   b. study of the underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the academic disciplines or fields of education or research represented in the course, and
   c. emerging concepts that are informed by recent scholarship, current research findings and, where applicable, advances in practice.

The Course Management Template requires Course Co-ordinators to ensure that the learning outcomes of the degree are consistent with the relevant AQF level. The AQF embodies the concepts in this standard. Requirements of the qualifications of the teaching staff are outlined in s24(a), of the Learning and Teaching Policy.

Faculties check that the Course Management Template includes the objectives of this standard. The Curriculum and Course Planning Committee also review this to ensure that learning outcomes are consistent with the AQF. The Quality Verification System administered by the Go8 is another level of review.

The Academic Board should be satisfied that learning outcomes have been reviewed by an external expert. This is only required for courses which require professional accreditation. Some consideration could be given to including this requirement in the Course Management Template.

As a result of the Curriculum Management Project, commencing in June 2021, a new electronic course management template will be developed, replacing the current template. The new template has been designed after extensive stakeholder feedback to be more user friendly.

3.1.3 - Teaching and learning activities are arranged to foster progressive and coherent achievement of expected learning outcomes throughout each course of study.

The Learning and Teaching Policy 2019 requires that Unit of Study Coordinators review the design of the curriculum of the unit of study, including learning outcomes, learning and teaching activities and assessment to ensure ongoing alignment against program learning goals and graduate qualities.

Completion of the Course Management Template ensures compliance of this standard by requiring pre-requisite and co-requisite units provide further assurance that learning is progressive. When completing the template, faculties are able to check the inclusion of the objectives of this standard. Additionally, the Curriculum and Course Planning Committee also reviews this to ensure that learning outcomes are consistent with the AQF. The Quality Verification System, administered by the Go8, also provides a benchmark.

As described above, a result of the Curriculum Management Project will be the development of a new electronic course management template.

3.1.4 - Each course of study is designed to enable achievement of expected learning outcomes regardless of a student's place of study or the mode of delivery.

The University specifies learning outcomes for every course of study. Course Coordinators provide detailed information on how learning outcomes will be achieved, which are then mapped to how learning outcomes will be assessed. This is achieved through the Course Management Template and through assessment plans. This standard is monitored both via the Assessment Advisory Committee and the course review procedures.

The University must refresh its understanding of the different modes of delivery in light of COVID-19, particularly with respect to online learning. A better design for a more interactive online experience is required, especially when it comes to online assessment. A potential recommendation could, for the 2021 thematic review, include encouraging nan online assessment work group. This is particularly important for hybrid forms, requiring an in-depth rethink as to what hybrid forms of delivery are trying to achieve.

As described above, a result of the Curriculum Management Project, will be the development of a new electronic course management template.

3.1.5 – Where professional accreditation of a course of study is required for graduates to be eligible to practise, the course of study is accredited and continues to be accredited by the relevant professional body.

Faculties oversee the professional accreditation of courses. The Course Management Template requires a statement of professional accreditation. Course reviews must also be accompanied by the most recent professional accreditation report, if relevant.

Accreditation currency is reported during the course review process. The Quality Unit maintains a central repository of all professional accreditation reports and maintains a register of currency. It reports to the AQC regularly on accreditation status.

As described above, a result of the Curriculum Management Project, will be the development of a new electronic course management template.

5.3.4 – Review and improvement activities include regular external referencing of the success of student cohorts against comparable courses of study, including:

> **b. the assessment methods and grading of students' achievement of learning outcomes for selected units of study within courses of study**

The University participates in the Go8 QVS benchmarking exercise which includes examination of assessment methods and grading.

The Educational Innovation team train staff on how to effectively grade students' units of study assessments. Training is provided through the Graduate Certificate of Higher Education (formal qualification) and the Modular Professional Learning Framework (informal modules).

Methods of assessment are collected, aligned with learning outcomes and published to students via the unit outline and externally to accreditation bodies as required and appropriate. Qualitative feedback is provided through the Unit of Study Survey, specifically in questions 5 and 6 and through the Student Experience Survey.

HESF Standards and Quality Assurance

1.3 Orientation and Progression

	Standard	Accountable Office	Responsible Office	Legislation	University provisions
1.3.2	Specific strategies support transition, including: b) undertaking early assessment or review that provides formative feedback on academic progress and is able to identify needs for additional support, and	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) or Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal	Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Pro Vice-Chancellor, Educational Innovation Team Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor	Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000	Academic Honesty in Coursework Policy 2015 Academic Honesty Procedure 2016 Coursework Policy 2014 Graduate Research Good Practice Principles (external resource) Learning and Teaching Policy 2019 Learning and Teaching Procedures 2016 University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2014
1.3.3	Methods of assessment or monitoring that determine progress within or between units of study or in research training validly assess progress and, in the case of formative assessment, provide students with timely feedback that assists in their achievement of learning outcomes.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000	Academic Honesty in Coursework Policy 2015 Academic Honesty Procedure 2016 Coursework Policy 2014 Learning and Teaching Policy 2019 Learning and Teaching Procedures 2016 University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2014
1.3.5	Trends in rates of retention, progression and completion of student cohorts through courses of study are monitored to enable review and improvement.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Faculty Education Committees	Higher Education Support Amendment (Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students) Bill 2020	Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy and Procedures 2015 Coursework Policy 2014

1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment

	Standard	Accountable Office	Responsible Office	Legislation	University provisions
1.4.1	The expected learning outcomes for each course of study are specified, consistent with the level and field of education of the qualification awarded, and informed by national and international comparators.	Academic Board Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Academic Board Individual Faculty – Education Committee	None	Australian Qualifications Framework (external resource) Coursework Policy 2014 Graduate Research Good Practice Principles (external resource) Learning and Teaching Policy 2019 Learning and Teaching Procedures 2016 University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2014 University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule 2011
1.4.2	The specified learning outcomes for each course of study encompass discipline-related and generic outcomes, including: a) Specified knowledge and skills and their application that characterise the field(s) of education or disciplines involved b) Generic skills and their application in the context of the field(s) of education or disciplines involved c) Knowledge and skills required for employment and further study related to the course of study, including those required to be eligible to seek registration to practise where applicable, and	Academic Board Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Academic Board Individual Faculty – Education Committee	Health Practitioner Regulation National Law 2009 Legal Profession Uniform Law 2014 Veterinary Practice Act 2003	Australian Qualifications Framework (external resource) Graduate Research Good Practice Principles (external resource) Learning and Teaching Policy 2019 Learning and Teaching Procedures 2016

	Standard	Accountable Office	Responsible Office	Legislation	University provisions
	d) Skills in independent and critical thinking suitable for life-long learning.				
1.4.3	Methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, are capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment.	Academic Board Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Academic Board Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) ADE at each faculty	Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW) 2009 Legal Profession Uniform Law 2014 Veterinary Practice Act 2003	Assessment Procedures 2011 Australian Qualifications Framework (external resource) Coursework Policy 2014 Thesis and Examination of Higher Degree by Research Policy 2015 Thesis and Examination of Higher Degrees by Research Procedures 2020 University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2014
1.4.4	On completion of a course of study, students have demonstrated the learning outcomes specified for the course of study, whether assessed at unit level, course level, or in combination.	Academic Board Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Academic Board Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) ADE individual faculties	Health Practitioner Regulation National Law 2009 Legal Profession Uniform Law 2014 Veterinary Practice Act 2003	Assessment Procedures 2011 Australia Qualifications Framework (external resource) Coursework Policy 2014 Thesis and Examination of Higher Degree by Research Policy 2015 Thesis and Examination of Higher Degrees by Research Procedures 2020 University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2014
1.4.5	On completion of research training, students have demonstrated specific and generic learning outcomes related to research, including:	Academic Board	Academic Board Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor	Australia Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018	Essential Resources for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2016 Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2020

	Standard	Accountable Office	Responsible Office	Legislation	University provisions
	a) A detailed understanding of the specific topic of their research, within a broad understanding of the field of research	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)			Thesis and Examination of Higher Degree by Research Procedures 2020 University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule 2011
	b) Capacity to scope, design and conduct research projects independently	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)			
	c) Technical research skills and competence in the application of research methods, and				
	d) Skills in analysis, critical evaluation and reporting of research, and in presentation, publication and dissemination of their research.				
1.4.6	Assessment of major assessable research outputs for higher degrees by research, such as theses, dissertations, exegeses, creative works or other major works arising from a candidate's research, incorporates assessment by at least two assessors with international standing in the field of research, who are independent of the conduct of the research, competent to undertake the assessment and do not have a conflict of interest, and:	Academic Board Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Academic Board	Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018	Supervision of Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2020 Thesis and Examination of Higher Degree by Research Policy 2015 Thesis and Examination of Higher Degrees by Research Procedures 2020 University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule 2011

	Standard	Accountable Office	Responsible Office	Legislation	University provisions
	a) For doctoral degrees, are external to the higher education provider, and b) For masters degrees by research, at least one of whom is external to the higher education provider.				
1.4.7	The outputs arising from research training contribute to the development of the field of research, practice or creative field and, in the case of doctoral degrees, demonstrate a significant original contribution.	Academic Board Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Academic Board Research Education Committee – Faculty	Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018	Thesis and Examination of Higher Degrees by Research Guidelines for Examiners 2020 Thesis and Examination of Higher Degree by Research Policy 2015 Thesis and Examination of Higher Degrees by Research Procedures 2020 University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule 2011

3.1 Teaching

	Standard	Accountable Office	Responsible Office	Legislation	University provisions
3.1.1	The design for each course of study is specified and the specification includes: a) The qualification(s) to be awarded on completion b) Structure, duration and modes of delivery c) The units of study (or equivalent) that comprise the course of study	Academic Board Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Academic Board Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	None	Coursework Management Template (internal resource) Coursework Policy 2014 Learning and Teaching Policy 2019 Learning and Teaching Procedures 2016 University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2014

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	Standard	Accountable Office	Responsible Office	Legislation	University provisions
	d) Entry requirements and pathways e) Expected learning outcomes, methods of assessment and indicative student workload f) Compulsory requirements for completion g) Exit pathways, articulation arrangements, pathways to further learning, and h) For a course of study leading to a Bachelor Honours, Masters or Doctoral qualification, includes the proportion and nature of research or research-related study in the course.				
3.1.2	The content and learning activities of each course of study engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study and the expected learning outcomes, including: a) Current knowledge and scholarship in relevant academic disciplines b) Study of the underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the academic disciplines or fields of education or research represented in the course, and	Academic Board Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Academic Board Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	None	Coursework Management Template Coursework Policy 2014 Learning and Teaching Policy 2019 Learning and Teaching Procedures 2016 University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2014

	Standard	Accountable Office	Responsible Office	Legislation	University provisions
	c) Emerging concepts that are informed by recent scholarship, current research findings and, where applicable, advances in practice.				
3.1.3	Teaching and learning activities are arranged to foster progressive and coherent achievement of expected learning outcomes throughout each course of study.	Academic Board

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) | Academic Board

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) | None | Course Management Template

Coursework Policy 2014

Learning and Teaching Policy 2019

Learning and Teaching Procedures 2016

University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2014 |
| 3.1.4 | Each course of study is designed to enable achievement of expected learning outcomes regardless of a student's place of study or the mode of delivery. | Academic Board

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) | Academic Board

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) | None | Course Management Template (internal resource)

Coursework Policy 2014

Learning and Teaching Policy 2019

Learning and Teaching Procedures 2016

University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2014 |
| 3.1.5 | Where professional accreditation of a course of study is required for graduates to be eligible to practise, the course of study is | Academic Board | Academic Board | None | Course Management Template (internal resource)

Coursework Policy 2014 |

	Standard	Accountable Office	Responsible Office	Legislation	University provisions
	accredited and continues to be accredited by the relevant professional body.	Provost	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)		Learning and Teaching Policy 2019 Learning and Teaching Procedures 2016 University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2014

5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement

	Standard	Accountable Office	Responsible Office	Legislation	University provisions
5.3.4	Review and improvement activities include regular external referencing of the success of student cohorts against comparable courses of study, including: b) the assessment methods and grading of students' achievement of learning outcomes for selected units of study within courses of study	Academic Board Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Academic Board Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	None	Assessment Procedures 2011 Coursework Policy 2014 Learning and Teaching Policy 2019 Learning and Teaching Procedures 2016 University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2014 University (Delegations of Authority) Rule 2020 University of Sydney (Governance of Faculties and University Schools) Rule 2016 University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule 2011

Appendices

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

THEMATIC REVIEW 2021

THEMATIC REVIEW INTO THE QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS
TERMS OF REFERENCE

RACHAEL WEISS, UNIVERSITY QUALITY MANAGER
28 August 2020

PURPOSE

The panel will review the quality of assessments at the University of Sydney. It will make recommendations to the University regarding quality improvements.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The review panel will:
1. Examine and report on the quality of assessment, its authenticity and effectiveness, including online assessment
2. Examine and report on the quality of feedback to students
3. Examine and report on the assessment of learning outcomes
4. Examine and report on assessment benchmarking
5. Report on the extent to which the University meets the relevant HESF standards
6. Make recommendations for improvements to the quality of assessments at the University

PANEL MEMBERSHIP

Name	Position
A/Prof Anthony Masters	Chair of the University of Sydney Academic Board
Prof Pip Pattison	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education)
Prof Phill Dawson	Associate Director, Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning (CRADLE), Deakin University
A/Prof Peter McCallum	Registrar and Academic Director, Education, Lead on Assessment Improvement Initiatives, University of Sydney
Prof James Tognolini	Director, Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment (CEMA), the Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney
Prof Annamarie Jagose	Dean, Faculty Arts and Social Sciences, University of Sydney
Prof Anna Reid	Head of School and Dean, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney
Prof Pauline Ross	Professor of Biology and Deputy Head of School, School of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Sydney
Prof Inam Haq	Associate Dean (Education), Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney
Dr Raffaella Mammucari	Scholarly Teaching Fellow, School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, University of Sydney
A/Prof Elaine Huber	Director of Business Co-Design Unit and Chair of Unit of Study Approval Committee, University of Sydney
Dr Natalie Silver	Lecturer, Law School, University of Sydney
Dr Cecily Oakley	Manager, Curriculum and Quality, Faculty of Science, University of Sydney
Ms Ishrar Tabenda Hasan	Student Representative, SUPRA
Mr Swapnik Sanagavarapu	President, SRC

Thematic Review 2021 – Terms of Reference

HESF STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THIS REVIEW

1.3 Orientation and Progression

2. Specific strategies support transition, including:
   b. undertaking early assessment or review that provides formative feedback on academic progress and is able to identify needs for additional support
3. Methods of assessment or monitoring that determine progress within or between units of study or in research training validly assess progress and, in the case of formative assessment, provide students with timely feedback that assists in their achievement of learning outcomes.
5. Trends in rates of retention, progression and completion of student cohorts through courses of study are monitored to enable review and improvement.

1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment

1. The expected learning outcomes for each course of study are specified, consistent with the level and field of education of the qualification awarded, and informed by national and international comparators.
2. The specified learning outcomes for each course of study encompass discipline-related and generic outcomes, including:
   a. specific knowledge and skills and their application that characterise the field(s) of education or disciplines involved
   b. generic skills and their application in the context of the field(s) of education or disciplines involved
   c. knowledge and skills required for employment and further study related to the course of study, including those required to be eligible to seek registration to practise where applicable, and
   d. skills in independent and critical thinking suitable for life-long learning.
3. Methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, are capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment.
4. On completion of a course of study, students have demonstrated the learning outcomes specified for the course of study, whether assessed at unit level, course level, or in combination.
5. On completion of research training, students have demonstrated specific and generic learning outcomes related to research, including:
   a. a detailed understanding of the specific topic of their research, within a broad understanding of the field of research
   b. capacity to scope, design and conduct research projects independently
   c. technical research skills and competence in the application of research methods, and
   d. skills in analysis, critical evaluation and reporting of research, and in presentation, publication and dissemination of their research.
6. Assessment of major assessable research outputs for higher degrees by research, such as theses, dissertations, exegeses, creative works or other major works arising from a candidate's research incorporates assessment by at least two assessors with international standing in the field of research, who are independent of the conduct of the research, competent to undertake the assessment and do not have a conflict of interest, and:
   a. for doctoral degrees, are external to the higher education provider, and
   b. for masters degrees by research, at least one of whom is external to the higher education provider.
7. The outputs arising from research training contribute to the development of the field of research, practice or creative field and, in the case of doctoral degrees, demonstrate a significant original contribution.

3.1 Course Design

1. The design for each course of study is specified and the specification includes:
   a. the qualification(s) to be awarded on completion
   b. structure, duration and modes of delivery
   c. the units of study (or equivalent) that comprise the course of study
   d. entry requirements and pathways
   e. expected learning outcomes, methods of assessment and indicative student workload
   f. compulsory requirements for completion
   g. exit pathways, articulation arrangements, pathways to further learning, and
   h. for a course of study leading to a Bachelor Honours, Masters or Doctoral qualification, includes the proportion and nature of research or research-related study in the course.
2. The content and learning activities of each course of study engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry consistent with the level of study and the expected learning outcomes, including:
   a. current knowledge and scholarship in relevant academic disciplines

Thematic Review 2021 – Terms of Reference

    b. study of the underlying theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the academic disciplines or fields of education or research represented in the course, and

    c. emerging concepts that are informed by recent scholarship, current research findings and, where applicable, advances in practice.

3. Teaching and learning activities are arranged to foster progressive and coherent achievement of expected learning outcomes throughout each course of study.

4. Each course of study is designed to enable achievement of expected learning outcomes regardless of a student's place of study or the mode of delivery.

5. Where professional accreditation of a course of study is required for graduates to be eligible to practise, the course of study is accredited and continues to be accredited by the relevant professional body.

5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement

4. Review and improvement activities include regular external referencing of the success of student cohorts against comparable courses of study, including:

    b. the assessment methods and grading of students' achievement of learning outcomes for selected units of study within courses of study.

Thematic Review 2021 – Terms of Reference

TIMELINE

Preparation for the review will be undertaken by the Quality Unit commencing in August 2020. The review panel will commence the review in February 2021. Completion is scheduled for June 2021 when a final report, including commendations and recommendations and responses from relevant academic units and portfolios, will be ready for endorsement by UE and Academic Board. The paper will go to the Academic Quality Committee for recommendation to the Academic Board. The outcome will be reported to Senate via the report of the Academic Board and may also be presented to Senate by the Review Chair, if deemed appropriate.

Committee	Submission date	Meeting date
University Executive (Decision)	TBA	TBA
Academic Quality Committee	TBA	TBA
Academic Board	TBA	TBA
Senate	TBA	TBA

RECOMMENDATION FOLLOW UP

Academic units and administrative portfolios will report to the AQC within three months of the report to Senate with an implementation plan. Within one year of the report to Senate, academic units and administrative portfolios will report to AQC on progress against the review recommendations and their implementation plans. This report will be forwarded to Academic Board and to UE.

METHODOLOGY

The Quality Unit will prepare a data pack for the panel which will include reports, analysis and data from the Assessment Working Group, and quantitative and qualitative data from central reports.

Quantitative data and analysis
IAP will provide student performance data for three cohorts:
1. Undergraduate students
2. Postgraduate coursework students
3. Postgraduate research students

IAP and the Evaluation and Analytics team will source available data on student assessments, such as types of assessment per unit per semester, and required assessment components of each unit of study or course.

The Evaluation and Analytics team in DVC Education portfolio will provide further data from surveys and will provide statistical analysis of the full set of data.

Qualitative data and analysis
Qualitative data and analysis will include:
1. Student interviews (or a C-sight forum if social distancing is an issue)
2. Written submissions from each faculty and University school

Evaluation and Analytics will provide analysis of qualitative data from standard student surveys such as USS. The panel will evaluate the qualitative data gleaned from interviews and written submissions.

Appendix 2: Bibliography

University of Sydney Policies

Assessment Procedures 2011

Coursework Policy 2014

Staff workload Policies Summary

Academic Honesty in Coursework 2015

Academic Honesty Procedures 2016

Learning and Teaching Policy 2019

Educational Integrity and Decision-making and Penalty Guidelines 2018

University of Sydney Reports

Statistical Analysis of Assessment and Student Performance and Experience - Leo Shenqu, Manager of the Evaluation and Analytics Team, 2021

Proctored mid-semester tests: student feedback - Educational Innovation, DVCE Portfolio, 2020

Types of Assessments and Authentic Assessment – Educational Portfolio (Office of the DVCE), 2020

Rubric Pilot Feedback Phase 1 – Educational Portfolio (Office of the DVCE), 2019

Graduate Qualities – Student Consultation Workshop feedback - Education Portfolio (Office of the DVCE), 2020

Graduate Qualities – Student consultation workshop - popular placement and feedback - Education Portfolio (Office of the DVCE), 2020

Volume of Assessments Sector and Literature Scan Paper – Meenakshi Krishnaraj, Education Portfolio (Office of the DVCE), 2019

Volume of Assessments 2019 – Education Portfolio (Office of the DVCE), 2020

Volume of Assessments Semester 1 2019 and 2020 comparison – Education Portfolio (Office of the DVCE), 2020

Academic Integrity Internal Audit – Internal Audit, 2020

UE-ED Assessment in Semester 2 2020 – UE Education, July 2020

Centralizing Online Assessment Management – UE-Education, 2020

Faculty feedback on Measurement of Student Achievement of Graduate Qualities AAC Science – Professor Pauline Ross and Dr Elisa Bone, 2020

Faculty feedback on Measurement of Student Achievement of Graduate Qualities AAC Science Attachment 1– Professor Pauline Ross and Dr Elisa Bone, 2020

Attachment 2: Faculty feedback on Measurement of Student Achievement of Graduate Qualities AAC Science Attachment 2 – Professor Pauline Ross and Dr Elisa Bone, 2020

Assessing Graduate Qualities in the Bachelor of Arts – Professor Alyson Simpson, Associate Professor Kelly Freebody, Associate Professor Bruce Isaacs, 2019

Graduate Qualities Forum update – CEMA – Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment (CEMA), 2020

Review of Interdisciplinary Effectiveness and Influence Rubrics – Prepared by: Drs Lucy Mercer-Mapstone, Vicky Tzioumis and Lilia Mantai Approved and Prepared by: Prof. Pauline Ross, 2020

Analysis of University of Sydney Assessment Resources and Usage – Office of the DVCE – Thematic Review

Course Review Reports

Bachelor of Applied Science (Physiotherapy) – FMH, 2020

Master of Medical Physics – Science, 2020

Master of Professional Accounting – Business, 2020

Accreditation Reports

Master of Urban and Regional Planning – ADP, Planning Institute Australia, 2020

Master of Urbanism (Urban and Regional Planning Specialisation) – ADP, Planning Institute Australia, 2020

Bachelor of Engineering Honours – Engineering, Engineering Australia, 2019

Master of Professional Engineering – Engineering, Engineering Australia, 2019

Master of Exercise Physiology – FMH, Exercise and Sports Science Australia, 2020

Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Oral Surgery) – FMH, Australian Dental Council, 2021

Medical Programs – Progress Report to the Medical School Accreditation Committee – FMH, Australian Medical Council Limited, 2020

Changes to LLB and JD courses in 2020 due to COVID-19 – information requested by LPAB – LAW Sch, Legal Profession Admission Board, 2020

Quality Verification System (QVS) Reports

Report on the 2017 QVS round, 2019

Sample report: Computer Science, 2018

Power BI Reports

APA7001 **https://app.powerbi.com/groups/me/apps/f3d8e4d7-d659-4590-a82b-94b0a9d89a4b/reports/97d7b45e-bf79-4d74-aa66-3c24c999606e/apa7001**

APA7002 **https://app.powerbi.com/groups/me/apps/f3d8e4d7-d659-4590-a82b-94b0a9d89a4b/reports/97d7b45e-bf79-4d74-aa66-3c24c999606e/apa7002**

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Appendix 3: Staff and Student Interviews

Student feedback was also sought through an online forum, and staff feedback was sought through an online survey, an Academic Board session, two interview sessions with the panel and faculty contributions (see **Appendix 3**).

Student Feedback

Student feedback was sought through online surveys, including the Student Experience Survey (SES) and the Unit of Study Survey (USS).

A random sample of 6660 assessment-related comments from the Student Experience Surveys (SES) and the Unit of Study Surveys (USS) in 2019 and 2020 was analysed for this report. These two years were chosen because of the distinct differences between the student experience in 2019, the last 'normal' year of study and 2020, the first COVID-19-affected year of study.

Student Experience Survey

The SES focuses on measurable aspects of the student experience that are linked with learning and development outcomes, and for which universities can reasonably be assumed to have responsibility. It gathers information on five facets of the learning experience of first and final-year undergraduate students and all postgraduate students:

- Skills development
- Learner engagement
- Teaching quality
- Student support
- Learning resources

More information about the survey can be found here: **Course surveys - Intranet - The University of Sydney.**

Unit of Study Survey

The USS collects feedback on the student experience at the unit of study level. It aligns with the response items (questions) and scales found in the national course-level survey, the SES. There are six quantitative items and two open-response items that are common University-wide:

Quantitative items

In this unit of study:
- Overall I was satisfied with the quality of teaching by the teacher(s).
- The work has been intellectually rewarding.
- I developed relevant critical and analytical thinking skills.
- I have had good access to valuable learning resources.
- The assessment tasks challenged me to learn.
- I have been guided by helpful feedback on my learning.
- I have felt supported to learn in the online environment
- I felt part of a learning community

Response scale
1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

<u>Open-response items</u>
- What have been the best aspects of this unit of study?
- What aspects of this unit of study most need improvement?

More information about the survey can be found here: **Unit of Study Survey - Intranet - The University of Sydney.**

Staff Feedback

Online Staff Survey

University staff were invited to participate in an online survey for the Thematic Review 2021 to comment on the quality of assessments. The survey consisted of seven open-response questions, as follows:

1. Are there particular characteristics of assessment that are important to your own approach to assessment? Are there particular characteristics that are critical to your discipline?
2. Can you provide the panel with one or more examples of highly effective assessment, either from your own work or that of others?
3. What are the barriers or challenges to improving assessment practices? Are there assessment practices you would like to implement but for which there are hurdles? If so, what are those hurdles?
4. How do you design your assessment to support academic integrity, and what do you do about security? What more could we do to prevent and detect integrity breaches?
5. If you needed to reduce the volume of assessment in your units, what would you do?
6. Do you have any comments on desirable future developments in assessment?
7. Is there anything else you would like to share with the panel about assessment?

Academic Board session

The Academic Board was asked to endorse the terms of reference of the 2021 Thematic Review and provide feedback to the Review Panel on areas of focus for their investigation, with particular reference to aspirational future standards for assessment.

In the 2 March 2021 meeting, Academic Board was divided into breakout rooms on Zoom. Each breakout room considered one of the recommendations in order to provide feedback for the Review Panel on how best to focus their investigations. As one purpose of the Thematic Review is to work towards recommending the quality to which we would aspire in our assessments, the breakout rooms were asked to keep this in mind in providing their feedback.

Thematic Review 2021 Panel Meeting with Staff

Faculty Representation	
BUS	7
ENG	1
FASS	8
FMH	14
LAW	3
SCI	3
Total	**36**

Session I   Date: 15/04/2021   Time: 3:00pm to 4:00pm

Name	Faculty	School
Simon Loria	BUS	Business School
Juan Yao	BUS	Discipline of Finance
Artem Prokhorov	BUS	Discipline Business Analytics
Mark Melatos	FASS	School of Economics
Graham White	FASS	School of Economics
Marian Vidal-Fernandez	FASS	School of Economics
Tim Fischer	FASS	School of Economics
Sam McMahon	FASS	Sydney School of Education and Social Work
Jinlong Gao	FMH	Sydney Dental School
Maria Tran	FMH	Sydney Dental School
Mark Schifter	FMH	Sydney Dental School
Phillip Burke	FMH	Sydney Dental School
Tonia Crawford	FMH	Sydney Nursing School
Lifeng Kang	FMH	Sydney Pharmacy School
Maree Milross	FMH	Sydney School of Health Sciences
Roger Bourne	FMH	Sydney School of Health Sciences
Slade Matthews	FMH	Sydney Pharmacy School
Gary Muscatello	SCI	School of Life and Environmental Sciences

Session 2   Date: 15/04/2021   Time: 4:00pm to 5:00pm

Name	Faculty	School
Eliza Wu	BUS	Business School
Patty Kamvounias	BUS	Business School
Rachael Hains-Wesson	BUS	Business School
Robyn Martin	BUS	Business School
John Kavanagh	ENG	School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
Matthew Smith	FASS	School of Economics
Alyson Simpson	FASS	Sydney School of Education and Social Work
Alix Thoeming	FASS	Educational Innovation Team
Heiko Spallek	FMH	Sydney Dental School
Helen Ritchie	FMH	Sydney Medical Sciences
Jo River	FMH	Sydney Nursing School
Tina Hinton	FMH	Sydney Pharmacy School
Justine Dougherty	FMH	Sydney School of Health Sciences
Jamie Glister	LAW	
Peter Gerangelos	LAW	
Simon Rice	LAW	
Mathew Pye	SCI	School of Life and Environmental Sciences
Murray Thomson	SCI	School of Life and Environmental Sciences

Faculty Contributions

Additional faculty contributions were made by the FMH ADE, Professor Inam Haq and LAW ADE, Professor Nicole Graham.

Appendix 4: HEA Fellowships

54

Category	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
Associate Fellow	0	7	17	13	0	37
Fellow	0	1	24	86	68	179
Senior Fellow	0	11	10	18	2	41
Principal Fellow	1	3	1	2	1	8
TOTAL	1	22	52	119	71	265

Appendix 5: Abbreviations

AAC	Assessment Advisory Committee
AB	Academic Board
ADE	Associate Dean of Education
Advanced HE	Advanced Higher Education
AFHEA	Associate Fellowship
APD	Academic Planning and Development
AQC	Academic Quality Committee
AQF	Academic Quality Framework
CEMA	Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment
CRADLE	Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning
DVCE	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education)
EI	Education Innovation
ESS	Employer Satisfaction Survey
FASS	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
FFT	Feedback For Teachers
FHEA	Fellowship
GLE	Governance, Leadership and Engagement
Go8	Group of Eight Universities
HDR	Higher Degree by Research
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HESF	Higher Education Standards Framework
HOS	Head of School
IAP	Institutional Analytics and Planning
ICPU	Industry and Community Project Units
JRG	Jobs Ready Graduate Bill 2021
MPLF	Modular Professional Learning Framework
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
PFHEA	Principal Fellowship
PSU	Professional Service Unit
QU	Quality Unit
QVS	Quality Verification Scheme
RAM	Responsibility and Accountability Matrix
S1	Semester 1
S2	Semester 2
SEAMS	Sydney eLearning Account Management system
SES	Student Experience Survey
SFHEA	Senior Fellowship
SRC	Student Representative Council
SUPRA	Student University Postgraduate Representative Association
UE	University Executive
UG	Undergraduate
USS	Unit of Study Survey
USYD	University of Sydney