



# John Paul II Institute

for Marriage and Family, Melbourne

## ASSESSMENT POLICY

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### Introduction

Student assessment is a vital part of the learning process.

It is integral to students' formation and the development of graduates who are capable of making a significant contribution to the Church and society.

Assessment is the process whereby student learning outcomes are determined, feedback is given to students on their progress and final result grades are awarded.

Accordingly, this Policy document provides a guide for the assessment of student learning at the Institute and supports quality assessment practices, including conduct of examinations.

It applies to all coursework subjects offered by the Institute.

It does not apply to the examination of research theses.

This Policy reflects the values in the Institute's Mission Statement and sits within, and relates to, an existing policy framework that includes the Academic Regulations.

### Rationale for Assessment

The three key objectives for quality in student assessment in higher education are to:

- guide and encourage effective approaches to learning;
- validly and reliably measure expected learning outcomes, including the higher-order learning that characterises higher education; and
- define and protect academic standards.

The following general principles underpin the Assessment Policy:

- (i) Assessment should be an aid to successful learning and should encourage students to apply their knowledge and skills in an analytical and critical manner;
- (ii) Modes of assessment should be specifically linked to the learning outcomes of a subject and course;

- (iii) Assessment requirements should be based on pre-determined and clearly articulated criteria that describe standards of knowledge, skills, competencies and/or capabilities;
- (iv) Students should receive feedback on their work in a timely manner that assists them to monitor their progress towards the achievement of specified learning outcomes and to improve the quality of their work;
- (v) Formative assessment tasks are tasks that allow the subject coordinator and the students to assess the progress that is being made and to identify changes that may need to be made to improve the final outcome for each student. Formative assessment is to be distinguished from summative assessment which in the main determines the final result for the student's performance in a subject. However formative tasks must contribute to the final assessment, either by being a minor proportion of the grade, or by being activities, such as a seminar paper, which may be reworked for inclusion in a larger piece for assessment. Formative activities are an important aspect of learning that is to be encouraged as an integral part of the learning process.
- (vi) There must be at least one piece of formative assessment for students undertaking subjects at Graduate Diploma level.
- (vii) Assessment should be inclusive and equitable for all students;
- (viii) Assessment should be valid and reliable;
- (ix) Students and staff should act in accordance with the Academic Regulations and the Assessment Policy;
- (x) Assessment should enable the Institute to certify that the grade awarded corresponds to the student's performance and that the student has met subject and course requirements;
- (xi) Assessment should involve reasonable workloads for both staff and students commensurate with the credit points allocated to a subject and the nature of the discipline. The requirements of each individual assessment task in a subject should also be commensurate with the proportion of marks allocated to that task;
- (xii) Assessment processes and procedures should conform to the highest ethical and moral standards; and
- (xiii) The Institute regards assessment as a confidential matter. No person involved in the process should divulge to any unauthorised person any information related to an individual student's assessment or grades.

### Assessment Tasks

Each **subject** at Graduate Diploma level will consist of some combination of the following assessment modes totaling 4,500 to 5,000 words or equivalent:

- ◆ Essays, or other written work, such as curriculum design, intended to demonstrate the expected learning outcomes; and/or

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- ◆ One hour written examination (of 1,000 words **or equivalent**) or two hour written examination of approximately (2,000 words **or equivalent**); and/or
- ◆ Class seminar presentations, debates or other formative participation may contribute up to 50% of the final assessment if also written up and submitted afterwards.

The assessment for each subject at Masters Level (that is students who have completed or have been given credit for having completed the subjects required for the Graduate Diploma) shall consist of one 5,000 word essay. A seminar paper or other formative activity may also be required, but only if it is to be written up and submitted as part of the final 5,000 word piece.

Inadequate attendance may result in failure (See *Academic Regulations*).

**Second Marking**

All assignments that result in a failure must be second marked either by a member of the faculty, or, if no-one on the faculty with the required subject knowledge and expertise is available, someone who is not a member of faculty but has the required subject knowledge and expertise,

**Assessment Criteria**

The expected learning outcomes for a subject are a subset of the expected learning outcomes for the course. The assessment tasks are designed to demonstrate the expected learning outcomes, and the students must be made aware in the subject outline that the assessment criteria for each assessment task reflect the relevant expected learning outcomes. Thus for instance if the learning outcome includes critical analysis of and the capacity to contrast the different perspectives of the issues, then one of the assessment criteria for an essay on a particular issue would be that the student demonstrates critical analysis of the different perspectives and contrasts them.

**Originally Reviewed**

**External Review: Prof Peter Carpenter, Education Consultant  
1<sup>st</sup> May 2008**

**Prof John Ozolins, Head of Philosophy  
Australian Catholic University  
12<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

**Policy subsequently amended September 2009**

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## Appendix

The policy requires each subject to have assessment criteria for each assessment task that reflect the expected learning outcomes. The latter criteria take precedence over the following general list. However, students completing essays for assessment may find the following general list of elements helpful as matters that can be expected to be taken into account in the assessment of essays. Note that not all assessment tasks are essays and students should take particular note of the assessment criteria included on the subject outline for each subject .

### **Argument**

Accurate exposition of material should provide appropriate evidence of advanced knowledge about the relevant material, especially current scholarship, and the differences of opinion that relate to the specific topic chosen; logical development of argument should demonstrate a high order of skill in analysis, critical evaluation through the planning and execution of the research and writing; and the essay should demonstrate creativity and flexibility in the application of knowledge and skills to new situations, to solve complex problems and to think rigorously and independently

### **Structure**

Essay contains an Introduction that identifies the scope of the task and a Conclusion that reports the student's own findings; Paragraphs are linked; Consistent thread of argument; Fluent writing; Succinct writing

### **Style**

Accurate spelling, grammatical sentences, correct punctuation

**Presentation** (neatness, legibility, layout, general appearance)

### **Referencing**

(correct citation, adequate acknowledgement of sources, consistent use of referencing style)

### **Bibliography**

Make sure that a bibliography is provided. This should contain those books which were actually consulted in the writing of the paper. It should show a consistent referencing style.

**Length** It should be noted that assignments which are too short (i.e. more than 25% less than the required number of words) are unlikely to pass.