

# TACKLING ASSESSMENTS

Assessment is an important part of your TAFE or CQUniversity studies. It measures your achievements against the intended learning outcomes of the unit and can diagnose your problems to help you learn more effectively.

There are several terms and definitions with which you should become familiar. Assessment tasks carried out during a unit are often termed assignments (e.g. essays), while end-of-unit assessment tasks are typically examinations (exams). Peer assessment is where you provide input on the work of other students, whereas self-assessment requires you to evaluate your own work.

When you come across a term you have not heard of, consult the CQUniversity Glossary of terms, at: <https://www.cqu.edu.au/about-us/structure/governance/glossary>

## UNDERSTAND THE VARIOUS TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

All units will have a number of assessment tasks that you will undertake during the term. Those most often used are:

- » Written assignments: essays, dissertations and reports.
- » Numerical exercises and mathematical problems where there is a formal correct answer.
- » Practical assessments: often assessed from a written report, or by in-class observation of practical skills.
- » Problem-based exercises: often investigated in teams to reflect real world problems.
- » Oral presentations: talks on a particular topic, presented individually or as a group.
- » Quiz: these can use different forms of questioning, including multiple choice, short answer and true/false.
- » Exams: these can be closed book (no texts can be taken into the exam room) or open book where either (i) listed texts or (ii) any texts can be taken into the exam room.

## FIND THE DETAILS OF ALL ASSESSMENT TASKS WITHIN YOUR UNIT

Start with the current unit profile—this will provide details of each assessment task, together with their weightings, due dates, topic description and assessment criteria. The unit website, in Moodle, may also provide additional information to help you get the most out of each assessment task. Make sure that you understand the size and scope of each task. Do not leave things to the last minute and make sure you submit it by the due date, as penalties are imposed for unauthorised late submission of assignments.

Find out about your assessment in the unit profile, which is available in your Moodle site.

The University's assessment policies can be found on the CQUniversity policy website (look for *assessment*) at: <http://policy.cqu.edu.au/>

Based on circumstances and supporting evidence, you can request an assessment extension through the link within your unit Moodle site. An example is if you are ill when the assessment task is due. If you do not understand some aspect of the assessment process, ask your lecturer for further details—for example, through the online discussion forum in Moodle, or by email.

# USE LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA TO STRUCTURE YOUR WORK

Refer to the Grades and Results Policy on the types of grades used: <http://policy.cqu.edu.au/>

Each assessment is worth a proportion or percentage of your final grade for the unit. Generally, the higher the percentage, the more time you should allocate to complete the assessment task. The unit profile should also provide details of the learning outcomes covered as well as the assessment criteria.

These criteria and any marking scales are provided to help you focus on the main aspects of the task; use them to structure your work. For university students, many units are marked on a percentage scale (%), or as grades. It is vital to check each unit profile for details, but as a guide, grades are generally as follows:

- » High Distinction (HD, 85% and above)
- » Distinction (D, 75–84%)
- » Credit (C, 65–74%)
- » Pass (P, 50–64%), and
- » Fail (F, 49% and below).

In some units, assessment tasks are graded on a Pass or Fail basis. For TAFE students, work assessments will be marked “Competent” or “Not Yet Competent.”

## REVIEW YOUR WORK

After all of the effort that you have put into your assessment, it pays to allow enough time to check through your work and consider how well it covers the various aspects of the topic, and how well it addresses the assessment criteria.

To ensure that the content is appropriate and that technical errors have been picked up, read through your assignments twice before handing them in—once to check for errors of spelling and grammar and once to check content and meaning. Use spell check and grammar check functions to assist you, but avoid the American spelling of some words.

## USE FEEDBACK TO LEARN

The valuable information that your lecturers provide on your assessment tasks will help you improve your next assessment and will help you develop your understanding of the topic material. You should make the most of feedback in units from the early part of your degree to help you do better in later units. Likewise, you can give feedback about your unit through the end-of-term unit evaluations.