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Introduction

These Guidelines provide an overview of how to assure learning outcomes through external peer review of assessment. The following principles underpin external peer review of assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Enables the external referencing of assessment methods and grading of students’ achievement of learning outcomes across comparable courses of study. Supports both the quality enhancement and quality assurance of courses and units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficient and sustainable</td>
<td>Provides a streamlined, efficient and sustainable process for external referencing that can be operationalised and used routinely by participating higher education institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparent</td>
<td>Engages multiple perspectives and facilitates critical discussion between teaching staff across comparable courses of study to support consensus building around standards of student learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building</td>
<td>Contributes to the professional development of participating staff and disciplinary and cross disciplinary communities of practice through a College of Peers process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Higher Education Standards Framework

The revised Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) (2015) will be implemented across the Higher Education (HE) sector from January 1st, 2017. The implications of this sector-wide implementation are that all higher education providers, both universities and private providers, will need to ensure that they have processes in place to meet these standards. The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) believes that it is the role of the HE provider, not the regulator, to assure academic standards. TEQSA are interested not only in the institutional processes for assuring learning and teaching standards but also the actions and outcomes from these review processes.

In relation, to peer review of assessment and external referencing, there are a number of key standards in the Framework which address these areas, these include:

- **1.4.1** Expected learning outcomes are informed by national and international comparators.
- **5.3.1** Accredited courses [at least every 7 years] are subject to comprehensive reviews including external referencing or other benchmarking activities.
- **5.3.4** Review and improvement activities includes regular external referencing against comparable courses of study [progression, attrition, completion] and assessment methods and grading of learning outcomes for selected units of study within courses (HESF, 2014).

The words which have been italicised above highlight the key points within each individual standard statement. Standard 1.4.1 asks course teams to consider national and international comparators within their discipline for benchmarking learning outcomes. Some disciplines will need to consider international comparators if they are not able to identify and search for external expertise and assessors in Australia. Standard 5.3.1 has significant resource implications for accrediting professional courses and accrediting bodies, therefore, it is important that there is a structured, planned approach to accreditation which involves peer review of assessment, external referencing or other benchmarking activities. Professional accrediting courses will need to meet both institutional and accreditation requirements. Standard 5.3.4 relates specifically to course reviews and the importance of including other forms of external referencing, including data such as progression, attrition and completion rates. Important to note about this standard, is that peer
review of assessment and grading is not done in isolation, but as an overall process of assuring the quality of a course.

The **scope of these three standards** includes undergraduate courses and postgraduate coursework programs, such as Professional Doctorates.

These three standards point to the importance of course teams and course coordinators playing an instrumental role in peer review of assessment and any other forms of external referencing and/or benchmarking for quality assurance and quality enhancement purposes.

**Examples of external reference points** are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• National Qualifications Framework or equivalent;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The University’s mission &amp; its graduate attributes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning outcome standards like those determined by ALTC discipline groups, UK subject benchmarks, the UK Quality Code and the draft Australian HE L&amp;T standards;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Suggested program level outcomes from the Assessment of HE Learning Outcomes project, from US bodies like the Western Association of Schools &amp; Colleges, the UK National Institution for Learning Outcomes Assessment, the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the Business Council of Australia etc;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The learning outcomes for courses of the same name in other places;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The requirements for post-graduate study in the discipline/profession concerned;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• External professional accreditation standards and requirements (when applicable);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Results from inter-institutional benchmarking, peer review;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The work-ready <em>plus</em> capabilities highlighted in the fellowship, including graduates being sustainability literate, inventive, change implementation savvy and having come to a considered position on the tacit assumptions driving the 21st century agenda;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Academic experts’ and program team input, inter-institutional peer review and moderation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Key capabilities and future trends identified by successful early career graduates, alumni and entrepreneurs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The capabilities sought in job advertisements;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employer feedback; input from External Course Advisory Committees;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The results of School/Department Reviews;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Government policy and funding incentives;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What peak industry, social and scientific bodies are calling for;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regional development priorities and opportunities;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What parents, prospective students &amp; others say they want (Scott, 2016)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Integrating peer review of assessment with institutional QA processes

In relation to these standards, course and major/disciplinary teams will need to consider the University’s curriculum structures which apply to all courses that undertake either/and accreditation and course review processes. Figures 1 and 2 below outline the quality assurance process for peer review of assessment across the University. Course teams will need to put in place a schedule of peer reviews of assessment which are aligned to accreditation, annual course reports and comprehensive course review timelines.

Each faculty and institute, through their Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) or appointed nominee, will need to liaise with staff in Curriculum and Quality, in the Division of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education), to ensure there are transparent, planned and efficient quality assurance processes in place for peer review of assessment which are aligned to institutional and external reporting requirements. For major courses, such as the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Science, course teams will need to put in place a rolling process of peer review of assessment for both accrediting courses and discipline majors.

Figure 1 outlines the process for accrediting courses which includes two phases of peer review of assessment and calibration, which is progressively undertaken over five years. The Australian Council of Engineering Deans (ACED) in association with Dr Sara Booth, developed a process for accreditation bodies and industry which aligns peer review of assessment with the accreditation process (Figure 1). The iterative process includes opportunities for professional learning [a College of Peers process] as well as opportunities for closing the loop on course quality improvement over a five year period. Accrediting panels will be able to assess both the quality of the peer review feedback as well as the outcomes from the feedback. For quality enhancement purposes, it is highly recommended that academic staff are provided with training on peer review of assessment and calibration, so as to build capacity across the discipline to come to a shared understanding of the disciplinary standards.

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</table>

**Figure 1.** Professional accreditation [Meeting-Australian Council of Engineering Deans, 2016]

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</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.** Institutional comprehensive course reviews [6-7 years depending on course]
Figure 2 outlines the process for individual disciplines and/or majors across the University to align the peer review of assessment, with annual course reports and the comprehensive course reviews.

**Relevant Policies and Procedures**

Table 1 below outlines the relevant policies and procedures at the University of Tasmania. Course teams need to be familiar with these institutional policies and procedures in preparing for different types of academic/administrative reviews.

**Table 1. University of Tasmania’s relevant policies and procedures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy and Procedure</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Review and Professional Accreditation Policy</td>
<td>Draft and out for consultation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 below outlines the relevant policies and guidance notes used at the national level for quality assurance purposes. Course teams need to be familiar with national regulatory policies and guidance notes.

**Table 2. TEQSA’s relevant policies and procedures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy and Procedure</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEQSA Guidance Note External Referencing and Benchmarking</td>
<td>Under development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Generic terms for institutional levels of organisation

When undertaking peer review of assessment with other HE institutions, it is important to come to a shared understanding on generic terms so that cross-institutional teams are referring to the same level of component (Nelson, Clarke, Stoodley, & Creagh, 2014). See Table 3 below.

**Table 3. Generic terms for institutional levels of organisation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Generic term</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Synonyms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>A semester-long teaching activity</td>
<td>Unit, Course, Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>A collection of subjects leading to an award such as a Bachelor of Applied Science</td>
<td>Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Department</td>
<td>A discipline, curriculum, or professionally based administrative unit</td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>An administrative cluster of Departments (or synonyms)</td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>An administrative cluster of Faculties (or synonyms)</td>
<td>Central administration, University, Institute, College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tertiary Sector</td>
<td>The collection of post-secondary institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definition:**

For the purposes of these Guidelines, **peer review of assessment** is defined as,

> ‘the practice of colleagues providing and receiving feedback on one another’s unit/subject outlines, assessment tasks and marking criteria to ensure that assessment is aligned to intended learning outcomes and includes a calibration process to ensure comparability of achievement standards and an opportunity for professional learning.’ (Booth, Beckett, & Saunders, 2015)

The key points of this definition are the alignment to course level learning outcomes [this is implicit, however, it is not only about unit level learning outcomes]; the inclusion of a calibration process to ensure the comparability of achievement standards and the opportunity for professional learning. The conversation for course teams has changed from a discussion on courses and units to now a discussion about **how we assure the learning outcomes of a course**. The focus is now on the course and how those learning outcomes are progressively implemented across a course.

Peer review of assessment is both a formative and summative process. It is a formative process because it involves opportunities for academic colleagues to discuss and review each other’s academic work and student work samples and to learn from each other through institutional, cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary conversations. The summative element is reporting the number of peer reviews of assessment activities across the University for quality assurance and quality improvement purposes.

It must be noted, however, that peer review of assessment is not just a tick-a-box activity, but rather a quality enhancement activity which needs to be owned by course and/or disciplinary teams. TEQSA are interested in not only the process of peer review of assessment but also what changes have been made to
programs as a result of the peer review process to improve student learning outcomes and ultimately students’ learning experiences.

**Assuring learning and teaching standards**

When assuring learning and teaching standards, course teams will need to consider the following key points:

- A shared understanding of key terms;
- Take into account the extensive work in this area;
- Understanding that this work fits with a Learning and Teaching Standards Framework;
- The nature and use of a graduate capability framework and the importance of developing graduates who are work-ready plus (Scott, 2016).

**A shared understanding of key terms**

Some of the key questions for course teams to consider are:

- Have we all come to a shared definition of each of these key concepts?
- Does our university have a glossary of such terms that all staff use?

It is critical that course teams come to have a shared understanding of key terms and come to agreement on key terms. Some of the indicative definitions are below, but it is important that course teams come to an agreed understanding of key terms prior to peer review of assessment.

- **Standard** – a level of achievement with clear criteria, indicators and means of testing.
- **Quality** – fitness for purpose/fitness of purpose and performance to an agreed standard.
- **Learning** – a demonstrably positive improvement in the capabilities and competencies that count.
- **Assessment** – gathering evidence about the current levels of capability and competency of students using valid (fit-for-purpose) tasks.
- **Strategy** – linking relevant, desirable and clear ends to the most feasible means necessary to achieve them.
- **Evaluation** – making judgements of worth about the quality of inputs and outcomes (including the evidence gathered during assessment).
- **Learning outcomes** - ‘The capabilities and competencies students are expected to demonstrate they have developed to a required standard by the end of a program or unit of study. They include personal, interpersonal and cognitive capabilities as well as the key knowledge and skills necessary for effective early career performance and societal participation’ (Scott, 2016).

**Extensive work in assuring the quality of assessment**

There has been extensive work undertaken in earlier Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT)/Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) projects and fellowships on assuring the quality of assessment in Australian HE. Some of these projects include:


Calvin Smith et al: Graduate outcomes – a resource bank from work-integrated learning, graduate capabilities and career development projects, ALTC extension Project: [https://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/373261/ALTC-Projects-Booklet.pdf](https://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/373261/ALTC-Projects-Booklet.pdf)

Some websites that are valuable include:

- Romy Lawson’s Assuring Learning website [http://www.assuringlearning.com/dissemination](http://www.assuringlearning.com/dissemination)
- Geoff Crisp’s Transforming Assessment website [http://transformingassessment.com/](http://transformingassessment.com/)

Aligning with a Learning and Teaching Standards Framework and Graduate Capability Framework

Key questions to ask:

- Are we all clear on where a focus on course learning outcomes fits into the full picture of what is necessary to assure the quality and standards of Learning and Teaching in higher education?
- Do we have an agreed, validated, comprehensive picture of what a professional and graduate capability framework for our institution should cover?
- What distinguishes a work ready plus graduate? (Scott, 2016)

Some of the key points that course teams will need to consider when discussing a learning and teaching standards framework are outlined in Table 4 below (adapted from Geoff Scott, 2016). The framework has two components: 1) the top part of the framework [in pink] identifies what needs to be given focus when seeking to assure academic standards and the quality of learning and teaching and assessment; and 2) the lower part of the framework [in grey] represents how the University can assure these standards are applied, tracked and improved consistently and effectively.
Domains 1 and 2 (in Table 4) below focus on the quality and standards of the inputs, whilst Domains 3 and 4 focus on the quality and standards of the outputs. Domain 3 outlines what a teacher does. Domain 4 outlines what a student as a learner can do. When discussing Table 4, it is important that specific focus is given to every domain to ensure that every staff member, whether academic or professional, can see what contribution their role makes in helping retain and engage students in productive learning and when they deliver this role, it is effectively acknowledged. What matters to students is that the combined and consistent quality of all four domains (in Table 4), that is the total student experience, and it is to the extent to which the validated standards in all four domains, are consistently and effectively delivered and monitored that determines the quality of graduates.

Table 4. Learning and Teaching Standards Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOMAIN 1: Course design standards</th>
<th>DOMAIN 2: Support standards</th>
<th>DOMAIN 3: Delivery standards</th>
<th>DOMAIN 4: Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Relevance</td>
<td>• Orientation</td>
<td>• Staff accessibility,</td>
<td>• Clear sequence of trained governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Active learning including eLearning</td>
<td>• Library</td>
<td>responsiveness and skills</td>
<td>management roles and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theory-practice links</td>
<td>• Learning guide standards</td>
<td>• Consistency and quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clear expectations</td>
<td>• Staff selection</td>
<td>of delivery of support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Direction and unit links clear</td>
<td>• and training</td>
<td>systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Capabilities that count that are the focus</td>
<td>• Peer support</td>
<td>• Consistency of delivery of design features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning pathways are flexible</td>
<td>• First year advisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assessment is clear, relevant, reliably marked with helpful feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff are capable, responsible and effective teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support is aligned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Access is convenient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Management Framework Policy [UTAS] and Governance Level Principle 13. The underpinning principles are:</td>
<td>Clear sequence of trained governance management roles and responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aligned with and responsive to national and state legislative and regulatory requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Aligned with University strategic objectives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student and stakeholder focused.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Based on a commitment to continuous improvement.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Systematic and internally consistent.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Applied across all activities and organisational units.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Underpinned by sound leadership and constancy of purpose.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Based on an ethos of subsidiarity, or devolved responsibility, with all staff expected to participate.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Predicated on evidence-based decision making.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• Based on mutually beneficial relationships with partners.
• Aligned with UTAS environmental, social, cultural and economic goals.
• Resourced for success.
• Reliant on all staff having access to professional development in quality assurance processes.

When new courses are designed, it is critical to pay attention to assuring the standards in all four domains. A lot of work has been undertaken in Domains 1-3 (learning design, assessment for learning, support and delivery and assuring reliable assessment in higher education) in earlier OLT projects. Less attention has been given to Domain 4, to ensure that course level learning outcomes and the capability of graduates are validated (confirmed through evidence-based peer review). It is critical to **assure the fitness of purpose of course level outcomes** (that is, their relevance, desirability and feasibility) and their aligned assessment is very important as this is where the leaders and innovators of tomorrow come from. **Domain 4 sits at the heart of the quality and standards framework.** It is important for course teams to identify and confirm the types of assessment tasks that are most suited to measuring those validated course level learning outcomes. Scott (2016) has identified the **key tests for powerful assessment** which includes the following:

• Attracts high levels of student satisfaction;
• Addresses key capabilities set down for program/unit especially work ready plus graduates;
• Has different perspectives;
• Is integrated;
• Not just problem based but solutions oriented;
• Whole course focus;
• Directly relates to what has been learnt;
• Can be digitally enabled;
• Where possible, dilemma based, real world focus;
• Can be used for learning (formative) as well as for assessment (summative); and
• Is scalable (Scott, 2016).

Also, when course teams are formulating course level learning outcomes (Domain 4: Impact in Table 4) they will need to consider a more comprehensive and validated picture of what graduate and professional capability entails.

**Use a comprehensive and validated professional capability framework to profile course level learning outcomes**

**Key questions to ask:**

• When formulating course level outcomes are we using an agreed, validated, comprehensive picture of what a professional and graduate capability framework (Figure 3) for our institution should cover?
• To use a range of employer focus groups and surveys [professional groups, employers, entrepreneurs, and successful early career graduates]  

Geoff Scott’s FlipCurric website aims at how to best equip graduates with the skills to meet the social, cultural, economic, resource, and environmental challenges that face our nation in the future. To successfully achieve this, assessment must have an assured integrity and fitness for purpose by confirming that the assessment is ensuring our graduates are work ready for today and the future.
Robust evidence shows the importance of assuring the quality of what and how we assess as assessment, more than anything else, is what drives learning and communicates to the students what matters. Flipcurric focuses on ensuring that the focus of new learning material should be on the outcomes that are relevant and desirable and confirm that the graduates are capable of being of benefit to their chosen profession and more broadly the social, cultural, economic and environmental sustainability of our planet. Therefore, Flipcurric flips the curriculum design and review process by looking at the program level outcomes that are sort rather than the content. This ensures that the outcomes are mapped to individual units of study so that the outcomes are being assessed validly and reliably. The learning methods and resources are built into each unit of study accordingly to help students perform as successfully as possible on their assessment tasks. The six keys to FlipCurric are listed below (Scott, 2016).

**Six keys to flipping the curriculum**

The six keys to flipping the curriculum and assuring the quality of achievement standards and assessment involve the following:

1. **Right program level learning outcomes first**

   Course teams will need to confirm that course level program level outcomes are relevant, feasible, clear, and comprehensively considered against multiple reference points and positioned in a graduate capability framework.

2. **Right mapping**

   Course teams will need to ensure effective mapping of course level learning outcomes to unit level ones.

3. **Right assessment**

   Course teams will need to ensure that assessment in each unit of study is powerful, integrated and fit-for-purpose.

4. **Right grading**

   Course teams will need to confirm an agreed set of indicators which will be used to allocate grades.

5. **Right calibration**
Course teams will need to confirm that all the team will be grading assignments applies the same indicators in the same way.

6. **Right learning methods and resources.**

Course teams will need to confirm that the learning resources and methods built into each unit of study are engaging and will directly help students to perform as successfully as possible on that unit’s assessment task/s (Scott, 2016). See [http://flipcurric.edu.au/about-143/overview-of-the-six-keys](http://flipcurric.edu.au/about-143/overview-of-the-six-keys)

Examples of powerful assessment

See the FlipCurric website for examples of powerful assessment. The FlipCurric website has over 250 assessments searchable by field of education and type of assessment: [http://flipcurric.edu.au/](http://flipcurric.edu.au/). Course teams are also able to upload exemplars of powerful assessment which will be reviewed by a panel of national and international reviewers.

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**The test for powerful assessment task or tool under consideration:**

- Attracts high levels of student satisfaction;
- Clearly addresses the key capabilities set down for the program/unit, especially those identified as characteristic of work ready *plus* graduates in the field of education concerned;
- Brings to bear different perspectives, taps into multiple domains of learning;
- Is integrated – that is, it concurrently seeks to assess key personal, interpersonal and cognitive capabilities in the profession/discipline concerned along with appropriate and effective use of relevant competencies;
- Is not just problem-based but solutions oriented; involves doing not just knowing;
- Has a whole-of-program focus;
- Directly relates to what has been learnt;
- Produces representations of what students can do rather than just a grade
- Can be digitally enabled
- Promotes academic integrity
- Is, whenever possible, dilemma-based /‘wicked’/ real-world focused/authentic and demonstrably relevant to effective early career practice;
- Can be used for learning (formative) as well as for assessment (summative);
- Is scalable (Scott, 2016).
Online peer review portal

The University of Tasmania has access to a national online peer review portal so that academics with the support of professional staff are able to undertake peer review of assessment [as well as external referencing and benchmarking] in an efficient, timely and secure online process.

To be completed when online peer review tool has completed testing.

Different models of peer review of assessment

There are currently four models of peer review of assessment which are:

1. Quality Verification System (QVS) model used by the Group of Eight (Go8) and an adapted model of this process with the Innovative Research Universities (IRU);

2. Inter-university Moderation project (Krause & Scott et al., 2014);

3. Achievement Matters project (Freeman & Ewan, 2014)
   achievementmatters.com.au

4. External examiners system which is implemented in the United Kingdom.

For information on these different models of peer review of assessment see the following:

The University’s preferred model of assessment is the Interuniversity Moderation Project which has been adapted through the External Referencing of Standards (EROS) project with four universities [Curtin, QUT, RMIT and UOW]. See Appendix A for the template to be used as part of the review process.

EROS Process Steps

Section 1 - Process for Triads and Dyads

Once the courses and institutions participating in the external referencing process have been matched and confirmed it is recommended the following steps be undertaken.

Key steps

1. The participating course coordinators/leaders through consultation nominate a final year unit and discipline staff member in each course to be involved in the external referencing process. It is recommended at a minimum the coordinator for the selected unit is nominated. The relevant course coordinator may also choose to be involved in the referencing process.
2. All staff agreeing to participate are asked to sign a participant agreement covering confidentiality and ethical behaviour (see attached Template - Participant Agreement). 
   NOTE: If not already in place the participating institutions may also chose to sign a Memorandum of Understanding that will require confidentiality in handling of information, reports and other outputs of the external referencing process.

3. A cross-institutional group is formed from the nominated discipline staff from the participating courses.

4. Each group conducts a preliminary or introductory conversation of a fairly informal nature in order to:
   - share their expectations of the peer referencing process
   - provide a brief introduction to the units and assessment selected for review using unit outlines to inform the discussion
   - discuss any reservations they may have and generally get to know each other prior to beginning the review process
   - confirm timeline and key dates (e.g. draft reports and review meeting, final reports).
   It is recommended that this preliminary conversation be undertaken using, for example, Skype or Blackboard Collaborate so that people can see each other. Distributing unit outlines prior to the meeting is also useful.

5. Each participating institution provides the review materials for selected unit to the other participating institutions. See the Review Materials checklist in this guide and on page 2 of the report template.

6. Participants each individually review student work samples and background curriculum material provided as follows:
   - Institution A and B review C’s set of curriculum materials and work samples
   - Institution B and C review A’s set of curriculum materials and work samples
   - Institution C and A review B’s set of curriculum materials and work samples

   Notes:
   Ideally a triad of three participating institutions (A, B and C) would be involved to enable multiple perspectives, robust discussion and increased transparency, however there may be circumstances where only two institutions can be involved (A and B). It should also be noted that there are additional organisational and time considerations associated with triads.

   During any stage of the process, reviewers can request more information, or clarification of information provided.

7. Each reviewer drafts responses to the questions on the report template and notes areas where any additional information might be provided by the unit coordinator that would further inform the reviewer’s understanding of the assessment context.

8. These draft reports are provided back to the originating institution and then the group meets (in person or online) to conduct feedback conversations on each set of materials reviewed guided by the following points.
   a) Group provides general comment on the overall reviewing experience
   b) For each reviewed unit a collegial, robust discussion is undertaken. Following is a suggested structure for this discussion:
• Invited the unit coordinator to comment on the draft report and their own review experience.
• Reviewer/s raise questions emerging from the reviewing process (e.g. the conditions under which the assessment task was performed, how the task related to similar tasks in other units likely to have been undertaken by the same students etc.).
• Reviewer/s provide feedback on the appropriateness of judgements. Feedback should be supported by explanatory comment regardless of whether judgements were deemed appropriate or not.
• Reviewer/s comment on areas of strength and areas likely to benefit from further attention. Reviewers who have identified several points may wish to limit these to the 3 considered most important so as not to overwhelm the person receiving feedback.
• Staff from the reviewed institution are invited to provide further comments or ask questions throughout the discussion.
• The main points raised during the conversation are summarised by the group.

9. Reviewers individually complete their external referencing report that is returned to their institutional coordinator.

Final reports are discussed between the relevant program coordinator and unit coordinator who participated in the external referencing process. Any errors of fact in the reports may be corrected at this stage. Responsive action is determined, briefly documented on the template and followed up according to school or faculty processes.

Section 2 - Review Materials Checklist
(for the institution requesting the external referencing)

The requesting institution will provide the reviewer with the following information:

General points
• An overall course or study plan structure which positions the unit being reviewed. (A curriculum map, showing the way the ULOs are mapped to the CLOs, is helpful if available)
• List of Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)
• Specific CLOs relevant to the Unit being reviewed

For the selected unit
• Unit outline
• Unit Learning Outcomes (ULOs)
• A schedule of learning for the unit showing key learning and assessment over the teaching period

For the selected assessment task
• Information provided to students setting out the assessment task requirements and/or questions
• Weighting of the assessment
• Assessment Rubrics, marking guides, or criteria sheet

Grading
Explanation of the grading scheme as it applies to the samples of student work and explanations of nomenclature

Samples of student work

Please read Section 3 for information on how to select samples of student work

Samples of de-identified student work provided

Section 3 - Guidance on the selection of student work for external referencing.

Student work selected for external referencing should be able to demonstrate some of the course learning outcomes (CLOs), i.e. those that characterise the knowledge and capabilities students should have achieved by the completion of their course. (It is recognised that samples will not be able to cover the full range of possible outcomes.) It would be unusual to encounter this problem but avoid selecting samples that might have intellectual property implications (e.g. commercial-in-confidence). Samples should be selected from defined grade ranges, based on the final mark achieved as described below. Within these grade ranges, sampling is conducted at random. Student work must be de-identified prior to the external referencing process, but otherwise the work is left intact, complete with any annotations made by the original assessor. (If assessor comments/marks are on a separate document, such as a rubric, this should be included alongside the student work.)

Stratified Random Sampling

To enable a focus on threshold standards, and to provide a consistent format for the comparison of student work across institutions that may use different grade band boundaries, samples for external referencing should represent a random selection of assessed work to include the mark ranges as follows:

1. **A minimal pass** (selecting a sample at random from student work that achieved the minimum pass mark up to no more than 5% above this. If there is no student work that falls into this category, the work with the lowest passing mark should be submitted for review.)

2. **A fail** (selecting a sample at random from student work that did not meet the pass mark, but did not fail by more than 10% below the minimum pass mark. If there is no student work that falls into this category, then the work with the highest failing mark should be submitted.) If there are no failing students then a second sample from the ‘minimal pass’ category should be added.

3. **A grade greater than a pass** (selecting a sample at random from student work that achieved a mark that is higher than that which falls within the grade range associated with a ‘Pass’. [e.g. Credit, Distinction, High Distinction] If there are no students achieving a strong pass then do not submit work in this category.)

The procedure above is designed to produce at least two and normally three samples of work for review. Work should be selected using some form of random selection procedure (i.e. selecting a sample at random from a sub-list of eligible samples, or selecting samples at random from the full cohort until the three sample criteria are met.)
Selection of student work examples:

Example 1

Institution X has five grade bands within their institution, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Band</th>
<th>Mark Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Distinction</td>
<td>80-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>70-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>60-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>0-49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 2

Institution Y also has five grade bands, but with different boundaries compared with University X:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Band</th>
<th>Mark Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Distinction</td>
<td>85-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>75-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>65-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>50-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>0-49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unit X1 has the following distribution of marks for the final assessments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Grade Band</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unit Y1 has the following distribution of marks for the final assessments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Grade Band</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>High Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>High Distinction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One sample of assessed work for external referencing should be randomly selected from within the:

1. green strata (representing a minimal pass)
2. red strata (representing a fail)
3. blue strata (representing a strong pass)

If there had been no failing students, then two samples would have been drawn from the green strata.

One sample of assessed work for external referencing should be randomly selected from within the:

1. green strata (representing a minimal pass)
2. red strata (representing a fail – but in this case there are no students with a score between 40-50%, so the highest failing mark [36%] is selected instead.)
3. blue strata (representing a strong pass)

If there had been no students scoring 65% or more, then only samples 1) and 2) would be selected and put forward for review.
PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT

1. I have had the referencing process explained to me and have read the information and guidelines provided.

2. I agree to participate in the referencing process as described.

3. I understand my role in the process is to provide collaborating institutions with the required unit information for which I am unit coordinator. I will use the checklist of information to complete this. I will also be available to speak with staff of the other universities to develop the relationship necessary for the review, and to provide clarification and advice as required.

4. In turn I will be required to review the unit or units of the other universities involved in the external referencing process using the template report format and associated guidelines provided.

5. I understand that if I have questions about the referencing process I can contact the institution contact.

6. My participation in the referencing process will give me access to confidential information including samples of de-identified student assessment tasks.

7. I will respect the views and opinions of others during the process.

8. I will not compromise anyone else’s intellectual property or participant confidentiality.

Name:

Date:

________________________________________________________
Signature
Glossary of terms and acronyms

**Academic standards**: refers to both learning and teaching standards. Teaching standards are understood to encompass “process” or “delivery” standards, while learning standards refer to “outcome standards” which describe the “nature and levels of student attainment” (TEQSA, 2011, p. 3).

**Assessment**: a process to determine a student’s achievement of expected learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration. It is expected to fairly, validly and reliably measure student performance of intended learning outcomes. Valid assessment refers to the explicit and clear alignment between intended learning outcomes and the assessment methods used to measure student achievement of those outcomes.

**Assessment Rubric or Guide**: A tool designed to measure the level of student achievement against consistent criteria and to award scored and/or graded outcomes. Assessment guides usually have three elements:

- Criteria for assessment
- Scored/graded outcome
- Descriptors of the performance criteria for each scored or graded outcome

Another commonly used term is ‘Assessment Criteria sheet’.

*Example of an Assessment Rubric:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Scored/Graded Outcome</th>
<th>High Distinction</th>
<th>Distinction</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Fail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>Example of Descriptors of the performance criteria for scored or graded outcome.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument</td>
<td>Clearly stated, concise and consistent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Originality</td>
<td>Logical and well evidenced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong conceptual grasp and unique presentation of ideas that goes well beyond the prescribed reading for the unit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Assessment Task**: illustrative task or performance opportunity that closely targets defined learning outcomes, allowing students to demonstrate their learning and capabilities. Assessment tasks include, but are not limited to essays, tests, examinations, laboratory, clinical or field practicums, projects, compilations, productions, presentations, performances, web-based discussions and participation in forums.

**Assessment Weight**: the number of marks or % value attributed to a particular assessment item, which should reflect the relative importance of that assessment.

**Assurance**: the process of ensuring that activities and outcomes meet an agreed standard.

**Course**: whole-of-degree program. A course is a collection of units of study leading to an award or qualification. Also known as program.

**Course Learning Outcomes**: the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a student has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning across the whole program.

**Coursework Program**: Those taught programs of students. Higher Degree Research programs are generally not considered coursework programs.

**End to End Process** – A term used to refer to the beginning and end points of a methodology. It can refer to an academic methodology such as the EROS project, service delivery, administrative and business processes.

**External Referencing**: External review of all, or aspects, of a program, unit of a program, or student achievement standards by a peer from another institution who is an acknowledged discipline or professional expert.

**Grade Descriptors**: describe performance at the subject level, but may be indicative of levels of performance of certain types of assessment task (especially project work, reports and other extended writing tasks).

**Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF)** – These are the standards enacted under the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency Act, and are binding on universities.

**Marking**: the act of assessing individual assessment components, generating a score and/or grade, and feedback, as appropriate.

**Program**: whole-of-degree program. A program is a collection of units of study leading to an award or qualification. Also known as course.

**Program Learning Outcomes**: the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a student has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning across the whole program.

**Quality**: is fitness for purpose/fitness of purpose and performance to an agreed standard.

**Referencing**: see External Referencing.

**Reliability**: trustworthiness of assessment, the extent to which the grade awarded by one marker aligns with that awarded by another marker. Standards: statements describing the level or quality of student performance of criteria, in an assessment task.

**Unit**: an individual unit taken as part of a whole-of-degree program. A single component of a
qualification, or a stand-alone unit, that has been approved/accredited. A unit may also be called a ‘course’, ‘subject’, or ‘module’.

**Unit Learning Outcomes**: the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a student has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning in an individual unit/subject.

**Validity**: in establishing outcomes which are the focus of assessment, validity refers to the process of confirming, on evidence and against a range of agreed reference points, that what is being given focus on in a course or subject is both relevant and desirable. In terms of the process of assessment, validity refers to the use of assessment methods that are ‘fit for purpose’ – that is, they are shown to be the best way to measure the development of the capabilities and competencies set down for achievement in a particular course or subject.

**Acronyms**

AQF – Australian Qualification Framework
EROS – External Referencing Of Standards Project
HESF - Higher Education Standards Framework
PLOs – Program Learning Outcome
TEQSA – Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
ULOs– Unit Learning Outcomes
Acknowledgements

The University of Tasmania would like to thank in particular, the EROS Project team and Emeritus Professor Geoff Scott, as well as a number of projects, resources and methodologies for our work. We wish to acknowledge:


Executive Director, Innovative Research Universities Secretariat, Conor King, for permission to draw on resources developed for their Academic Calibration Project.

http://www.achievementmatters.com.au


The Group of Eight Quality Verification System


References


Appendix A

The External Referencing of Standards Report (EROS) template.
# External Referencing of Standards Report

## Details of institution requesting the external referencing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College/Faculty and Institution:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline/Professional area:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of expertise sought:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Details of institution undertaking the external referencing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviewer's Name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College/Faculty and Institution:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline/Professional area:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of expertise:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Unit and Course details

Prepare one of these reports for each unit or capstone project reviewed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit (code, title and discipline area):</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course (title):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Statement of potential conflicts of interest

To be completed by the reviewer.

For example, being involved in collaborative teaching, research, or consultancy work with colleagues teaching in the units being reviewed.

## Note

Course: A collection of units of study leading to an award or qualification. Also known as a program.

Unit: An individual unit of study. Also known as a subject or course.

**Acknowledgement:** This template was developed as part of the External Referencing of Standards Project (EROS Project), a collaboration between the RMIT, Curtin University, University of Wollongong and QUT.
**Notes for reviewers**

**Preparing reports**

Within 3 weeks (or as otherwise agreed) of receiving the relevant information and materials, you are required to submit the attached completed report to the institution requesting the external referencing report.

**Report structure and content**

Please complete all of Part A: Sections 1 to 3 of the report. If there are additional comments or recommendations you wish to make, document these in Section 4 of the report.

**Language of the report**

In writing the report you should be aware that it may be discussed widely within departments and schools, and in forums that have a range of participants including students. This information may also be included in published materials.

The language used in the report should reflect:

- sensitivity to the peer review nature of the process and therefore may include commendations as well as suggested areas for change
- cognisance of a potentially wide audience for the report, for example accrediting bodies and institution level committees

**General points**

1. The institution being reviewed will own the copyright of all the materials produced in relation to the review.
2. You will assign all present and future rights relating to the reports and any other materials created in relation to your role as an External Reviewer to the institution being reviewed. You will also waive any rights including moral rights in connection with those materials.
3. The institution being reviewed will make reasonable endeavours to ensure the accurate reproduction of material and information provided by you; all other warranties and undertakings are excluded, including liability for direct or indirect loss to you.
4. You give consent to the institution being reviewed to publish any part of your report, electronically or in hard-copy, in internal or public websites, reports and/or brochures.

---

**Notes for requesting institution**

**Selection of units**

The unit selected for review should be from the final year or stage of the course and the assessment tasks put up for review should NOT be multi-stage ones – eg. those that contain several integrated assessment tasks.

**Checklist for the institution requesting the external referencing**

The requesting institution will provide the reviewer with the following information:

**General points**

- An overall course or study plan structure, which positions the unit being reviewed (a curriculum map, showing the way the ULOs are mapped to the CLOs, is helpful if available)
- List of Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)
- Specific CLOs relevant to the Unit being reviewed.

**For the selected unit**

- Unit outline
- Unit Learning Outcomes (ULOs)
- A schedule of learning for the unit

**For the selected assessment task**

- Information provided to students setting out the assessment task requirements and/or questions
- Weighting of the assessment
- Assessment rubrics, marking guides, or criteria sheets.

**Grading**

Explanation of the grading scheme as it applies to the samples of student work and explanations of nomenclature.

**Samples of student work**

Please read Section 4 in the accompanying guide for information on how to select samples of student work

- Samples of de-identified student work provided.
The report is divided into Part A and B:

PART A: For Reviewers to complete

- Section 1: Course (CLOs) and Unit (ULOs) Learning Outcomes
- Section 2: Assessment
- Section 3: Student Achievement Standards
- Section 4: Other matters you wish to raise

PART B: Response of the requesting institution to the external referencing report

PART A: Section 1 | Course (CLOs) and Unit (ULOs) Learning Outcomes

1. Are the Unit Learning Outcomes aligned with the relevant Course Learning Outcomes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Yes, but</th>
<th>No, but</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments / suggested changes.
Note: responses should pertain to the course selected for external referencing and not other courses the unit may be taught in.

2. Are the Unit Learning Outcomes appropriate for a final stage Unit at this AQF qualification level?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Yes, but</th>
<th>No, but</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments / suggested changes.
Note: responses should pertain to the course selected for external referencing and not other courses the unit may be taught in.
PART A: Section 2 | Assessment

1. Does the assessment task enable students to demonstrate attainment of the relevant ULOs and relevant CLOs?

| Yes | Yes, but | No, but | No |

Comments / suggested changes.

Note: responses should pertain to the course selected for external referencing and not other courses the unit may be taught in.

2. Is the description of the performance standards (e.g. the marking guide/marking criteria/assessment rubric/annotated work samples) appropriate to the specified ULOs and relevant CLOs?

| Yes | Yes, but | No, but | No |

Comments / suggested changes.
PART A: Section 3 | Student Achievement Standards

1. Do you agree that the grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment?

| Yes | Yes, but | No, but | No |

Comments / suggested changes.
Note: please refer to the grading scheme and descriptors provided for this institution and respond to each sample assessment. Please contain your comments to the grades awarded in the samples provided.

Sample A:

Sample B:

Sample C:

2. Based on your review, do you consider the methods of assessment are capable of confirming that all relevant specified CLOs and ULOs are achieved?

| Yes | No |

Comments / suggested changes.

Add comments here.
PART A: Section 4 | Other matters you wish to raise

1. Are there other matters not covered in Parts 1, 2 and 3 above that you wish to draw to the attention of the course team?

| Yes | No |

Please provide brief details.

Add details here: ________
PART B: Section 1 | Response of the requesting institution to the external referencing report.
*(to be completed by the Course and Unit Coordinator)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priorities for implementation from the review</th>
<th>What are the anticipated enhancements to the quality of the course and learning experience of students?</th>
<th>Date for completion</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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