

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS ASSESSMENT POLICY**

### **1 PURPOSE AND CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This policy applies to all courses offered by The College English Language Programs.
- 1.2 This policy will provide guidance to staff and students in relation to English Language Programs course assessment. This is in accordance with the objectives of the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2020 and specifically Standard P4 of the ELICOS Standards, 2018.
- 1.3 A criteria and standards-based approach to student assessment is used. Criteria and standards-based assessment requires that criteria is identified and performance standards described so that students know the level of performance required for each assessment task.
- 1.4 This policy must be read and understood in conjunction with the Course Outlines, The College and University policies, including, but not limited to the:
  - 1.4.1 English Language Programs Course Progress Policy;
  - 1.4.2 English Language Programs Review of Grade Policy;
  - 1.4.3 English Language Programs Attendance Policy;
  - 1.4.4 English Language Programs Course Evaluation and Review of Courses Policy;
  - 1.4.5 English Language Programs Special Consideration Policy;
  - 1.4.6 The University Records Management Policy;
  - 1.4.7 The University Student Misconduct Rule;
  - 1.4.8 English Language Programs Teaching and Learning Policy.

### **2 DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:
  - 2.1.1 Academic manager – the staff member appointed to manage the course/program area by the Director. Students will be made aware of the relevant person for the course/program at the beginning of their studies.
  - 2.1.2 Assessment Tasks – include, but are not limited to: essays, tests, examinations, projects and presentations.
  - 2.1.3 CEFR – refers to the Common European Framework of Reference.
  - 2.1.4 Cohort – refers to all students correctly enrolled in a course of study.
  - 2.1.5 Course Outline – refers to documentation included in the prescribed schedule of assessments, study guidelines, student handbook/learner manuals.

- 2.1.6 CRICOS – refers to Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students.
- 2.1.7 Criteria – are specific performance attributes or characteristics that the assessor takes into account when making a judgement about the student response to the different elements of the assessment task.
- 2.1.8 Direct Entry – an ELICOS course that has direct entry arrangements to a tertiary education course.
- 2.1.9 Director – refers to the Director of the English Language Centre, which includes courses delivered through English Language Programs.
- 2.1.10 ELICOS – refers to English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students.
- 2.1.11 English Language Programs Assessment Committee – refers to the committee that meets at the end of each teaching session to approve the final results of each course. The committee comprises the Director (Chair), Manager or equivalent (Deputy Chair), and an academic manager and/or a person nominated by the Director.
- 2.1.12 ESOS – refers to the Education Services for Overseas Students Act.
- 2.1.13 Fair Assessment – is assessment that is feasible for the students' level of progression through their program, has transparent processes (i.e. marked according to articulated criteria and standards) and provides timely and constructive feedback.
- 2.1.14 Inherent Requirements – refers to the fundamental parts of a course or courses that must be met by all students. They are the abilities, knowledge and skills needed to complete a course. Students with a disability or chronic health condition can have reasonable adjustments made to enable them to meet these requirements. There may also be other considerations, (e.g. cultural or religious), that may impact the capacity of students to meet an inherent requirement and may require adjustments. However, any adjustments must not fundamentally change the nature of the inherent requirement.
- 2.1.15 Manager – Manager, English Language Programs.
- 2.1.16 Moderation – means regulating the marking of individual markers to achieve consistency in the application of course outcomes, performance standards and marking criteria.
- 2.1.17 Overseas Student – refers to a student studying at Western Sydney University The College on a student visa.
- 2.1.18 Standardisation – is to ensure consistency of marking standards in courses where there are multiple assessors.
- 2.1.19 Standards – are statements describing the level or quality of student performance of criteria in an assessment task.

2.1.20 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.

2.1.21 The College –Western Sydney University Enterprises Pty Limited trading as Western Sydney University, The College.

2.1.22 The University –Western Sydney University.

### **3 POLICY STATEMENT**

3.1 Each course will have course learning outcomes that are consistent with the level and field of education and informed by national and international comparators, and industry or professional standards where applicable.

3.2 Within the English Language Programs, assessment is based on established criteria and standards, not ranking, and will:

3.2.1 Guide and encourage effective student learning.

3.2.2 Sufficiently, fairly, validly, and reliably measure student performance of intended learning outcomes.

3.2.3 Define and maintain academic standards.

3.3 Each course will have:

3.3.1 Assessable tasks developed to collect evidence of student attainment of course learning outcomes. The logic of the assessment tasks will be explained to the students in the form of a rationale.

3.3.2 Standards developed by applying professional judgements about expected levels of student performance on assessment criteria may include use of the CEFR to assist in guiding judgements about student work samples.

3.3.3 Clear criteria and standards of performance developed for each assessment task. These criteria and standards will be described in the Course Outline to ensure that students are informed about the level of performance required for each assessment task.

3.3.4 Assessment tasks that align with learning outcomes which reflect course objectives and where relevant, graduate attributes.

3.4 Unless otherwise specified in the Course Outline, all assessment tasks are considered mandatory. This ensures that all course learning outcomes are achieved.

3.5 Course progress is dependent upon successful completion of each assessment task. Assessment can be conducted for both formative and summative purposes.

3.6 Formative assessments are designed to provide feedback to students and monitor their performance, and summative assessments contribute to students' final grades.

- 3.7 The number and nature of assessment tasks will be consistent with the documentation approved as per the English Language Programs Course Evaluation and Review Policy. Variations will only be permitted to the extent that they are permitted by the Policy.
- 3.8 Where a course contains a mixed cohort of students, for example including Study Tour students, different assessment tasks may be used for the separate groups, but they must still align with the course outcomes.
- 3.9 Principles related to Assessment, Moderation and Quality Assurance in the English Language Programs courses:
- 3.9.1 assessment must be valid, reliable, fair, flexible and clearly referenced to criteria; and
    - 3.9.1.1 include appropriate oversight or moderation of assessment outcomes;
    - 3.9.1.2 in the case of ELICOS courses which are provided under a direct entry arrangement to the University, formal measures will ensure that assessments are coordinated and monitored by Manager and academic manager/s. This is done to reflect a formal approach in maintaining assessment standards for each course level.
  - 3.9.2 where a course involves more than one class, the assessed tasks and the assessment criteria applied must be consistent across all classes. The assessment task results provided by course teachers in each class must undergo a moderation process each teaching period to validate the results. Standardisation will occur:
    - 3.9.2.1 before marking assessment tasks, to ensure markers have a shared understanding of standards;
    - 3.9.2.2 during and after marking to ensure markers have applied standards consistently. This may include:
      - 3.9.2.2.1 spot checking at random;
      - 3.9.2.2.2 double marking; and / or
      - 3.9.2.2.3 reviewing borderline results.
  - 3.9.3 moderation will occur to ensure that standards have been applied and ensure there is a consistency and fairness across the markers;
  - 3.9.4 standardisation and moderation meetings, including lists of attendees, and outcomes, must be documented;
  - 3.9.5 all marked summative assessment tasks, including examination papers may be subject to a review and validation process after moderation, authorised by the Manager or Director. The reasons for a review and the results of the review must be documented;
  - 3.9.6 if a significant number of students in a cohort receive extremely high or extremely low marks, or if there are significant inconsistencies between groups undertaking

the course in different locations or by different modes, the College English Language Programs Assessment Committee may, on the basis of evidence, request assessments to be remarked;

3.9.7 the pattern of results in each course will be recorded and be subject to analysis over time;

3.9.8 any changes made to the results during moderation must be documented and recorded accurately;

3.9.9 no changes are to be made to results after students have been given either assessment marks or final marks, unless such changes are the result of a review of assessment/change of assessment as per English Language Programs Review of Grade Policy.

3.10 In relation to marks finalisation:

3.10.1 Prior to the final approval of grades, the academic manager should conduct preliminary checks to ensure all assessment marks are entered accurately.

3.10.2 The English Language Programs Assessment Committee will review and recommend endorsement of final marks.

3.11 Attendance and engagement: English Language Programs expects teaching-staff to encourage students to regularly and actively participate in all scheduled educational activities, (such as online activities, face-to-face activities and discussions). For assessment purposes:

3.11.1 marks may not be awarded for attendance only;

3.11.2 overseas student attendance requirements are governed by English Language Programs Attendance Policy.

### **3.12 Continuous Improvement of Student Assessment**

3.13 Continuous improvement of assessment is undertaken, as per the English Language Programs Course Evaluation and Review of Courses Policy by:

3.13.1 monitoring appropriateness of assessment for students;

3.13.2 regularly evaluating the course outcomes that have been achieved.

3.14 If any summative assessment task, including examination, average appears inconsistent within a particular course level, assessment validation review processes are conducted. This entails the academic manager completing an Assessment Validation form and is done as a quality assurance measure to maintain valid, reliable and transparent assessment tasks suited to each course level. Any new course assessment is trialled, reviewed and average marks recorded for each cohort on a term by term basis.

## **4 RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSESSMENT**

### **4.1 Academic manager**

4.2 It is the responsibility of the academic manager to ensure that:

- 4.2.1 assessment methods and practices of all teaching staff, including part-time and sessional staff, comply with this Policy and other related University and The College policies;
- 4.2.2 correct and timely processes are followed;
- 4.2.3 where courses are taught across more than one campus/mode of delivery, the assessment tasks and marking are consistent and equivalent;
- 4.2.4 quality processes are implemented to:
  - 4.2.4.1 ensure timely and constructive feedback on assessment tasks;
  - 4.2.4.2 promote consistency in marking standards across courses and programs.

4.3 In developing assessment tasks, the academic manager must:

- 4.3.1 ensure assessment methods are valid for the relevant field of education;
- 4.3.2 assess the performance of students' work fairly, objectively and consistently against the criteria and standards;
- 4.3.3 ensure assessment tasks are aligned with learning outcomes and provide students with a range of assessment experiences, and are implemented on a whole of program basis;
- 4.3.4 ensure assessment tasks are staged so that students have sufficient time to absorb and act on assessment feedback in subsequent assessment tasks in the course. Ordinarily one major assessment task will be administered within the first four weeks of the teaching session.

4.4 In the case of students under 18, English Language Programs administration staff will ensure that assessment task results are forwarded to their parent or guardian subject to privacy regulations.

### **4.5 Teaching Staff**

4.6 Teaching staff carry out their teaching responsibilities by:

- 4.6.1 providing students with a Course Outline;
- 4.6.2 ensuring assessment tasks are designed to measure students' achievement of relevant learning outcomes; developing clear criteria and standards against which the level of student performance in the assessment task can be measured;
- 4.6.3 ensuring that any inherent requirements in the course are adequately assessed;

4.6.4 taking account of academic integration plans in the assessment processes.

4.7 In providing feedback to students, teaching staff are to:

4.7.1 ensure that feedback is timely; and

4.7.1.1 justifies the mark given against the stated assessment criteria and standards;

4.7.1.2 identifies what could have been done to improve marks.

4.7.2 make every effort to be available to students seeking information regarding the determination of their results for a reasonable period after assessment tasks have been returned and after the final results are released;

4.7.3 ensure assignment feedback sheets are given to students when their assignments are returned or, in the case of the oral presentation/seminar, when all students in the class have completed their presentations;

4.7.4 provide guidance verbally and in writing to any student who fails an oral presentation so that they have an understanding of requirements for their repeat presentation;

4.7.5 ensure each oral presentation feedback sheet has clear written and constructive feedback regarding the allocation of marks;

4.7.6 ensure each writing assignment or task student feedback sheet has information to allow students to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their writing and the awarding of marks;

4.7.7 ensure adequate records of marks and any relevant comments on individual student assessment tasks are kept in accordance with The College Records Management Policy;

4.7.8 ensure all assessment marks, including assignments, oral presentations, and mid-term and final exam marks are recorded promptly and accurately in soft copy, via GradeCentre. If a mark is adjusted in GradeCentre, a record of the adjustment is automatically kept by GradeCentre;

4.7.9 maintain the principles of the University's Privacy Policy in relation to student records and information;

4.7.10 in instances of suspected student cheating, collusion and/or plagiarism, ensure actions taken are consistent with the University's Student Misconduct Rule.

## **4.8 Students**

4.9 Students have a responsibility to:

4.9.1 familiarise themselves with the English Language Program Assessment Policy and examinations procedures;

- 4.9.2 ensure they read and understand the assessment requirements and note the due dates and methods for submission of assignments provided in the Course Outline, seeking clarification from their teacher and/or the academic manager, if required;
  - 4.9.3 actively engage with the learning activities and resources provided as part of their courses and by the University to help them prepare their assessment tasks.
- 4.10 Understand that should they fail to pass a course they will be subject to rulings of the English Language Programs Course Progress Policy:
- 4.10.1 follow the teachers' guidelines and instructions for format and submission of assignments;
  - 4.10.2 when enrolling in a course after teaching has commenced, obtain the relevant assessment information from the teacher and/or, the academic manager;
  - 4.10.3 seek advice if they have a disability or chronic health condition, or acquire one during their course, to ensure that they can meet any inherent requirements of the course.
- 4.11 Students are required to:
- 4.11.1 inform the teacher if they have difficulty submitting their assignment electronically and /or to complete all assessment items for the course;
  - 4.11.2 keep soft copies of their assessment;
  - 4.11.3 notify relevant staff (e.g. teacher, academic manager, Wellbeing staff member) as soon as possible prior to, or at the beginning of, the teaching session if they have special requirements which needs to be accommodated.
- 4.12 In relation to assessment tasks, students must:
- 4.12.1 undertake all assessment tasks ethically and with academic integrity, including avoiding any action or behaviour which would unfairly advantage or disadvantage any student, in accordance with the Student Misconduct Rule;
  - 4.12.2 submit, on time, their own individual work;
  - 4.12.3 collect all marked assessment tasks in sufficient time to learn from the feedback provided;
  - 4.12.4 ensure they understand the requirements, including timetables, for examinations and other assessment tasks.

## **5 NUMBER AND WEIGHTING OF ASSESSMENTS**

- 5.1 Assessments that carry a weighting towards the final mark for the course will be advised in the Course Outline.
- 5.2 The number of assessment tasks should rely on a balance between effective measurement and effective learning; assignments should be comprehensive enough to allow sufficient



evidence of student attainment to be collected, but not so excessive as to detract from learning.

- 5.3 Normally there will be more than one assessment task from which the final mark for a course is derived. A specific weighting for each item of assessment must be nominated (e.g. 25%). The weighting will not be expressed as a range (e.g. between 20 and 35%).
- 5.4 The assessment for all courses should include an early, diagnostic, low risk assessment item to identify students who are not engaging or who may need additional support. Additional support will be provided as per the English Language Programs Course Progress Policy. No marks should be awarded for the diagnostic task and the grading is 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'.
- 5.5 The College reserves the right to require a student to pass a particular assessment task or tasks in order to pass a course (even if the total mark achieved is more than 50%). Where this is the case, it will be clearly stated in the Course Outline.

## **6 GRADING REQUIREMENTS**

- 6.1 Students will be advised in the Course Outline how all final marks and grades are to be determined.
- 6.2 Grade categories will be used to provide guidance to students on their performance in individual tasks as they progress in English Programs (Table 1).
- 6.3 Students will be provided with criteria and standards for each assessment task prior to the task being undertaken. Upon receipt of their marked assessment task, it should be clear to the student, based on their performance against the assessment criteria and standards, why they achieved the mark/grade given, and how they could have achieved a better mark/grade.
- 6.4 Unless otherwise stated in the Course Outline, marking will align with the grading descriptors listed in Table 1. These categories will help prepare students for the requirements of further study following successful completion of their course at The College English Language Programs.
- 6.5 Students enrolled in English Language Programs courses will receive a "Pass" grade upon successful completion of their course. To achieve a "Pass" grade, a student must meet prescribed standards that are specific to the course. Students who have partially enrolled in a course that is less than the total length of the course and who have satisfactorily attended and passed assessments in the period of enrolment may be awarded a Satisfactory 'S' grade.
- 6.6 Students who do not receive a "Pass" or "S" grade will be required to re-enrol in the same level course unless otherwise specified.

**Table 1 - English Language Programs Assessment grading standards for courses**

| Notation | Grade            | Percentage |
|----------|------------------|------------|
| H        | High Distinction | 85 – 100   |
| D        | Distinction      | 75 – 84    |
| C        | Credit           | 65 – 74    |
| P        | Pass             | 50 – 64    |
| F        | Fail             | 0 – 49     |
| S        | Satisfactory     | No grade   |

### **6.7 Temporary Marks**

- 6.8 Where assessment items are incomplete because of a student’s illness or misadventure, as defined in the English Language Programs Special Consideration Policy, the Director will determine the final mark in extenuating circumstances.

## **7 NOTIFICATION TO STUDENTS OF ASSESSMENT TASKS, DUE DATES AND FEEDBACK**

- 7.1 Any variation in the assessment task/s after assessment information has been provided to students in the Course Outline and that affects all students within a course, will only be made in exceptional circumstances. The relevant academic manager is to approve such changes, and all students are to be formally notified in accordance with normal communication protocols of The College.
- 7.2 Students will be informed of their numerical mark for course assessments unless the component is assessed as satisfactory/unsatisfactory.
- 7.3 All assessments must be accompanied by a completed assignment cover sheet, which includes a student declaration confirming that the task has been undertaken ethically and that the work has not been plagiarised. For more information on plagiarism refer to the [University's library Study Smart page](#).
- 7.4 Students should be allowed sufficient access to their marked formative assessment task/s to understand why the mark has been awarded and to learn from the feedback provided by the marker.
- 7.5 Staff who wish to conduct assessment tasks on the Western Sydney University e-learning site, vUWS should do so in accordance with English Language Programs guidelines.
- 7.6 Unclaimed student work for assessment will be retained for a period of one month after the end of the relevant teaching session. Examination papers and final major assessments are kept for a period of 24 calendar months following the end of the relevant teaching session.

- 7.7 Students will be provided with criteria and standards for each assessment task prior to the task being undertaken. Upon receipt of their marked assessment task, it should be clear to the student, based on their performance against the assessment criteria and standards, why they achieved the mark given, and how they could have achieved a better mark.
- 7.8 A course may incorporate resubmission of work as part of the assessment process to enable students the opportunity to improve their performance against the criteria and standards. In all cases, a resubmitted task which is deemed to have passed can only achieve a maximum mark of 50%.

### **7.9 Late Submission of Assessments**

- 7.10 Except where an extension has been approved for the submission of an assessment task by the relevant academic manager, or in line with the English Language Programs Special Consideration Policy, the following penalties will apply to the late submission of an assessment task:
- 7.10.1 a student who submits an assessment task after the due date for submission will be penalised by 10% for each day late;
- 7.10.2 the assessment will not be accepted after the marked assessment task has been returned to students who submitted the assessment task by the due date.

## **8 CIRCUMSTANCES FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE RE-MARKING OF AN ASSESSMENT TASK**

- 8.1 If a student wishes to discuss their assessment task result, the student should review the quality of their response and feedback against the assessment criteria and standards prior to arranging a meeting with the teacher of their class. Normally, a meeting with the teacher responsible for the class should take place no later than one week after the marked assessment task is available for collection by the student.
- 8.2 If the meeting is unsatisfactory to the student, they may apply for a review of the mark by the Academic manager.
- 8.3 The student should complete a Request for Review of Assessment form and submit this to the relevant Academic manager and attend a meeting with the academic manager.
- 8.4 In advance of the meeting, the student is required to familiarise themselves with the grounds for review.
- 8.5 If, at the end of the meeting with the student, the academic manager agrees that one or more of the student's responses to the assessment criteria and standards require re-marking, the reasons for the re-mark will be documented. The re-marking of an assessment task should be undertaken by the academic manager or someone of similar academic level. Where a re-mark is undertaken, all comments from the previous marker should be removed or, where possible, a copy of the submitted assessment task will be provided. Where the assessment task has been an oral presentation, the matter should be referred to the academic manager and /or Manager for approval.

- 8.6 If, at the end of the meeting with the student, the academic manager of the course does not agree that a re-mark is justified, the student will be advised that the assessment task will not be re-marked.
- 8.7 The outcome of the discussion with the student will be recorded.
- 8.8 The student may refer to the English Language Programs Student Complaint Handling and Resolution Policy if unsatisfied with the outcome.

### **8.9 Review of a Final Mark in a Course**

- 8.10 To seek a review of a final grade in a course, students must follow the English Language Programs Review of Grade Policy.

## **9 MATTERS AFFECTING ASSESSMENT**

### **9.1 Special Consideration**

- 9.2 The College recognises that there will be circumstances beyond a student's control that may impact adversely on their performance. Under such circumstances, a student may make application for Special Consideration for the assessment task/s so affected. Definitions of misadventure and extenuating circumstances relevant to special consideration are provided in the English Language Programs Special Consideration Policy.

## **10 OFFICIAL RESULTS**

- 10.1 Marks will be provided to the University by The College and will be entered on the student management system. Official results will be released after being officially endorsed by The College English Language Programs Assessment Committee.

## **11 COURSE CERTIFICATION**

- 11.1 English Language Programs will, upon completion (or partial completion) of study, issue each student a document that:
  - 11.1.1 indicates the CRICOS course name, and English Language Programs as the registered ELICOS provider;
  - 11.1.2 shows the dates of study, course duration and authorised signature and name of signatory;
  - 11.1.3 indicates the levels of achievement or proficiency;
  - 11.1.4 shows the student's course attendance percentage;
  - 11.1.5 includes or is accompanied by an explanation of the terms used in awarding grades at all levels.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS ASSESSMENT POLICY

### STATUS AND DETAILS

|                            |  |                          |   |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Status</b>              | Current  |                          |   |
| <b>Version</b>             | 2  |                          |   |
| <b>Effective Date</b>      | 18 January 2023  |                          |   |
| <b>Review Date</b>         | 18 April 2023  |                          |   |
| <b>Approval Policy</b>     | The College Senior Management Team   |                          |   |
| <b>Governing Authority</b> | Western Sydney University Enterprises Board  |                          |   |
| <b>Endorsed by</b>         | The English Language Committee   |                          |   |
| <b>Unit Responsible</b>    | English Language Centre  |                          |   |
| <b>Enquiries Contact</b>   | Joan Park<br>E: <a href="mailto:J.Park3@westernsydney.edu.au">J.Park3@westernsydney.edu.au</a> |                          |   |
| <b>Available On</b>        | SharePoint   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

### Summary of Changes from Previous Version

Updates to 2. Definitions; ensure current position titles are current and correct throughout the policy; and updated with a Satisfactory 'S' grade in the English Language Programs Assessment grading standards for courses.