MEMBERS OF THE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION STANDING COMMITTEE
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) (Winthrop Professor Jane Long) – Chair
Associate Chair of Academic Board (Professor Brett Kirk)
Director of Centre for Advancement of Teaching and Learning (Winthrop Professor Denise Chalmers)
Director of Institutional Research Unit (Dr Greg Marie)
President of the Guild (Ms Emma Greeney)
Director of Student Services (Mr Jon Stubbs)
Faculty representatives from the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee:
   Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics (Dr Angus Tavner) – Deputy Chair
   Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (Dr Brenton Knott)
   Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (Associate Professor Sandra Carr)
Assistant Professor Eileen Thompson (CATLyst, UWA Business School)
Professor Sid Nair (Higher Education Development (Evaluations), CATL)

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING – THURSDAY 10TH JUNE 2010

This is to confirm that the next meeting of the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee will be held from 10.00am to 11.30am on Thursday 10th June 2010 in the Office of Development meeting room (Level 1)

Part 1 of the agenda is to be dealt with en bloc by motion of the Chair. There are no items in Part 2. Part 3 is for discussion. A member may request the transfer of an item from Part 1 to Part 3.

Jan Cardy
Executive Officer
AGENDA

WELCOME
The Chair will welcome members to the meeting.

APOLOGIES
The Chair will record any apologies. Members are reminded that apologies should be forwarded to the Executive Officer prior to the meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT OR PERCEIVED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
The Chair will invite members to declare potential for conflict or perceived conflicts of interest, if applicable, with regard to items on the agenda.

1. MINUTES – REF: F29275
Confirmation of the minutes of the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee meeting held on Monday 1st March 2010.

2. ITEMS/BUSINESS IN PROGRESS FOR NOTING – REF: F7739, F25751, F27278, F29500, F29501, F8744, F7739
Members are asked to note the following items as ‘business in progress’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM/BUSINESS IN PROGRESS</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F7739 Assessment Practices within respective faculties</td>
<td>Feedback is being sought from Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) on the extent to which the advice, provided in the paper entitles “Response to assessment Committee on Examinations” had impacted on assessment practices within respective faculties – no feedback was received from faculties. Chair to follow up with Associate Deans</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>In progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F25751 Special Consideration</td>
<td>Review Special Considerations policy and procedures in the context of faculty feedback and develop a matrix to determine appropriate adjustment of marks in relation to special consideration</td>
<td>Second Stage Working Party convened by Academic Secretary, Ms Sylvia Lang</td>
<td>In Progress – Funding has been granted for dedicated project officer to progress procedures and matrix to give effect to the policy - due Nov 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F27278 Review of Evaluation of Teaching at UWA</td>
<td>Report referred to the University’s Executive</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>In progress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### PART 1 – ITEM FOR COMMUNICATION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC

#### 3. APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS – REF:F28685

The Teaching and Learning Committee’s Teaching and Learning Development Fund supports priorities in teaching and learning focussing on strategies outlined in the Education Section of the University's Operational Priorities Plan. In support of the operational objective (EDU 3) “to extend high-quality teaching approaches and improve learning outcomes”, enhanced feedback to students has been targeted for further action.

At its meeting held on 1st April 2010, the Teaching and Learning Committee considered and endorsed (R7/10) the Teaching and Learning Development Fund 2010 Scheme on Assessment and Feedback.

For members’ information, the following submissions have been received to date and grants allocated:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty/School</th>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts</td>
<td>Develop, test and implement online assessment and feedback software and comprehensive procedures for first year design studio in ALVA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences</td>
<td>Standardising and Improving Assessment and Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWA Business School</td>
<td>Adaptation of SPARK (Self and Peer Assessment Resource Kit). SPARK has been developed to improve learning from team assessment tasks and make the assessments fairer for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Assessing Professional Growth and Learning through the Development of an E-portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering, Computing and Mathematics</td>
<td>Development of an assessment strategy for the four integrated Engineering Foundation units in the Engineering Science Major.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life and Physical Sciences</td>
<td>Three projects:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Repeat lectures versus split lectures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Assessment understanding and the concept of standards by Faculty staff</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Developing an understanding of Level 1 undergraduate student’s perceptions of assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences | Implementation of enhanced feedback mechanisms for students of the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences about their performance in clinical assessments.

School of Indigenous Studies | Develop, implement and evaluate a culturally appropriate process of peer assessment for use in the Aboriginal Education Unit EDUC8429.

A copy of the Guidelines to the Scheme are attached (Attachment A) for members information.

PART 2 – ITEMS FOR DECISION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC

No items

PART 3 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

4. MODERATION PRACTICES – REF: F8744

Moderation of assessment is a quality review and assurance process that seeks to ensure that assessment procedures and practices are valid and reliable and are aligned with stated standards, principles and ethos.

In early 2010 the Chair of the Assessment and Evaluation Standing committee, W/Professor Jane E Long, requested information from faculties regarding their existing moderation practices:

‘Moderation practices and any other activities that may address students’ perceptions about bias in formal exam marking, fears of such bias and their overall confidence level in the University’s formal assessment processes.’

Tackling fears about bias by informing students of the extent of existing moderation is a measure strongly supported by the Guild as one means to ensure confidence in our approaches to assessment.

At its meeting in March 2010 members considered a document which summarised the feedback received from four faculties. The content of the feedback, and the wider subject of moderation, was discussed and the following points were noted:

- The feedback received did not address moderation practices / procedures currently in practice
- There may be a lack of clarity on what moderation is
- To what levels were assessments moderated internally throughout UWA?
- Are assessment practices comparable across faculties?
- Have moderation practices been embedded within UWA guidelines on assessment?

Members resolved (R 2/10) ‘to send an email, to Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) requesting further feedback on moderation practices and the email would clearly define moderation and seek feedback on the issues raised.

A second round of feedback has been received and a summary document is attached (Attachment B)

For discussion
5. REVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY’S ASSESSMENT POLICIES: F29501

At its meeting held on 8th December 2009, members considered a paper entitled ‘Assessment Policy at UWA’ and the minute of the discussion is available on the web at http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/staffnet/committees/assessment/_nocache.

Members will also be aware that the Chair has convened an informal working party to assist the development of an appropriate policy.

To progress this item further, a paper titled ‘Core Assessment Policies at Australian Universities’ has been prepared by Dr Zoe Anderson, Research Assistant, Centre for Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) and is attached for members information (Attachment C).

For discussion

6. THE RESTRUCTURE OF STUDENT PERCEPTION OF TEACHING (SPOT) – REF: F24800

The first version of student feedback to teachers was developed in the late 80s as a formative tool to assist teachers to obtain student feedback so as to affect improvement. Since its introduction a number of concerns (see Appendix A of the attached document) were raised on the tool and effectiveness of the tool for quality improvements in teaching (Orrell, J., 2009; Stubbs et.al, 2008).

A paper, prepared by Professor Sid Nair, Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL), presents a framework for the redesign of the survey tool so as to achieve a systematic approach across the university which in turn will provide a number of benefits to the teaching and university community. A copy of the paper is attached (Attachment D).

For discussion

7. DISTRIBUTION OF MARKS/GRADES AT UWA, 2009 – REF: F7739, F8744, F29501

The paper ‘Distribution of Marks/Grades at UWA, 2009, developed by the Institutional Research Unit, is circulated (Attachment E) for members’ information. Members will recall a similar paper pertaining to the previous year was circulated and discussed within the group. The Chair will invite Dr Greg Marie, Director of the Institutional Research Unit to introduce this item and open a discussion of the 2009 data

For discussion

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Assessment and Evaluation Standing Committee will be held on Thursday 12th August 2010 from 10am to 11.30am in the Office of Development meeting room (Level 1).
Teaching and Learning Committee

Teaching and Learning Development Fund – 2010 Scheme

Assessment and Feedback
(endorsed by Teaching and Learning Committee 7/2010)

The Teaching and Learning Committee’s Teaching and Learning Development Fund was first established in 1999 with the intention that the Fund be used to progress teaching and learning related priorities within the University’s Operational Priorities Plan. The OPP 2009-2013 strategic objective for Education is “To improve the quality of the student learning experience”.

Aim

The aim of this Scheme is to improve the student learning experience at UWA with a focus on assessment and feedback.

Assessment and feedback are central to student learning. While UWA provides excellent educational opportunities for its students, these areas are ones which, nationally, remain challenging. At UWA, the context of the New Courses 2012 affords an excellent opportunity to staff to consider assessment approaches, feedback mechanisms, and the extent to which these may be revised usefully as an integral part of the development of new courses. Such revision may not only result in good learning outcomes for students, but may extend to consideration of effective use of staff resources. Provision of project funding at faculty level is intended to encourage collaborative activity with wide-ranging impact.

Grants Available

$190,000 is available from the Fund. Each of the nine faculties will be offered a grant of $20,000 and the School of Indigenous Studies will be offered a grant of $10,000.

Objectives

Faculties and the School of Indigenous Studies are invited to formulate faculty/school specific project(s) within the following broad parameters:

- assessment tasks and forms, within majors and between levels of study, that align clearly with stated learning outcomes;
- approaches to ensure that feedback on assessment provided is systematic, timely, effective and relevant for students.

Within this broader context, faculties are also strongly encouraged to consider, as appropriate, one or more of the following themes:

- assessment and effective feedback in large units;
- the use of technology in assessment and feedback;
- the needs of level one students;
- engaging students in assessment and feedback;
- effective postgraduate coursework assessment and feedback.
Application Procedure

It is intended that the application procedure be as efficient as possible. The process for this Scheme will be similar to that adopted for distribution of the University's Learning and Teaching Performance Funds.

On behalf of the Teaching and Learning Committee a small group comprising the Chair, Deputy Chair and Executive Officer will consider faculty proposals within the parameters of the Scheme. Faculties and the School of Indigenous Studies are invited to consider what project(s) within the Scheme’s broad parameters would best fit their priorities and culture and submit a brief outline (no more than two pages) for consideration by the group.

Timelines

Proposals of no more than two pages should be forwarded to Ms Sue Smurthwaite, Associate Director, Education Policy Services no later than Friday, 14th May 2010.

It is anticipated that the group will meet in mid-May and funding allocated by 31st May 2010.

Reporting

Deans will be responsible for expenditure of the funds in line with the broad parameters of the Scheme.

Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) or equivalent will be invited to submit a brief report to the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee for its August 2011 meeting outlining project(s) undertaken and their impact on the student learning experience within the context of assessment and feedback.

The deadline for these reports, either final or progress, is Friday, 15th July 2011.

25 March 2010
Moderation Practices

Summary of Faculty Feedback

Moderation of assessment is a quality review and assurance process that seeks to ensure that assessment procedures and practices are valid and reliable and are aligned with stated standards, principles and ethos.

In early 2010 the Chair of the Assessment and Evaluation Standing committee, W/Professor Jane E Long, requested information from faculties regarding their existing moderation practices:

‘moderation practices and any other activities that may address students’ perceptions about bias in formal exam marking, fears of such bias and their overall confidence level in the University’s formal assessment processes.’

Tackling fears about bias by informing students of the extent of existing moderation is a measure strongly supported by the Guild as one means to ensure confidence in our approaches to assessment.
## Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts

### Moderation Procedures used in Examination Marking

- ALVA has very few exams typically there are only two out of 35-40 units on offer in each semester. These are either marked wholly by the unit coordinator or by a panel of tutors.
- When marked by the coordinator, results, including averages, are compared to previous years and cohorts of students.
- When marked by tutors, preliminary results are assessed for any irregularities by the unit coordinator and then moderated accordingly.

### To what extent are they used?

- Design studios constitute the major arena for instruction in ALVA.
- Assessment and moderation practices are much standardised and universally applied each semester.
- For instance, in each level (years 1-5) there are a number of individual studios with 15 to 25 students each. Each student submits a design folio at the end of the semester and these are marked by a panel of 3-4 assessors, one of whom is constant across the entire level. Borderline and failed folios are typically then given a final review by a second panel comprising the level assessor/moderator and discipline chair and the particular studio coordinator. For interim submissions, marks are typically (but not always) reviewed and moderated by the level coordinator (the level coordinator, responsible for overseeing all studios in a given year, may or may not be the level assessor).

### How frequently are they used?

- These practices are routinely used each semester.

### Moderation Procedures used in other forms of Assessment

- Other units, including core and option units are more varied in their moderation practices, though most undertake some form of moderation, particularly were multiple groups of tutorials and tutors are involved.
### Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

**Moderation Procedures used in Examination Marking**

- Double-marking as well as benchmarking are used in some disciplines.
- More commonly, exam papers are divided into sections and each section is marked by a different academic. There is also the practice of selectively double-marking and benchmarking a selection of exams from the different grade clusters (P, CR, D ad HD).

**To what extent are they used?**

- Wherever feasible and manageable, these practices are used.

**How frequently are they used?**

- (see above)

**Moderation Procedures used in other forms of Assessment**

- In assessing continuous and cumulative assessment during the semester, similar strategies are employed, i.e. selective double-marking, benchmarking as well as marking by different staff members, i.e. every piece of assessment in a unit is marked in its entirety by a different academic to ensure consistency across the cohort.
## Moderation Procedures used in Examination Marking

- Guidelines are issues for the distribution of marks in all degrees offered in the school
- Multiple markers (e.g., several tutors for a unit either each mark the full paper or each tutor marks only a single question for all papers)
- Board of Examiner meetings are held for specific programs/disciplines where the spread of marks is discussed

### To what extent are they used?

- Extensively

### How frequently are they used?

- Always

## Moderation Procedures used in other forms of Assessment

- Lecturers in charge in large units will check mark a sample of tutors assignments or will convene a meeting of markers where a sample of assignments are graded and a marking criteria is agreed. This is practiced across all large units in the school on a regular basis
**Faculty of Education**

**Moderation Procedures used in Examination Marking**

- After the examination a briefing meeting is held with all academic staff involved in the marking of the assessment papers. Marking guides will be provided to markers. The markers review the examination, discussing expected content/responses.
- The process of fair, valid and consistent marking is reviewed.

**To what extent are they used?**

- Examinations are used in only one unit in the Faculty of Education: EDUC8485 Teaching and Learning Perspectives (approximately 140 students)

**How frequently are they used?**

- Once per semester after the examination

**Moderation Procedures used in other forms of Assessment**

- A moderation process is used in the marking of EDUC8620 or EDUC8621 major papers for Masters students completing a course work only degree. After marking major papers of own students, sample papers were selected for marking, discussion and feedback by a group of markers. Working from the established set of criteria for the assessment of the Major Paper, each marker suggested a grade. Discussion ensued around each paper. A high degree of consistency was found with the allocated grades. From this process, an assessment rubric was developed which provided additional scaffolding for the marking of the papers. This rubric was presented to all staff in an assessment seminar held last year.
- In addition to this formal process, individual staff frequently consult and review papers by peers for clarification and their own continuing professional development.
- In the Graduate Diploma of Education coordinators of curriculum units (EDUC8460, 8470, 8445, 8446, 8461, 8462, 8463, 8464, 8465, 8466, 8467, 8471, 8472, 8474, 8475, 8476, 8477) meet to establish common assessment tasks and common assessment dates. Unit coordinators develop their own rubrics. Markers for each unit are asked to select a representative sample of work for the first assessment task and bring that sample to a moderation meeting. Small group discussion of work samples contributes to development of shared and refined understandings of the task, the criteria, the standards implicit and embedded in the task and documents. This is a particularly useful process. In a recent moderation meeting the the grade allocation was found to be consistent across 10 markers. Closer examination of cut offs for grades will be the focus of the next moderation meeting next semester. Some staff have adopted blind marking techniques and this is under consideration by other staff.
- Informally, colleagues consult when they are faced with a piece of student work that is problematic or sitting at a grade cut off point. Colleagues are asked to do a blind mark or remark the piece of work and then the marking is discussed before determining a final grade.
Moderation Procedures used in Examination Marking

Faculty policy covers both consistency in marking and overall scaling/profiling for the Unit:

- 'Consistency in marking across all students enrolled in a unit is of prime importance. Consistency can be achieved by having one marker grade the same section of the assessment for every student. This may be relatively easy to achieve in units with small enrolments or for assessments where there are a number of questions. Where a number of markers are involved in marking student work, every effort must be taken by the Unit Coordinator to ensure consistency and moderation in the marking of the process. All fail papers must be check marked before they are finalised.'
- There appears to be some informal practices involved in second marking a sample of HDs.
- There are informal opportunities to compare the anchoring of our scale against practices in other comparable universities through the experience of staff members who have recently taught at other Australian universities (Sydney, ANU, Tasmania, QUT, Murdoch) and regular teaching visits by Adjunct staff based at other universities in Australia and overseas (Melbourne, Birmingham, London). A new member of staff is an external examiner at two Hong Kong universities. Some informal discussion occurs with Adjuncts and practitioners who teach for the Faculty to ensure conformity with UWA policy.

To what extent are they used?

- Check marking of Fails is consistently applied

How frequently are they used?

- Check marking occurs as part of the assessment process for each Unit

Moderation Procedures used in other forms of Assessment

- Check marking of Fails occurs for each form of assessment. In addition, Faculty policy covers the scaling/profiling of overall marks for the Unit
- 'The Law School applies a mandatory graded percentile scale for final grades in all LLB units of 30 students or more. For units of less than 30 students the scale is not mandatory but is a guide to examiners.

   The range of final grades for scaling purposes is:
   - 4 – 10% HD
   - 25 – 40% HD and D

- The percentage of students who fall within a particular range of grade (HD and D) is worked out by dividing the number of students who achieved the grade by the number of students who are enrolled in the unit, excluding those students who have been granted a deferred exam. Note, the number of students who are enrolled in the unit (excluding those who have been granted a deferred) may be more than the number of students who actually sat the exam or handed in the final piece of assessment. Unit coordinators should confirm the number students enrolled in the unit, less those students granted deferred, with the Administrative Assistant... before finalising grades.'
- As part of the new Major in Law and Society, it is envisaged that Unit Coordinators will develop marking criteria for markers in the Unit, will convene a meeting of all markers to mark and discuss a sample of assignments before marking their own batches, and will moderate the marking process by sampling a range of marked
assignments focusing on assignments that have been marked at the cut-off point for each grade. As teams develop internal consistency, the intensity of moderation within units may diminish.

- Consistency between Units will partly be achieved by team teaching across Units. Fails will be check marked outside the particular Unit team, and a sample of students' work at other grades will be circulated so that scales can be anchored across the levels of the Major in a common understanding.
### Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences - School of Anatomy & Human Biology

#### Moderation Procedures used in Examination Marking

**To what extent are they used?**

- Varies widely between units, in part determined by the size of units and the number of people involved in marking the same item.
- First year (approx 800 students),
  a) 1 essay per semester - up to 15 markers. Marking rubric prepared. Comparison of mean & distribution of marks for each tutor (exact matching of means not attempted). In cases where one tutor's marks deviate significantly from overall distribution course co-ordinator blind-marks again samples from upper, lower, mid part of tutor's distribution. If no great deviation from tutor's marks they stand, otherwise adjust towards overall mean in direction indicated by stats and co-ordinator's remark
  b) practical and short answer exams - 2-3 markers per question. Rubric prepared. Set of markers sit together and mark, variant answers accepted or rejected recorded for future use, co-ordinator and lecturer concerned present - adjudicate. Distribution of marks over set of questions for each variant examined, individual questions cycled amongst test variants (no adjustments between variants have been required for at least the last 7 years, before that adjustments were made towards the overall mean in years where new questions were trialled, if necessary
  c) MCQs - computer marked. The question bank, having been accumulated over 30+ years is now very large and has been weeded of questions which mislead high performing students or which totally failed to discriminate. Combined with the large student group this has meant that there has been very little year-to-year variation in the distribution of scores in recent (15 or so) years - no moderation required.

- Second Year
  In all but the largest second year units whole questions are marked by one person (with questions distributed amongst markers) - no moderation required. Practical and short answer questions are marked "round table" with marking rubrics & adjudication by lecturer. Variation of mark distributions between years is considered by the School BOE but there have only been two instances of significant deviation in the last 7-10 years. One was addressed by identifying the deviant section of the assessment and adjusting its distribution to be nearer that of the rest of the unit assessment, the other by adjusting the distribution (form and mean) of the whole unit. In the larger units for essays in which there is choice of question marking of each choice is shared between two markers who consult. Distributions of marks by marker and question are compared with a mind to adjustment if necessary, but none has been. Written assignments and oral presentations are marked separately by two markers and a consensus mark is reached (which is not necessarily the arithmetic mean)

- Third Year
  Moderation is not used. All of any one assessment item is marked by a single person. Anywhere up to 8 different assessment items may be dealt with in this way. Mark distributions have been remarkably stable across recent years (checked at School BOE)

#### How frequently are they used?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Varies - more frequently in first year to almost never at third year, as indicated above</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderation Procedures used in other forms of Assessment</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>See details above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences – School of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology

#### Moderation Procedures used in Examination Marking

- No pre-assessment moderation is carried out. Marks are never scaled at any level.
- Post-assessment moderation is done only to the extent that the same individuals are marking their parts of the exam each year. Moderation of results from year to year are carried out by comparing the class averages and standard deviations. This is done using the Board of Examiners report form.
- Regarding PSB assessments, when PSB staff are marking exams a couple of papers are marked in duplicate by staff in Perth and the marks compared with the PSB markers to ensure consistency in the marking. Also, when PSB staff mark we send up a detailed marking key to ensure consistency between Singapore and Perth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent are they used?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>See above</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How frequently are they used?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderation of PSB papers are carried out only at the 2nd year level units as these units only use PSB lecturers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third year units are taught, examined and marked only by Perth staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Moderation Procedures used in other forms of Assessment

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences – School of BBCS (Assoc/Prof Manfred W Beilharz)</th>
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</thead>
</table>

**Moderation Procedures used in Examination Marking**

- Pre-assessment moderation and post-assessment moderation

**To what extent are they used?**

- They are used for all assessable units and course in my discipline

**How frequently are they used?**

- 100% of the time

**Moderation Procedures used in other forms of Assessment**

- Not applicable
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences – School of BBC (Prof Don Robertson)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderation Procedures used in Examination Marking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• None used routinely.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No scaling of marks to a pre-determined distribution is ever performed</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In rare cases, when marks in an exam are deemed unreasonably low by historical standards, upwards adjustment to offending questions has been made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marks for exams are never moderated downwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent are they used?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Very little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How frequently are they used?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Very rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderation Procedures used in other forms of Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In the case of multiple tutorial or laboratory groups, marks are compared across groups and adjustments are made for groups that are significantly different from the mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In the case of essays, multiple marking of sample essays is performed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences – School of Psychology (W/Prof Geoff Hammond)

#### Moderation Procedures used in Examination Marking

- Distributions of marks for questions within an exam are examined for anomalies
- Any anomalies found are corrected and reported to and justified to the staff meeting that considers unit marks
- Likewise, and anomalies for unit marks that are not otherwise explicable can be corrected by the staff meeting

#### To what extent are they used?

- Adjustments would very seldom exceed 1 mark (out of 10) for a written assignment or 2 percentage points for a unit final mark

#### How frequently are they used?

- Perhaps once every two semesters

#### Moderation Procedures used in other forms of Assessment

- Written assignments graded by different markers
- Unit coordinators examine mark distributions to determine any anomalies which are then corrected
**Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences**

**Moderation Procedures used in Examination Marking**

- There is no moderation of undergraduate units in Schools within the Faculty with the exception of the Four Year Degree FNAS Research Projects (SCIE 4501-4504). In this case, a common marker per 10 theses to give the markers a reasonable workload.
- There is moderation of marking in the unit STAT3368 3S8 taught by the School of Mathematics and Statistics, but although FNAS students are enrolled in several units taught by Mathematics, none are enrolled in that particular stats unit.
- The School of Agricultural and Resource Economics checks the standard of examination papers but do not moderate results.
- In the School of Plant Biology, units are team-taught, with contributors setting and marking their own questions, noting if another contributor is marking too harshly or leniently.

**To what extent are they used?**

- 

**How frequently are they used?**

- 

**Moderation Procedures used in other forms of Assessment**

- There is moderation of Honours theses, and I could forward information if that would be useful.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School of Indigenous Studies</td>
<td>Not yet received</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and</td>
<td>Not yet received</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty of Engineering, Computing and</td>
<td>Not yet received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Core Assessment Policies at Australian Universities

1. Parameters: New Essentials

2. Overview

3. Key areas of note
   3.1 Grading frameworks and responsibilities
   3.2 Extent and timeframes of feedback
   3.3 Nature, number and balance of assessments

4. Supplementary ‘Good Practice’ guides

5. Summary
   5.1 Conclusion
   5.2 Comparative table
   5.3 Appendix: Examples of Good Practice

1. Parameters: New Essentials

This review is in keeping with the initial areas set out as key aspects of New Essentials.

1.1 Administration of assessment
1.2 Assessment practices
1.3 Minimum requirements for effective feedback to students
1.4 Grading procedures
1.5 Moderation procedures and maintenance of course standards

2. Overview

All the universities reviewed have a university-wide policy on assessment. However these vary markedly in terms of scope and detail. Documents are located sometimes within the Teaching and Learning centre area of the websites, but mostly on a separate policy page.

Recurring categories through many universities’ assessment policies, in some form, are:

Scope and purpose of assessment; forms of assessment; assessment load; standard penalties; publication of assessment details; feedback; guidelines for marking; policy on scaling and distribution of grades; consideration of special circumstances; appeals procedure; responsibilities of students, staff, university with regard to assessment.

In doing so, most universities have an underlying philosophy to their assessment policy, spelling out the way in which the structural outcomes of assessment align with their University principles, and/or make a clear statement about the purpose of assessment in general at their University.¹

Most obvious variation in these policies is between which aspects were required and which were deemed up to faculties to determine, and whether the ‘policy’ was mandatory or existed as a set of general ‘principles’. For example, in the Flinders University document, it states:

¹ “[T]his policy is based on the premise that all assessment practices must be aligned with curriculum intentions and measured against externally validated standards and not merely at arriving at a grade. Equally this policy is based on the premise that it is important that through assessment students are encouraged in their education rather than merely pursue grades.” Macquarie University Assessment Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html
“While the following general principles are intended to indicate desirable practices they are not intended to be prescriptive.”

This delineation of required/optional is exemplified through the University of Melbourne’s policy. In one section ‘Determining assessment requirements’, it lists:

Fixed requirements:
- The forms of assessment to be used
- The prescribed size, length or extent of each component of assessment
- The approximate timing of assessment tasks
- The weighting of each component of assessment

Variable requirements:
- The criteria on which these tasks will be graded and marks allocated
- The due date for submission or performance of each component of assessment
- Penalties for late submission of assignments
- Guidelines for breach of word limits on assignments and failure to follow prescribed formats
- The expected date for return for each component of assessment
- Where appropriate, guidelines for a resit of a test or examination

Furthermore, where the policy parameters are drawn in relationship to its practice and procedure also illustrate an area where universities differ. In Macquarie’s Guide to Implementation of Assessment Policies, it states: “The existence of a policy framework is very important for Macquarie, but this alone is not enough. Most important is that we now engage in a systematic process of implementation.”

3. Key areas of note

Beyond stylistic and emphasis differences, discrepancy in assessment policies showed up in three main areas:

a. Grading frameworks and responsibilities;

b. Description and requirements about extent and timeframe of feedback;

c. Description and requirement about timeframe, balance and mode of assessment.

3.1 Grading frameworks and responsibilities

All universities have some reference in their policy about grading, however, there is differentiation in the detail in which this is expressed. Some universities are less regulatory in their requirements around assessment regarding grading. At Flinders, for example,

Assessment should be interpreted in the widest possible context, embracing such areas as determining initial competencies, providing feedback to students on their progress, improving instructions and awarding of grades.

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Such a policy leaves much scope for faculty interpretation and decisions on the ways in which assessment is implemented, and grading allocated. This is further illustrated in the lack of strong policy regarding grading type, where it is left wholly at a local level.

Other universities, however, are much more prescriptive, and provide clear policy direction on the specific conceptual framework for grading. Most notable is the variation in policy about scaling. Some explicitly state against any form of scaling or norm-based assessment. The University of Adelaide states that assessment processes must:

> Ensure an individual student’s marks are determined by reference to their performance against predetermined criteria and standards linked to the specified course learning objectives and not by ranking against the performance of the student cohort in the course.⁶

Others present options for both norm referencing and standard referencing. At Monash:

> When a Chief Examiner determines that scaling of marks is required to ensure equality of outcomes and consistency across different cohorts of students, he/she must provide to the Board of Examiners, together with the recommended marks, an explanation of the variance.⁷

Less prescriptive is Sydney, which urges use of standards-based assessment overall, but does not make it mandatory. At Melbourne, the policy expects (not requires) that the departments/faculties will “monitor and review the distribution of grades awarded in each of their subjects”.⁸

Despite the overall adoption and strong encouragement of criterion-based and standard-based grading of assessments across these universities’ policies, the decision still, in some cases, remains at a faculty-level. However, most universities, even those that allow for some form of scaling occurring at a local level, require a strong justification from units and schools.

Furthermore, in the universities where the criterion-based assessment framework is specified, there is one notable exception on the designation of responsibility for setting criteria. Macquarie’s policy designates more responsibility in this area to executive sections of the university (Senate, Academic Deans), than any other university reviewed. The tendency to leave criteria for grade allocation to the local level (especially to Unit/Course-Coordinators) is a far more common practice.

### 3.2 Extent and timeframes of feedback

All universities specify the requirement of detailed, effective and timely feedback in some form, but there is wide variation in interpretation of the requirement on the primacy of this, and the stated minimum expectations, within the policy framework.

Some universities, such as Monash, are brief in their expectations in this area, stating in the section ‘Feedback’ that:

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The design of the assessment regime must take into account the feedback to be given to students, and in particular the desirability of students receiving feedback on written work before the next assessment is due.9

There are also differences between universities on what is specifically considered ‘timely’ return of feedback. At the University of Melbourne, it merely states that: “Students are entitled to formative and summative feedback about their performance…Comments should indicate to students how they have performed against assessment criteria”.10 The University of Sydney similarly does not spell out the exact parameters of what is deemed timely, except to say that: “Feedback to students is sufficiently timed to allow for remediation where necessary. Feedback to students…is sufficiently detailed to be a useful identification of strengths and deficiencies, yet not so detailed as to discourage self reliance in learning and assessment…”11

Other universities, however, are far more comprehensive, giving not only unequivocal timeframes for particular pieces of assessment, but also presenting criteria for this feedback. The University of Adelaide’s policy states in the section ‘Giving feedback to students’, that staff must:

Ensure all assessment, other than the last assessment in a course is returned within 4 weeks of the deadline for submission, or such earlier period as specified by the relevant school…Ensure constructive feedback on how a student or students can improve is provided after each assessment task except the last one in a course.12

The University of New South Wales’ policy is more prescriptive:

Formative feedback will be provided within three weeks of completion of a task and in a form that will: Assist students in preparing for future tasks, Enable students to make judgements about their learning and how they can improve their learning outcomes, Allow evaluation against explicitly stated assessment criteria and standards.13

In some cases, details about the substance of feedback are supplemented in Good Practice guides, provided by Teaching and Learning centres (see section four).

3.3 Nature, number and balance of assessments

The greatest variation rests in the detailing – or lack thereof – of the nature, load and number of assessments. In respect of assessment methods, policy varies from largely devolved faculty responsibility, to narrow prescription of requirements. At Flinders, for example, the policy that gives wide scope to more local forms of decision making on assessment specificities. It asserts:

Assessment methods should be selected which are appropriate to the objectives of the topic…Consideration should be given to permitting students to choose from optional forms of assessment, provided the alternative forms are consistent with the topic aims and are practically and

12 http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/700/
administratively reasonable. When appropriate to the topic undertaken, choice in assessment forms might allow for the assessment of performance in working situations.\textsuperscript{14}

A similar degree of latitude is exemplified in a different manner by University of Melbourne’s policy, which states that:

This policy does not prescribe with respect to the design of assessment tasks. Subject Coordinators and Examination Boards are well placed to develop sound assessment practices that reflect the characteristics and particular requirements of their subject areas. This document provides a policy framework to support such discipline-specific assessment design and implementation.\textsuperscript{15}

Others, such as Monash, give faculties autonomy in designing assessment (“There is an expectation that discipline areas will draw on assessment research relevant to their field to underpin how this policy is implemented”), but apply detailed and more rigorous attention to the framework of those assessments – what they categorise as Assessment and Implementation Regimes. Some requirements include:

Assessment load: The design of the assessment regime must take into account the workload requirements of the unit which are indicated by credit points associated with the unit…

Weighting of assessment tasks: Unless impractical, there must be at least two assessment tasks for any given unit, with no single task being worthy more than 80% of the total unit assessment.\textsuperscript{16}

While other illustrations include advisory, as well as required, elements:

Chief examiners of first year units offered in a standard semester are encouraged to ensure that at least one assessment task in the unit is submitted and returned by the end of teaching week six of the semester. In a standard semester, due dates for items of in-semester assessment worth 20% or more must be at least two weeks apart.\textsuperscript{17}

Other universities are more prescriptively detailed. The University of Adelaide states in its section ‘Setting assessment tasks and weightings’:

Ensure every course has a variety of types of assessments in accord with the total course assessment limits specified: i) Group assessment tasks: no more than 30%, ii) participation: No more than 10%, iii) Self or peer assessment no more than 10%, iv) Any single item of summative assessment: no more than 70%...Ensure every course contains at least one assessment task that is set, submitted, marked and returned to students by the midpoint of the course.

\textsuperscript{14} http://www.flinders.edu.au/ppmanual/student/assessment2.html
\textsuperscript{15} www.services.unimelb.edu.au/policy/downloads/AssessmentPolicy.pdf
\textsuperscript{16} http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/assessment/assessment-in-coursework-policy.html
\textsuperscript{17} http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/assessment/assessment-in-coursework-policy.html
Ensure that the deadlines for multiple assessment tasks in the same course do not coincide, if those assessment tasks together total more than 50% of the total assessment.18

Such examples demonstrate the wide scope in setting parameters for the actual nature and weighting of assessments current in the sector. There appears, therefore, three main ways in which this can be implemented in a policy: through university responsibility for all aspects (form, number and balance of assessments); through university policy regarding the framework (number, balance) but not form of assessments (i.e., at Monash and Macquarie); policy designating clear structural support for the faculties to decide on these three factors (i.e., Melbourne).

4. Supplementary ‘Good Practice Guides’

‘Good/Best Practice Guides’ are sometimes offered by Teaching and Learning centres at various universities in support of assessment policies. Documents in this area are of uneven detail and useability, but there are notable examples that present excellent concise, user-friendly templates.

These include:

- *Giving Assessment feedback*: Macquarie University19
- *Assessment Review Checklist*: Macquarie University20
- *Good practice guide for developing effective assessment*: Griffith University21
- *Developing Effective Feedback for learning*: Griffith university22
- *Grades*: University of Queensland23

5. Summary

5.1 Conclusion

There are considerable differences in the ways in which the universities reviewed detail, position and frame their policies around assessment, though all have such a policy in one form or another. The discrepancies between universities on key elements of implementation and/or rigor around the responsibilities and oversight of these policies is notable in this area. Key issues in creating such policy seems to lie in the decisions regarding grading and the extent of standardisation across disciplines and faculties; the location of decisions about assessment type, loading and timing at university or local level. Issues around minimum requirements for feedback seem less contentious, and are not rigorously enforced in some instances, in the move towards more detailed feedback requirements, but instead ‘encouraged’ via supporting material through T & L.

Lastly, presentation of the documents proved significant, not only in respect of were user-friendliness and clarity, but in their accessibility. In this regard, the University of Sydney and the University of Melbourne provided the most easy to navigate, logical content procedures of all universities reviewed, and offered two of the most comprehensive documents. (It is not surprising that these are two of the most up-to-date policies as well.)

19 www.mq.edu.au/ltc/about_lt/assess_docs/giving_ass_feedback.pdf
## 5.2 Comparative Table

Yes: specified in University policy  
No: not specified in University policy  
Local: Specified in University policy as a local (faculty) responsibility

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<th>UNSW</th>
<th>Macquarie</th>
<th>Flinders</th>
<th>Adelaide</th>
<th>ANU</th>
<th>Monash</th>
<th>UWA (existing)</th>
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<td>Criteria and standard-based</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C 7
5.3 Appendix: Examples of good practice

26. Preparation of assignments

The following are guidelines for the preparation of assignments for submission. Assignments submitted that do not comply with these guidelines may attract a marking penalty.

26.1. Cover Sheets: Unless otherwise specified, work completed independently should (and all longer assignments must) be submitted accompanied by a coversheet provided by the University. Each coversheet includes a unique identifier that assists with document tracking, and includes a plagiarism declaration that the student signs. Work not accompanied by the University coversheet will not be accepted, with the exception of shorter assignments that are either submitted in person in class, or submitted via subject-specific assignment submission boxes.32

26.2. Format: Unless otherwise specified by the Subject Coordinator, written assignments will be:

- typed;
- identifiable only by the inclusion of the relevant student number on each page. Students’ names (with the exception of shorter assignments submitted in person in class) should not be included in assignments;
- double-spaced;
- presented with margins of at least 2cm (right margin) and 4cm (left margin);
- page-numbered; and;
- if submitted in hard copy, either stapled together or appropriately bound.

Students may also be required to submit assignments in other formats, such as film or works of art, or handwritten solutions to mathematical problems. Subject coordinators must specify the precise requirements of these formats in assessment statements.

26.3. Citation: All referenced material must be acknowledged using an appropriate, consistent system within the document. Some teaching departments will recommend particular style guides specific to the relevant subject area (such as the Australian Guide to Legal Citation for Law students). In the absence of such a recommendation, students should follow the Harvard system.

Assignments with references should include either a reference list or a full bibliography of all works, as specified by the teaching department.

Non-compliance with these requirements may constitute academic misconduct (potential plagiarism) that can attract a range of penalties from deprivation of credit for that work to termination of enrolment. For more information about this, please refer to the policy on academic misconduct.

26.4. Style: The teaching department may specify a style of academic writing appropriate to the discipline or area of study. Written assignments should conform to the specified style, or may attract a marking penalty.

- University of Melbourne, Preparation of Assignments, Assessment Policy, pp.24-25.
2.2.7 Marking

2.2.7.1 Tasks are marked according to the published criteria (such as marking schema and grade descriptors) which have been provided to students when they receive the unit of study outline (as required under the Unit of Study provisions in the Academic Board Resolutions: Management and Evaluation of Coursework Teaching).

2.2.7.2 Decisions which may impact on a student’s progression or graduation do not depend on judgments made by a single marker without review by colleagues for calibration or moderation.

2.2.7.3 Decisions which may impact on a student’s progression or graduation are based solely on the assessments specified for that purpose.

2.2.7.4 When marks from tasks are combined, the methods used are statistically and educationally defensible.

- University of Sydney, Marking, Principles, Criteria and Responsibilities for Assessment, p. 10.
### Implementation of the Assessment Regime

1. The implementation of the assessment regime of a unit is a coordinated process under the direction of the Chief Examiner or nominee who must ensure that all assessment tasks are aligned with unit objectives, content and learning methods and that criteria by which the student work will be judged are defined and applied.

2. The Chief Examiner must ensure that all major assessment tasks are scrutinised by one or more other relevant members of academic staff who will validate compliance with the principles of good assessment practice outlined in the [University policy](#).

3. The Chief Examiner must establish a unit management group comprising key teaching staff from all modes, streams and locations involved in offering the unit to ensure that the assessment tasks and standards are equivalent across all modes, streams and locations. In particular, the final examination must be identical for all students enrolled in the offering of the unit, unless an exception to this rule is granted by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education).

4. The scheduling of assessment tasks

4.1. Chief Examiners of first year units offered in a standard semester are encouraged to ensure that at least one assessment task in the unit is submitted and returned by the end of teaching week six of the semester.

4.2. In a standard semester, due dates for items of in-semester assessment worth 20% or more must be at least two weeks apart.

4.3. In units that have final examinations and are offered in a standard semester:

- assignment deadlines must be set for the first 12 weeks of the semester
- all new assessable material must be introduced in the first 12 weeks of the semester; and
- class tests must be held in the first 12 weeks of the semester

4.4. In units that have no examination and are offered in a standard semester:

- where the final assessment task
- is weighted at 30% or more of the unit assessment, and
- does not consist of a supervised research project

it must be due during the official university examination period for the relevant teach period (if any); and

- all other assessment tasks must be set within the first 12 weeks of the semester

- Monash University, Implementation of Assessment Regime, *Unit Assessment Procedures*. 
**Dissemination of Information to Students**

1. Chief Examiners must ensure that students are provided with assessment details in the unit guide by the end of week one of the teaching period, including:

1.1. The assessment regime;

1.2. Topic release dates (where relevant);

1.3. Word limits (where applicable);

1.4. Contribution of each assessment task to the final result;

1.5. Submission and presentation requirements;

1.6. Duration of tests and examinations (where applicable);

1.7. Criteria by which performance will be judged. Only broad criteria are required at the start of the teaching period; further details can be provided at the time of handing out the individual assessment tasks;

1.8. Submission dates;

1.9. Estimated dates for the return of assessment tasks;

1.10. Instances of assessment tasks where some aspects can be negotiated (for example, allowing students to nominate topics). The procedures for this negotiation must be clearly stated;

1.11. Details of any hurdle requirements including the number of attempts allowed, and the consequences for the final result if these are not achieved;

1.12. Where there are group-based tasks, details of how the individual and group performance will be judged (see Implementation of the Assessment Regime, Group Work);

1.13. When a unit is listed as being taught at more than one level, the distinction between the assessment at each level;

1.14. A description of the types of feedback the students can expect in relation to their performance in the unit.

- Monash University, Dissemination of Information to Students, *Unit Assessment Procedures*
Giving assessment feedback

What is feedback on assessment?

Feedback on students’ assessment performance is a vital element in their learning. Its purpose is to justify students how their mark or grade was derived, as well as to identify and reward specific qualities in their work, to recommend aspects needing improvement, and to guide students on what steps to take. Feedback defines for students what their teacher thinks is important for a topic or a subject. At its best, feedback should:

- guide students to adapt and adjust their learning strategies
- guide teachers to adapt and adjust teaching to accommodate students’ learning needs
- be a pivotal feature of learning and assessment design, not an add-on ritual
- focus around course and unit learning outcomes
- guide students to become independent and self-reflective learners and their own critics
- acknowledge the developmental nature of learning.

Issues and problems with assessment feedback

Students often report having an unsatisfactory experience of getting feedback on their learning and assessment, and in particular that they would like more feedback, and they would like it to be more useful and usable.

Staff often report that they spend a lot of time providing valuable feedback but cannot see the evidence of students learning from it.

These are amongst the most commonly reported concerns of students:

- Feedback is too late to influence learning.
  This concern is often the result of the teacher providing assessment feedback too late in the unit, leaving little or no opportunity for the student to learn from it and adjust their approaches accordingly. Assessment feedback that is too late represents wasted effort by the academic, and wasted opportunity for students unless they are required to act upon it.

- Feedback is cryptic.
  When feedback consists of pithy and cryptic responses by the marker (for example, “more”, “good”, “what’s this?”, “link?”, or simply ticks and crosses or punctuation marks), students are left to guess whether it is meant to be positive or negative, whether and how the feedback is related to their mark, and what they might do to improve their learning performance.

- Feedback provides no explanation for action.
  When feedback consists mainly of editing of grammar or spelling, and provides little or no explanation for them to act on, students report that they are often left not knowing what they have done well, what they need to change and why they have achieved the grade they have.

- Good students miss out.
  It is often students who do well who get the least feedback, often receiving little more than “excellent” on their work without gaining an insight into what they have done well and what they could do to enhance their performance. Often the opportunities to encourage a good student to perform even better are missed by not providing useful feedback.

- Feedback is “one-off”.
  Many assessment tasks are “one-off”, intended to demonstrate students’ achievement for a
summative grade, but lacking the opportunity for them to try again based on feedback from the first try. Such tasks do not encourage risk-taking, experimentation, creativity and practice.

**Feedback is not progressive.**
If assessment tasks and feedback do not acknowledge the progression of learning, students do not get a sense of where they are in achieving progress towards longer-term learning goals and what they have yet to achieve.

Academic staff also report concerns regarding their experience in giving assessment feedback, including the following:

**Preparing feedback is time-consuming.**
Preparing and giving useful assessment feedback can be very time-consuming for academics, particularly in large classes, and its value is completely negated if students don’t read it or act on it.

**Giving feedback can be repetitive and unproductive work.**
It is not uncommon for academics to find themselves giving the same or very similar feedback to many students; nor is it uncommon to give the same feedback to repeated efforts by one student, with little change occurring over time in student performance.

**Feedback is too late to influence teaching.**
Just as students express concerns when feedback is provided too late for them to benefit from it, academic staff lose the benefit that early assessment and feedback to students provides for them to adjust their teaching as a result of students’ performance.

**Characteristics of effective feedback on assessment**

- **Feedback should be part of the assessment design,** with the processes of receiving and responding to feedback built into and made explicit in subsequent learning experiences and grading.
- **Feedback should be constructive,** so that students feel encouraged and motivated to improve their practice and contributing to positive self-esteem as learners.
- **Feedback should be timely,** so that students can use it for subsequent learning and work to submit.
- **Feedback should be prompt,** so that students can recall what they did and thought at the time.
- **Feedback should be justified,** by being based on clear and explicit explanations of performance against stated criteria and standards.
- **Feedback should be supportive of learning,** that students have clear indications of how to improve their performance in a development progression.
- **Feedback should be focused,** on achievement not effort; and on the work, not the student.
- **Feedback should be expressed in terms of learning outcomes,** so that students can relate their assessment to the learning outcomes seeing how they can close the gap between their current and their desired achievement of the outcomes.
- **Feedback should be consequential,** so that it engages students by requiring them to attend the feedback as part of the grading.
- **Feedback should be focused on independence,** so that it leads students to being capable of assessing their own work, by facilitating the development of critical reflection and self-assessment.
- **Feedback should be efficient,** so that staff can manage it effectively.
- **Feedback is NOT editing, spell-checking or grammar-checking.** Students should be required to edit their own work, and where possible to resubmit edited work based on feedback about what needs to be done.
Assessment Review Checklist

The Macquarie University Assessment Policy provides an opportunity to review the design of your units as part of the Curriculum Renewal process.

This checklist below was compiled by the Faculty of Business and Economics and LTC to assist you in reviewing your assessment design. Although some components are intended as guidelines, they are intended to help your program achieve best practice in the area of assessment. Visit the LTC website for more information about the policy and support in implementing any aspects you are unclear about.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

☐ There are 3 or more assessment tasks.
☐ The assessment tasks and methods are diverse and involve multiple form or modes of performance.
☐ A low risk diagnostic test that provides feedback to both the student and the academic staff is due early in the semester (for example, by week 4).
☐ The assessment tasks align with the learning outcomes as detailed in the unit outline.
☐ The assessment articulates the expected performance standards to students, which are used for formative function.
☐ The complexity and challenge of the assessment tasks is appropriate for the level of the unit i.e first year v final year.
☐ The design and wording of assessments address issues of equity and inclusiveness to accommodate the diversity of the student body.

EXAMINATIONS (if applicable)

☐ The educational rationale for the examination is stated in the unit outline.
☐ The final examination is worth 60% or less of the total assessment.
☐ The exam is designed to measure students’ knowledge and skills as aligned with the unit learning outcomes.

PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE

☐ The justification for having participation as an assessment component is explained, in relation to the learning outcomes, in the unit outline.
☐ The basis on which participation is assessed is fully and clearly described in the unit outline.
☐ Attendance is not a component of assessment.

GROUP TASKS

☐ The justification for having group tasks as an assessment component is explained, in relation to the learning outcomes, in the unit outline.
☐ Group assessment tasks in which the contributions of individual students cannot be identified are graded on a pass/fail basis.
☐ Group assessment tasks in which the contributions of individual students cannot be identified do not constitute more than 30% of the total assessment, unless the unit is on pass/fail basis only.
The Restructure of
Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT)

Professor Sid Nair
Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning
University of Western Australia
May 2010
Overview
The first version of student feedback to teachers was developed in the late 80s as a formative tool to assist teachers to obtain student feedback so as to affect improvement. Since its introduction a number of concerns (see Appendix A) were raised on the tool and effectiveness of the tool for quality improvements in teaching (Orrell, J., 2009; Stubbs et.al, 2008). This paper presents a framework for the redesign of the survey tool so as to achieve a systematic approach across the university which in turn will provide a number of benefits to the teaching and university community.

Currently, UWA is the only Go8 University that does not have a systematic validated questionnaire to measure teaching effectiveness. The teaching community will gain significantly from having a systematic approach to measuring teaching effectiveness. These gains include the teacher’s ability

- to monitor his/her growth by comparing their performance of the same items over time;
- to use such information (including time series) to support applications for promotion, awards and tenure;
- to compare their performance on many levels (for example within the school, faculty, campus and university); and,
- to learn from benchmarking information from various universities to improve the quality of teaching (including discipline specific approaches).

As a result of the proposed changes the teaching community will have for the first time validated items that will aid in tapping into the resources from other universities nationally and internationally to approaches to good teaching practices via any benchmarking exercise.

Questionnaire Design
The revised SPOT survey will consist of two parts.

Part 1
Part one is constructed of 12 core items and 2 open ended questions. All core items once approved are maintained for at least five years so that trends can be analysed. The advantage of holding items at a constant for a fixed time period is that teachers would be able to monitor and identify trends for teacher development and enhancements.

The items selected for the new SPOT will be based on three factors:
1. research supporting teaching effectiveness;
2. an ALTC study of the most common items used in many of the Australian universities; and,
3. the needs of UWA (See Appendix B).

Part two of the questionnaire will be thematic in nature with the inclusion of items in this section to be determined either at the university or faculty level. Thematic items are intended to be used to investigate areas of particular interest for monitoring strategic initiatives, or aspects for further investigation or development.

Table 1 describes the proposed items and structure of the questionnaire:
Table 1: Proposed items for the new generation SPOT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Qualitative Items**

1. What are the best aspects of teaching that you experienced in this class?
2. What areas (if any) of teaching do you consider need improvement?

**Part II – Thematic Items**

To be determined by Faculty/University

---

**Part II**

Part two of the questionnaire allows for the opportunity to investigate specific areas of interest for further development. This section of the questionnaire will be thematic in nature with the items in this section to be determined either at the university or faculty level. Thematic items are intended to be used to investigate areas of particular interest for monitoring strategic initiatives, or aspects for further investigation or development. Examples of areas that can be further investigated are accessibility, teaching strategies, teaching materials, etc. Thematic items are expected to have a shorter life span as these optional items are designed to ascertain information to change specific aspects of teaching practice of particular relevance to a faculty or university as a whole. The recommended time frame is to hold these optional thematic items for a period of 3
years before the introduction of a new theme. This timeframe allows the university to monitor any changes as a result of interventions. Thematic items should be included in the second or subsequent years of operation of the new SPOT. This allows the results to be analysed and reported so that an informed decision can be made on areas than may need further investigation at the university.

**Administration/Reporting**
No immediate changes to the current paper based administration is proposed though CATL will investigate an online approach as an option for those teachers who may want to avail themselves to the option of web based administration.

Reports will be provided to individuals as is the current practice.

With the move to a common set of items, it will be possible to produce aggregated reports from the SPOT data. These will be reported at aggregated levels only (eg by school, program of study, faculty, campus, university, year of course, size of class, percentile aggregates). As aggregate results become available, individual reports will be enhanced so that results of the individual will be able to be reported with the discipline and/or faculty aggregated data in the same report. This gives the teacher immediate contextual information of his/her performance compared to peers. In addition it provides supervisors and promotion committees contextual peer information on the individual’s performance.

**Accessibility**
There will be no change in accessibility of individual reports in order to maintain the current level of confidentiality of reports.

**Support and Training**
To provide the necessary training to promote the engagement of teachers with the evaluation data, the Centre for Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) will develop:

- a guide to interpreting the evaluation results to aid the teacher to understand his/her report, and,
- workshops will be tailored for all staff in how to read and use SPOT reports and track changes over time.

**Time Frame**
Table 2 outlines a recommended time frame for the changes and implementation of the new SPOT survey. The advantages of implementing the changes within the recommended timeframe is that there will be considerable aggregated data available prior to the launch of the new courses in 2012 which in turn will give the university another avenue to monitor the implementation of the New Courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Item development</td>
<td>By end of April 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Feedback, refinement and approval of</td>
<td>May - July 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>committees/Faculties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Communication to staff of changes</td>
<td>August-September 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Launch of new SPOT</td>
<td>January 2011 onwards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix A: Concerns of SPOT

Table 3: Concerns on SPOT Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire Structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1  | Too much choice and flexibility | • More than 300 items in the database to choose from to develop a questionnaire.  
• Items in each questionnaire are chosen by the teacher from the item bank.  
• Teachers have the ability to add their own items in the questionnaire apart from the database. (currently 7000 items) |
| 2  | Validity and reliability    | • Items in the item bank have not been validated.                                                                                     |
| 3  | Mission and Values          | • Items do not reflect UWA’s mission and values.                                                                                       |
|    | Use of SPOT                 |                                                                                                                                          |
| 1  | Systematic use for improvement | • No institutional evidence that the data is being used by teachers to effect change.  
• Survey results are only viewable by the teacher, who may/may not choose to share their information with others. In some faculties/schools this information is routinely shared |
| 2  | Use for PDR and promotions  | • Academic staff are expected to include their SPOT data and other evaluation data in their portfolio for annual review and applications for promotion. |
| 3  | Usage                       | • Usage is patchy with some areas using the questionnaire extensively with others not strongly involved the use of the questionnaire.    |
| 4  | Closing the loop            | • No evidence that students are informed that changes have occurred as a result of their feedback, (though this is recommended in the unit template)  
• No evidence that students are shown their (aggregate quantitative) feedback. |
Appendix B: Questionnaire Structure and Literature

The new generation SPOT survey will consist of two parts. Part one is constructed of 11 core quantitative items and 2 open ended questions. The multidimensional approach of constructing questionnaires with quantitative and qualitative measurements is supported by many scholarly works (eg, Lattuca & Doagal-Goldman, 2007; Ory, 2001). Harper and Kuh (2007) further highlight the importance of qualitative measures as such measures can often bring to light issues that cannot emerge through traditional quantitative means.

The quantitative items chosen /developed for the new generation of SPOT is based on research supporting that teaching effectiveness is best measured in a multidimensional way rather than by questions seeking broad responses to the teacher in general (eg Marsh, 1987; Marsh and Roche, 1997). The design is further based on two additional factors - a study of the most common items used in many of the Australian universities (Barrie, Ginns & Symons, 2007) and the needs of UWA. In addition, the proposed items in the core section of the survey has the added advantage of being applicable to all types of teaching – lecturing, group work, tutoring, online, distance, etc, thus culminating to one teacher questionnaire for all. Table 5 summarises the recommended items along with a synopsis of universities that use similar or identical items in their survey.

The proposed survey items shown in Table 4 fall within nine specific domains of teaching: clarity of instruction, stimulation of interest, interest of teaching, interaction/engagement, teaching approach, availability or accessibility, feedback, concern for students and values/educational principles specific to UWA. The tenth domain is an overall indicator of the effectiveness of the teacher. Global rating items have been found to be equally if not more valuable in assessment of teaching (eg, Algozinne et al., 2004; Abrami, 2001). Domains covered in other teaching related surveys is reported in Table 6.

Research in teaching and learning has consistently shown that teacher behaviour to be integral to effective teaching and student learning. The categories of teaching behaviour emerge from the perspective that teaching is multidimensional. Supporting this is the work from a number of researchers (Centra, 1993; Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010; Feldman, 1989; Marsh, 1987). These works highlight that there is much diversity in terms of the number of dimensions or possible areas of measurement of teaching behaviours that aid student learning. Some of the common areas highlighted in the research literature are; clarity/communication skills, teacher student interaction/support, organisation and planning, learning/value, teacher enthusiasm; individual rapport, group interests, breadth of coverage; examinations/grading; assignments/readings and workload/difficulty.

Barrie et. al’s (2007) work though more attuned to the practices and approaches utilised in Australian universities (39 in total including all Go8 Universities) reported similar findings. However, this research categorised student evaluation of teaching measurements into six broad categories encompassing many of the findings of the scholarly work reported earlier. These categories were Teacher predisposition/personality, course preparation and organisation, approaches to teaching and teaching strategies; quality of learning outcomes, learning climate and assessment.
The proposed items in the new SPOT fall within the broad classification proposed by Barrie et. al (2007). Assessment an important issue is captured at two levels, at the unit and teaching levels. The current SURF questionnaire captures information on the structure of the assessment and the tie in with the objectives of the unit (see Table 5). Feedback is the other component and falls in the broader category of quality of learning outcomes. These items in particular were included in the design of the questionnaire as this an area that has been highlighted over the years by students of UWA for specific attention. UWA is not alone in this area as other research work show feedback to be integral to effective student learning (Ramsden, 1992, 1998). Poulos and Mahony (2008) not only reinforced this finding but indicated that the effectiveness of feedback extends beyond types of delivery and timeliness, and that feedback plays an integral role in the transition of students from senior secondary studies to first year university. The studies goes on further to note that the credibility and hence impact of feedback is influenced by student perceptions of the provider.

Part 2 of the questionnaire is thematic in nature but the inclusion of items in this section is restricted either at the university or faculty level. Thematic items are to investigate in detail areas for further development. Examples of thematic areas are assessment, accessibility, workloads, teaching materials, etc.

Survey Responses
A 5-point Likert scale will be maintained in the response categories of Strong Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Agree. Also included in the response categories would be the option of ‘Unable to Comment’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Broad categories</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Proposed Items</th>
<th>Current UWA Core items</th>
<th>Go8 University items</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Approaches to teaching and Learning strategies</td>
<td>Clarity of Instruction</td>
<td>The teacher explained important concepts/ideas in ways that I could understand</td>
<td>…the learning objectives have been made clear</td>
<td>UNSW The lecturer communicated effectively with students&lt;br&gt;Monash I could comprehend the language and vocabulary used by the lecturer.&lt;br&gt;UQ Dr [X] was good at explaining things&lt;br&gt;UQ The lecturer communicated effectively with students (eg he/she explained things clearly)&lt;br&gt;USyd I found the lecturer's speech easy to understand</td>
<td>Murdoch This teacher communicates effectively with students&lt;br&gt;Edith Cowan The lecturer communicated clearly&lt;br&gt;Curtin [Dr. X] communicates clearly&lt;br&gt;Queen’s The instructor presented the material clearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stimulation of Interest</td>
<td>The teacher stimulates my interest in the subject</td>
<td>I have been motivated to work hard</td>
<td>UNSW This lecturer stimulated my interest in the subject matter he/she was teaching.&lt;br&gt;UQ Dr. [X] stimulated my interest in field of study&lt;br&gt;Uni of Adelaide The teaching stimulated my interest in this unit&lt;br&gt;USyd The lecturer stimulated my interest in the topic area&lt;br&gt;Monash My attention or interest was sustained during each lecture.</td>
<td>Curtin [Dr. X] is enthusiastic teaching this unit.&lt;br&gt;Murdoch This teacher demonstrates enthusiasm for the subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Broad categories</td>
<td>Dimension</td>
<td>Proposed Items</td>
<td>Current UWA Optional Default items</td>
<td>Go8 University items</td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I am encouraged to participate in classroom and/or online discussions when required</td>
<td>UNSW</td>
<td>The lecturer encouraged student input and participation during classes.</td>
<td>Murdoch This teacher encourages student participation in classes and/or groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UQ</td>
<td>Dr. [X] encouraged student input</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>* Broad categories</td>
<td>Interaction/ Engagement</td>
<td>*3  Interaction/ Engagement</td>
<td>*3  Interaction/ Engagement</td>
<td>*3  Interaction/ Engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teacher predisposition/ personality</td>
<td>Interest of teaching/ Attitude</td>
<td>The teacher demonstrates enthusiasm in teaching the subject</td>
<td>The teacher has shown enthusiasm for teaching the subject.</td>
<td>The lecturer appeared enthusiastic about the task of lecturing.</td>
<td>Murdoch This teacher demonstrates enthusiasm for the subject. [Dr. X] Is enthusiastic in teaching this unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Monash</td>
<td>The lecturer was enthusiastic about the topic area</td>
<td>Curtin This teacher seemed enthusiastic about teaching the class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>USyd</td>
<td></td>
<td>Macquarie This teacher used techniques (group work, examples, online participation, etc) that increased my understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Course Preparation and Organisation</td>
<td>Teaching approach</td>
<td>A variety of teaching techniques (group work, examples, online participation, etc) was used by the teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Macquarie This teacher used techniques (group work, examples, online participation, etc) that increased my understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Broad categories</td>
<td>Dimension</td>
<td>Proposed Items</td>
<td>Current UWA Optional Default items</td>
<td>Go8 University items</td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6*</td>
<td>Learning Climate</td>
<td>Concern for Students</td>
<td>I found the teacher helpful when I encountered difficulties with the lecture/unit.</td>
<td>The teacher has shown concern for students</td>
<td>Monash</td>
<td>There was opportunity for students to clarify possible misunderstandings of lecture content, either during each lecture or at some time shortly afterwards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7*</td>
<td>Values/Principles specific to UWA</td>
<td>I found the teacher sensitive to the needs of students from diverse groups (eg gender, race, religion, disability, etc)</td>
<td>The teacher treated me with respect</td>
<td>The teaching catered for students’ diversity (gender, cultural background, disability, etc)</td>
<td>UQ</td>
<td>[Dr. X] treated students with respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>I had sufficient access to my teacher for consultation (eg email, online, face-to-face, telephone).</td>
<td>I have found the teacher to be available for consultation apart from formal class times.</td>
<td>UNSW Monash</td>
<td>The lecturer was generally helpful to students. It was possible for me to consult the lecturer out of class about each lecture.</td>
<td>Curtin Queen’s [Dr. X] is approachable. The instructor was available for discussion outside class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: Survey Structure for Student Feedback on the Quality of Teaching (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*10</th>
<th>Quality of learning outcomes</th>
<th>Feedback/Assessment</th>
<th>I received constructive feedback on my work.</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>UNSW</th>
<th>The lecturer provided me feedback to help me learn. During lectures, the lecturer provided useful feedback on student work.</th>
<th>Curtin</th>
<th>[Dr. X] provides useful feedback.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*11</td>
<td></td>
<td>The feedback I received was provided in time to help me improve.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Uni of Adelaide</td>
<td>The feedback on my work was provided promptly</td>
<td>Murdoch</td>
<td>Work marked by this teacher is returned in a reasonable time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Overall rating</td>
<td>Overall, I found the teacher to be an effective teacher.</td>
<td>UNSW Uni of Adelaide USyd</td>
<td>Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of this lecturer’s teaching. The unit was well taught. Overall my lecturer effectively supported my learning</td>
<td>Curtin Queens</td>
<td>[Dr. X] is an effective teacher Overall, the instructor is an effective teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Survey Structure for Student Feedback on the Quality of Teaching (Cont’d)

**Qualitative Items**
1. What are the best aspects of teaching that you experienced in this class?
2. What areas (if any) of teaching do you consider needs improvement?

**Part II: Thematic items**
1. To be determined by Faculty/University
2.
3.

*reflect aspects UWA missions and values*
Table 5: Dimensions measured in the SURF Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>It was clear what I was expected to learn in this unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>The assessment requirements were clearly stated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The assessment tasks were closely linked to the unit objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>The unit was well organised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of required Materials</td>
<td>The learning resources (handouts, text, web resources, etc) were adequate for my study in the unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall unit rating</td>
<td>Overall, this unit was a good educational experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Administration and Reporting

Administration
No immediate changes to the current paper based administration is proposed though CATL will develop an online approach as an option for those teachers who might want to avail themselves to web based administration.

Reporting
A variety of aggregated reports will be made available to help the teacher to understand his/her performance (See Table 6):

Table 6: Accessibility Mapping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Report Type</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Individual Reports</td>
<td>Provided to individuals as is the current practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aggregate Reports - School, Faculty, University and Course level</td>
<td>All university staff. University Restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Small and large class aggregate reports/discipline, year level</td>
<td>All university staff. University Restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Percentile Aggregates</td>
<td>All University Staff. University Restricted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation and Training
To provide the necessary training to promote the engagement of teachers with the evaluation data the Centre for Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) will develop:

- a guide to interpreting the evaluation results to aid the teacher to understand his/her report, and,
- workshops will be tailored for all staff in how to read and use SPOT reports.

Supporting this is the work of Marsh (2007) and Goldschmid (1978) where they found that evaluation data alone rarely brought about changes in teaching behaviours as many teachers are not trained to analyse and interpret their ratings.

Closing the Loop
To achieve the best possible outcome, it will be advantageous to have

- a section in unit outlines where teachers report back to the class each time it is offered what has changed as a result of the teaching feedback that he/she received the last time the unit was taught;
- aggregate teaching evaluations by school, faculty, course and university are made available on the web to students in the university; and,
- improvement plans be made available to students.
Appendix D: References


Orrell, J (August, 2009). A review of evaluation of teaching at University of Western Australia.


Grades at UWA, 2009

Institutional Research Unit, Planning Services
The University of Western Australia
Grades at UWA, 2009

Introduction

This report presents the number and percentage of grades given in 2313 units taught at UWA during 2009.

Grades are presented separately for the 1403 small units (fewer than 30 students) and the 910 large units (30 or more students). Grades are also presented by unit level, categorised as 1, 2, 3 or 4+ according to the first digit of the unit code, e.g., ITAL2103 is Level 2, and MINE4106 and PUBH8752 are Level 4+.

A breakdown of the number and percentage of units by unit size, faculty and unit level is given in the two tables below. It can be seen that most small units at UWA are at Level 4+ and that large units are distributed more evenly across the four levels.

Table 1. Number of SMALL UNITS (fewer than 30 students) by faculty and level, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4+</th>
<th>Total n</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, Landscape &amp; Visual Arts</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business School</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>154</td>
<td></td>
<td>167</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering, Computing &amp; Mathematics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life &amp; Physical Sciences</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine, Dentistry &amp; Health Sciences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural &amp; Agricultural Sciences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total n</strong></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>1403</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total %</strong></td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Number of LARGE UNITS (30 or more students) by faculty and level, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4+</th>
<th>Total n</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, Landscape &amp; Visual Arts</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business School</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
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<td>Engineering, Computing &amp; Mathematics</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life &amp; Physical Sciences</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine, Dentistry &amp; Health Sciences</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural &amp; Agricultural Sciences</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total n</strong></td>
<td>183</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total %</strong></td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distributions of grades for all levels combined are shown below in Chart 1 and Table 3 (small units) and Chart 2 and Table 4 (large units). Subsequent charts and tables show the distributions of grades separately for each unit level.

The charts show pass grades only; the tables provide more detailed information, including Fail grades.
Brief summary of the distributions

The distribution of grades is different in small and large units. Overall, the percentage of Distinctions and Higher Distinctions (D+HD) is greater in small units (66%) than in large units (46%). Faculties differ significantly in the percentage of D+HD: among small units, the percentage of D+HD ranges from 52% (Law) to 75% (MDHS) and among large units from 37% (LAW) to 69% (EDU). The percentage of fail grades in large units differs between faculties, in small units ranging from 1% (MDHS) to 6% (Law) and in large units ranging from 1% (MDHS) to 12% (ECM).

Grades tend to increase with level. Amongst small units the percentage of D+HD increases from 55% at Level 1 to 71% at Level 4+. Amongst large units the percentage of D+HD increases from 40% at Level 1 to 60% at Level 4+. In both small and large units the proportion of Fail grades decreases from Level 1 to Level 4+.

Considering only the combinations of unit size, faculty and unit level with at least 10 units, there is a considerable range in the percentage of D+HD, from 34% (in the 30 large Level 1 units in ECM) to 79% (in the 178 small Level 4+ units in AHSS); the percentage of Fail grades ranges from 1% to 17% (the latter being in the 30 large Level 1 units in ECM).
Chart 1. Percentage distribution of grades by faculty, for small units (fewer than 30 students), 2009 (excluding fail grades)

Table 3: Distribution of grades by faculty, for small units (fewer than 30 students), 2009 (all units, all grades)
Table 4: Distribution of grades by faculty, for large units (30 or more students), 2009 (all units, all grades)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>No. of units</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, Landscape &amp; Visual Arts</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>374</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>1189</td>
<td>4148</td>
<td>4792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business School</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>1604</td>
<td>3906</td>
<td>7372</td>
<td>6580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering, Computing &amp; Mathematics</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>2372</td>
<td>3596</td>
<td>5278</td>
<td>4966</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>1206</td>
<td>3945</td>
<td>2515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life &amp; Physical Sciences</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>1396</td>
<td>3187</td>
<td>5086</td>
<td>5125</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicine, Dentistry &amp; Health Sciences</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>3143</td>
<td>4260</td>
</tr>
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<td>Natural &amp; Agricultural Sciences</td>
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<td>250</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>1466</td>
<td>1570</td>
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<tr>
<td>UWA</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>7216</td>
<td>15163</td>
<td>31934</td>
<td>31745</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 3. Percentage distribution of grades by faculty, for small units (fewer than 30 students), 2009 - Level 1 only (excluding fail grades)

Table 5: Distribution of grades by faculty, for small units (fewer than 30 students), 2009 (level 1 units only, all grades)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>CR</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, Landscape &amp; Visual Arts</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
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<td>Engineering, Computing &amp; Mathematics</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life &amp; Physical Sciences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine, Dentistry &amp; Health Sciences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural &amp; Agricultural Sciences</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
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<td>UWA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>62</td>
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</table>
Table 6: Distribution of grades by faculty, for small units (fewer than 30 students), 2009 (level 2 units only, all grades)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
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<th>Grade F</th>
<th>Grade P</th>
<th>Grade CR</th>
<th>Grade D</th>
<th>Grade HD</th>
<th>Grade F</th>
<th>Grade P</th>
<th>Grade CR</th>
<th>Grade D</th>
<th>Grade HD</th>
<th>Grade D + HD</th>
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<tr>
<td>Architecture, Landscape &amp; Visual Arts</td>
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<td>8.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business School</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>43.2</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
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<td>64.3</td>
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<td>14.0</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>55.9</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life &amp; Physical Sciences</td>
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<td>16.6</td>
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<td>Medicine, Dentistry &amp; Health Sciences</td>
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<td>31.9</td>
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<td>UWA</td>
<td>154</td>
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<td>11.3</td>
<td>28.0</td>
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<td>18.8</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Chart 5. Percentage distribution of grades by faculty, for small units (fewer than 30 students), 2009 - Level 3 only (excluding fail grades)

Table 7: Distribution of grades by faculty, for small units (fewer than 30 students), 2009 (level 3 units only, all grades)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>No. of units</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, Landscape &amp; Visual Arts</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>CR</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</td>
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<td>8.5</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>41.5</td>
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<td>33.3</td>
<td>24.4</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>33</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life &amp; Physical Sciences</td>
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<td>6.6</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>34.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>27</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural &amp; Agricultural Sciences</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
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<td>47.6</td>
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Table 8: Distribution of grades by faculty, for small units (fewer than 30 students), 2009 (level 4+ units only, all grades)

<table>
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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>CR</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>HD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, Landscape &amp; Visual Arts</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
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<td>Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
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<td>Business School</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering, Computing &amp; Mathematics</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life &amp; Physical Sciences</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>573</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicine, Dentistry &amp; Health Sciences</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>313</td>
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<td>Natural &amp; Agricultural Sciences</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>66</td>
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<td>186</td>
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<td>3478</td>
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</table>
Chart 7. Percentage distribution of grades by faculty, for large units (30 or more students), 2009 - Level 1 only (excluding fail grades)

Table 9: Distribution of grades by faculty, for large units (30 or more students), 2009 (level 1 units only, all grades)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>No. of units</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Architecture, Landscape &amp; Visual Arts</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>CR</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>HD</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
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<td>Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</td>
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<td>137</td>
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<td>490</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>9.5</td>
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<td>2045</td>
<td>1606</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>457</td>
<td>1304</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<td>Life &amp; Physical Sciences</td>
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<td>2201</td>
<td>1922</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural &amp; Agricultural Sciences</td>
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<td>309</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWA</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>3996</td>
<td>6679</td>
<td>11290</td>
<td>10078</td>
<td>4712</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Report No. 10/23 Institutional Research Unit, April 2010
Chart 8. Percentage distribution of grades by faculty, for large units (30 or more students), 2009 - Level 2 only (excluding fail grades)

Table 10: Distribution of grades by faculty, for large units (30 or more students), 2009 (level 2 units only, all grades)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>No. of units</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, Landscape &amp; Visual Arts</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
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<td>Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>2042</td>
<td>2278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business School</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>1412</td>
<td>2580</td>
<td>2176</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering, Computing &amp; Mathematics</td>
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<td>443</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>1278</td>
<td>1163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
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<td>67</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life &amp; Physical Sciences</td>
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<td>494</td>
<td>1005</td>
<td>1572</td>
<td>1345</td>
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<td>223</td>
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<td>274</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWA</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>2067</td>
<td>4497</td>
<td>9347</td>
<td>8849</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 9. Percentage distribution of grades by faculty, for large units (30 or more students), 2009 - Level 3 only (excluding fail grades)

Table 11: Distribution of grades by faculty, for large units (30 or more students), 2009 (level 3 units only, all grades)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>No. of units</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, Landscape &amp; Visual Arts</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business School</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>1734</td>
<td>1088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life &amp; Physical Sciences</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>1003</td>
<td>1288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine, Dentistry &amp; Health Sciences</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural &amp; Agricultural Sciences</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWA</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>2744</td>
<td>7108</td>
<td>6677</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Report No. 10/23 Institutional Research Unit, April 2010
Table 12: Distribution of grades by faculty, for large units (30 or more students), 2009 (level 4+ units only, all grades)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>No. of units</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>HD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>HD</th>
<th>Grade D + HD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, Landscape &amp; Visual Arts</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>376</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>1338</td>
<td>1338</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
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<td>253</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>409</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>409</td>
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<td>13.3</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>53.4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>23</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>206</td>
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<td>17.1</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life &amp; Physical Sciences</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine, Dentistry &amp; Health Sciences</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>367</td>
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<td>2288</td>
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<td>7.1</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural &amp; Agricultural Sciences</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td>15.0</td>
<td>55.0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2365</td>
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<td>1243</td>
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<td>6141</td>
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<td>8.7</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>59.8</td>
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