CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

University Assessment Policy and Principles for Taught Programmes

(Effective from Semester A 2024/25)

Updated in November 2024

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GLOSSARY

Academic Regulations ("AR")	Regulations made by the University Senate to govern student progress through taught programmes leading to awards approved by the University Senate.
Academic Regulations and Records Office ("ARRO")	ARRO handles student record matters relating to Bachelor's Degree and Associate Degree students.
Academic Staff	All persons, whether full-time or part-time, of whatever rank, designation, title or description involved in the delivery and assessment of student learning whether graduate or postgraduate. For the purpose of this policy it includes Postgraduate Teaching Assistants.
Academic Unit(s) ("AU(s)") (Home Academic Unit)	An academic unit refers to an academic department, college or school. A student's home academic unit is the department/college/school offering the degree or home major in which he/she is enrolled.
Assessment Tasks	The tests, coursework, examinations and other activities undertaken to assess students' progress through courses and to assign final grades.
Assessment Panel	University bodies responsible for assigning grades to students for their courses.
Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies ("SGS")	SGS handles student record matters relating to Master's, Professional Doctorate and Research Degrees.
Course	The basic units of instruction into which students are registered and for which grades may be assigned. Each course is identified by a unique course code which is composed of a letter code and a numeric code. The first digit of the numeric code indicates the course's level of academic difficulty. University courses are approved for inclusion in the course catalogue.
Course Leader	A Course Leader is appointed by the Head or Dean of an academic unit for each course offered by the academic unit or by the Provost for each course offered by an academic support unit, with responsibility for the delivery and assessment of a particular course.

Course Outline	A description of the course and what it will cover; the intended learning outcomes and a description of the weighting of each assessment task, along with the formula for determining the final course grade.
Dean	Dean refers to the Head of a college/school.
Departmental Academic Advisor ("DAA")	A Departmental Academic Advisor ("DAA") is an academic from an institution other than the University. The primary role of a DAA is to provide high level academic and strategic academic advice to an academic unit, covering all academic functions.
Examination Officer ("EO")	The member of the academic staff with overall control of the operation and security of examination materials.
External Academic Advisor (''EAA")	An External Academic Advisor (EAA) is an academic from an institution other than the University, who provides expertise to an academic unit. The EAA is appointed for an academic unit or a programme/programmes of an academic unit by the Head of a college/school/centre. The primary responsibility for an EAA is to assist the academic unit in maintaining the international standards of its programme(s); and contribute to the strategic growth of academic unit and the University as a whole.
Formative Assessment	Ongoing (frequently qualitative) evaluation for the purpose of guiding students through the learning activity and helping them improve the outcome.
Grade Point Average ("GPA")	The GPA is obtained by adding all the quality points (i.e., grade points multiplied by the number of credit units) for all courses taken during the student's studies at the University, and then dividing the result by the total number of credit units taken. All course grades, unless excluded as approved by Senate, are included in the calculation. The GPA calculation shall not be rounded. Any digits after the second digit to the right of a decimal point shall be truncated.

When calculating the GPA for all courses taken at the time of calculation, it is known as the Cumulative GPA (CGPA). When calculating the GPA for a given semester, it is known as the Semester GPA (SGPA). |

Master's Degrees	Collectively refer to Postgraduate Certificates, Postgraduate Diplomas, and Master's Degrees.
Programme (includes major and minor)	The structured grouping of courses in the major, minor or degree upon which the student is enrolled.
Programme Leader (includes Leaders for Majors, Leaders for Minors)	The member of the academic staff in overall charge of the delivery of the structured grouping of courses in the major or minor or degree upon which students are enrolled.
Rules on Academic Honesty	Rules for handling academic honesty cases.
Staff	Includes both academic and administrative staff members in the University.
Senate	The University Senate of City University of Hong Kong
Summative Assessment	Evaluation for the purpose of assessing students' learning outcome.
Taught Programme	A programme for which the requirements are chiefly the completion of courses.
Working Days	Mondays to Fridays, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays and excluding a day throughout or for part of which a black rainstorm warning or Typhoon Signal Number 8 or above is issued by the Hong Kong Observatory.
University	City University of Hong Kong

Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   The purpose of the University Assessment Policy and Principles for Taught Programmes (the Policy) is to clearly set out our philosophy and approach to assessment. Institutional standards are defined in relation to assessment procedures and mechanisms are established to monitor assessment policy and practice at the University.

1.2   As a general guide, policy defines the actions and responsibilities of staff and requires compliance. Principles on the other hand inform staff of procedures which may be used to ensure appropriate outcomes. Therefore, principles provide a basis for the development of good practice in assessment, which may be creatively and flexibly used by all staff.

1.3   Appendix A identifies the sources which have been referenced and drawn upon in drafting this Policy.

Chapter 2   General Assessment Policy and Principles

Policy Statements

1. Assessment is the crucial link between effective delivery of courses, student learning and development and the assurance of educational standards.
2. Assessment tasks must:
   - be fit for purpose, fair, consistent and constructively aligned to course or programme intended learning outcomes;
   - not discriminate according to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief, age, social origin or disability;
   - enable students to develop and demonstrate their learning and potential;
   - enable students to progress to or receive professional accreditation where appropriate;
   - assist student learning and development by providing appropriate and timely feedback on performance;
   - be of sufficient scope and range to enable accurate assessment of the extent to which students have attained the course or programme intended learning outcomes;
   - provide a reliable and consistent basis for converting the results into a final grade for the course;
   - assist academic staff to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching; and
   - be aligned with the University expectations as set out in its mission statement, regulations, policies and procedures.
3. Assessment procedures must be an integral part of a process which encourages the development of creative and critical abilities.
4. Assessment requirements, procedures and intended outcomes must be stated clearly so that the duties, obligations and responsibilities of Course Leaders, academic staff and students are clearly identified and addressed.
5. Heads or Deans of academic units and Heads of course-offering academic support units must ensure that assessment requirements and procedures are communicated to academic staff, students, Departmental Academic Advisors, External Academic Advisors and, where appropriate, professional accreditation bodies.
6. Heads or Deans of academic units and Heads of course-offering academic support units must ensure that assessment tasks and assessment procedures are fit for purpose, fair, consistent and constructively aligned to intended learning outcomes.
7. Assessment procedures must be transparent to all those involved in the process.
8. All those involved in the process must ensure they are fully informed about assessment procedures of the University and the unit.

Principles

2.1 Each programme should include a variety of assessment tasks which together make up the assessment scheme for that programme. These can include in-class activities, presentations, group activities, quizzes, assignments to be completed in students' own time, examinations, reports and projects, or be based upon pieces of work of a substantial nature such as a thesis or a research project. Variety promotes effective learning, allows for the assessment of a range of intended learning outcomes and supports a range of approaches to learning. An appropriate mix of formative and summative assessments should be used. Formative and summative assessment may, in practice, be combined.

2.2 Distribution and completion of assessment tasks should be co-ordinated to minimise stress and pressure for both students and for academic staff.

2.3 Wherever possible more than one form of summative assessment should be used in a course, e.g. essay, oral presentation, written examination, multiple choice examination, journal article, laboratory report, literature review, practical performance.

2.4 All assessment tasks, whether graded or not, should primarily be considered formative. Students are entitled to timely and meaningful feedback on assessment tasks. Timely and meaningful feedback is good practice and substantially contributes to both student learning and the development of students' potential.

2.5 Students should be advised not later than the end of the second week of the semester or, where a course does not run in accordance with scheduled semesters within two weeks of the commencement of the course, of the nature and timing of all assessment tasks for the entire course and the nature and timing of the feedback they will receive on assessment tasks due for completion before the end of the semester.

2.6 Assessment tasks and procedures should be regularly reviewed in conjunction with Departmental Academic Advisors and/or External Academic Advisors and, where a course is required for or leads to professional accreditation, in conjunction with the relevant professional body or bodies.

Chapter 3   Roles and Responsibilities

Policy Statements   P. 9

1. **Heads or Deans of academic units and Heads of course-offering academic support units are responsible for ensuring that the University assessment policy and procedures are observed and implemented.**

2. **Heads or Deans of academic units must appoint a Programme Leader for each programme within the academic unit.**

3. **Heads or Deans of academic units and the Provost (for courses offered by academic support units) must appoint a Course Leader for each course.**

4. **Heads or Deans of academic units and Heads of course-offering academic support units must establish an Assessment Panel for courses offered by their unit. The composition and duties and responsibilities of Assessment Panels are as set out in Appendix C to this Policy.**

5. **No course may be considered by more than one Assessment Panel.**

6. **Deans are responsible for making decisions on students' academic standing, terminating studies of students on academic grounds on behalf of Senate, classifying students' awards, recommending to Senate conferment of awards, and reporting to the College/School Boards in the event of any anomaly or inconsistency in the award classification decisions.**

7. **All academic staff have a professional responsibility to ensure that assessment tasks and assessment procedures:**
   - **enhance the quality of learning;**
   - **accurately measure the extent to which students have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the course and the programme; and**
   - **provide a reliable basis for converting results into a final grade for the course.**

8. **All academic staff are collectively responsible for ensuring that assessment tasks are constructively aligned with intended learning and teaching outcomes.**

Principles

3.1   Heads or Deans of academic units, Heads of course-offering academic support units and Chairs of Assessment Panels are primarily responsible for ensuring the integrity and security of assessment practices and procedures and for maintaining standards on courses and on programmes.

<u>Course Leaders</u>

3.2 Ideally Course Leaders should be full-time academic staff but part-time academic staff may be appointed where there are sound pedagogical reasons for doing so in the particular case.

3.3 Where part-time academic staff are appointed as Course Leaders, Heads or Deans of academic units, or the Provost (for courses offered by academic support units) should ideally appoint a full-time academic staff to provide all necessary support and assistance, particularly in relation to the preparation, moderation and marking of examination papers, and to attend all necessary meetings of Assessment Panels on the Course Leader's behalf.

3.4 Heads or Deans of academic units, or the Provost (for courses offered by academic support units) are encouraged to appoint Associate Course Leaders. Associate Course Leaders should also be full-time academic staff but part-time academic staff may be appointed where there are sound pedagogical reasons for doing so in the particular case. Appointing Associate Course Leaders is good practice to ensure continuity of delivery in the Course Leader's absence.

3.5 Where Heads or Deans of academic units, or the Provost (for courses offered by academic support units) consider the appointment of an Associate Course Leader is not necessary, e.g. because of the number of students taking the course, it is good practice to designate a full-time member of the academic staff to liaise with the Course Leader, to take up the Course Leader's duties and responsibilities in the absence of the Course Leader and to attend all necessary meetings of the Assessment Panel on the Course Leader's behalf.

The duties and responsibilities of Course Leaders include:
Generic duties
- ensures the timely and accurate completion of course management and administration and provides regular reports to the responsible Programme Leader;
- ensures the course reflects the coverage and depth required, as well as being up-to-date and relevant to student needs;
- develops and provides guidance on effective standards relating to academic principles, assessment, content and the support of student needs;
- provides support to instructors, students, and colleagues associated with the course; and
- evaluates the subject quality and outcomes and ensures feedback is reflected in revisions to the course.

Duties specific to assessment
- ensures that assessment tasks are consistent with the Policy Statements and the Principles of Assessment in Chapter 2;
- prepares the assessment tasks;
- ensures that assessment and examination questions are not re-used;
- ensures that assessment tasks are properly moderated;

- ensures that assessment tasks are constructively aligned with course intended learning outcomes;
- ensures that assessment tasks are assessed accurately and in a timely manner;
- develops detailed grade descriptors for the course (see Chapter 6);
- reports to the Assessment Panel on any changes (including corrections of typos) or errors on the examination questions made/identified during examination; and
- liaises with the Associate Course Leader or the designated full-time academic staff member as the case may be.

3.6 The duty and responsibility of the Associate Course Leader is to shadow the Course Leader, moderate assessment tasks and take up the Course Leader's duties and responsibilities in the absence of the Course Leader.

3.7 The duty and responsibility of designated full-time academic staff members is to liaise with and provide support for the Course Leader and to take up the Course Leader's duties and responsibilities in the absence of the Course Leader.

3.8 Course Leaders, Associate Course Leaders and designated full-time academic staff members should be appointed sufficiently in advance of the start of teaching to ensure that the course is ready for effective delivery at the start of the semester.

Assessment Panels

3.9 Attendance at Assessment Panels is an important duty. A Course Leader whose course is being considered by the Assessment Panel should only be excused attendance for good cause on prior written application to the Head or Dean of academic unit, or the Associate Provost (Quality Assurance and Accountability) (for courses offered by academic support units) setting out the reasons for absence and the measures that have been taken to ensure that matters relating to the course will be adequately addressed at the Assessment Panel.

Academic Staff

3.10 All academic staff are responsible for creating and maintaining an environment in which students are encouraged to develop their full potential. This requires the establishment and maintenance of high educational standards based upon academic honesty and appropriate and effective management of student learning and assessment by:
- ensuring that assessment tasks are consistent with the Policy Statements and the Principles of Assessment in Chapter 2;
- ensuring that assessment tasks are constructively aligned with intended learning outcomes;
- developing assessment tasks and procedures that are fair and effective and that contribute to student learning;
- administering assessment tasks fairly and efficiently;
- providing timely and constructive feedback to students;

- designing assessment tasks that minimise the potential for breaches of academic honesty;
- ensuring that students are aware of common conventions of academic honesty as well as the specific requirements of their discipline;
- communicating to students the expectations relating to academic honesty;
- providing students with appropriate guidance, learning activities and feedback on academic honesty;
- communicating to students the acceptable level of working together and how their work will be individually or jointly assessed;
- reporting instances of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty;
- encouraging students to think independently and exchange ideas freely;
- continually improving the effectiveness of their teaching; and
- developing and maintaining expertise in their areas.

Programme Leaders

3.11 Ideally academic staff appointed as Programme Leader will have administrative, management and leadership skills and be familiar with the Academic Regulations and the practices and procedures of the University as well as possessing academic credibility and experience.

3.12 Programme Leaders should not normally be appointed from academic staff new to teaching or new to the University.

3.13 The Programme Leader is the coordinator of the programme and reports directly to the Head or Dean of the academic unit.

3.14 The duties of Programme Leaders are as follows.
Generic duties
- ensures the timely and accurate completion of programme management and administration and provides regular reports to the responsible Head or Dean of academic unit;
- monitors and evidences the quality of student outcomes and benchmarks with other competitors, identifying new areas of content to be incorporated;
- assesses and regularly monitors the quality, coverage and currency of intended learning outcomes, learning and teaching activities and assessment tasks in the overall programme(s);
- involves Course Leaders, lecturers, instructors and students in regular, ongoing review and development of the programme, and provides appropriate guidance; and
- ensures the University policies are reflected in the programme.

Duties specific to assessment
- Coordinates assessment tasks to avoid overloading students, academic staff and administrative staff.

3.15   In addition to appointing a Programme Leader for each programme, Heads or Deans of academic units should ideally appoint an Associate Programme Leader for each programme to support and, if necessary, assume the Programme Leader's responsibilities in the absence of the Programme Leader.

Students

3.16   Students should take responsibility for their own learning. Students are expected to:
- read, appreciate and observe the general regulations for assessment on the ARRO/SGS web site; assessment requirements contained in course outlines of courses upon which they are enrolled and any supplementary requirements imposed by the Course Leader or the unit responsible for delivering the course or courses upon which they are enrolled;
- comply with deadlines set for the completion of assessment tasks;
- submit work for assessment which satisfies the requirements of academic honesty;
- inform themselves about the expectations of the University and relevant units;
- attend examinations at the time scheduled; and
- use feedback on assessment tasks constructively to enhance their learning.

Chapter 4   Benchmarking against International Standards

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1. **In the exercise of their responsibility to maintain academic standards in courses for which they are responsible, Heads or Deans of academic units and Heads of course-offering academic support units must have reference to the norms for similar courses at comparable internationally recognised universities.**
2. **Collaboration and active engagement with comparable internationally recognised universities is a requirement as it assists the University to draw upon international best practice in the continual review and improvement of learning and teaching.**
3. **Procedures for review and continued improvement of assessment should be documented and reported to College/School Boards. Heads or Deans of academic units and Heads of course-offering academic support units are responsible for ensuring that the University assessment policy and procedures are observed and implemented.**

Principles

4.1   Benchmarking enables the University to make comparison with the standards and performance of comparable internationally recognised universities to improve outcomes, processes and practices.

4.2   Measures adopted to ensure that the University standards are being maintained at an equivalent standard to comparable internationally recognised universities should reflect the following principles:
- assessment tasks should be reviewed alongside a range of comparable courses at comparable universities; and
- reviews of assessment should extend to courses at all levels.

4.3   Heads or Deans of academic units and Heads of course-offering academic support units should take the following steps to ensure that appropriate standards are being maintained:
- reviewing assessment tasks against course information such as grading rubrics, assessment procedures and practices and achievement of intended learning outcomes;
- reviewing assessment tasks, procedures and practices with the input of peers with experience of working in universities with an international reputation and from Departmental Academic Advisors (DAAs) and/or External Academic Advisors (EAAs);
- reviewing the continued validity and relevance of courses and assessment in the context of global knowledge developments;

- benchmarking against the requirements of relevant professional bodies; and
- drawing upon the international experience of academic staff and international visitors to provide different perspectives on the development of assessment practices and procedures.

Chapter 5   Assessment Criteria and Grade Descriptors

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1. **Assessment criteria and grade descriptors must be clearly defined and communicated in writing to students at the start of the course. Academic staff and Assessment Panels must adhere to these when assigning student grades.**
2. **Heads or Deans of academic units and Heads of course-offering academic support units must ensure consistency of grade descriptors across the unit and their compatibility with the University grade descriptors as defined in the Academic Regulations.**

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Principles

<u>Assessment Criteria</u>

5.1   Appropriate and meaningful assessment criteria are essential. Assessment criteria should establish clear and unambiguous standards of intended outcomes and achievement and effective methods for accurately assessing student learning and achievement.

5.2   Assessment criteria should be consistent with intended learning outcomes. The criteria should describe the knowledge, understanding and skills that students are expected to display in the assessment task.

5.3   Assessment criteria are of critical importance in criterion-referenced assessment, which is a feature of outcomes-based teaching and learning (OBTL). Assessment criteria should be developed for each assessment task, including group work and peer assessment, and distributed to students before an assessment activity.

5.4   Assessment criteria should be designed to:
- bring transparency and accountability to assessment processes and procedures;
- achieve consistency of marking on courses forming part of a particular programme and across colleges and schools;
- enable markers to award grades which accurately and fairly reflect the attainment of the intended learning outcomes of the work being assessed;
- enable students to understand how their work has been assessed and the grade awarded;
- promote understanding of assessment procedures and processes amongst students and academic staff;
- provide meaningful feedback to students; and

- enable units to assess the quality and effectiveness of learning and teaching procedures and processes.

5.5 Further guidance and support on the design of effective assessment criteria is provided by regular seminars and workshops organised through the Talent and Education Development Office. Academic staff should regard it as an important professional duty to attend those seminars and workshops both for their personal development and the development of accurate and effective assessment procedures and processes across the University.

Grade Descriptors

5.6 Grade descriptors describe various levels of achievement.

5.7 The University's Academic Regulations address the grading of courses as follows:

Undergraduate Degrees
Master's Degrees

Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definitions	
A+	4.3	Excellent	The qualifiers, such as "Excellent", "Good", "Fair" etc., define student performance with respect to the achievement of course intended learning outcomes (CILOs).
A	4.0		
A-	3.7		
B+	3.3	Good	
B	3.0		
B-	2.7		
C+	2.3	Fair	
C	2.0		
C-	1.7		
D	1.0	Marginal	
F	0.0	Failure	
P (Pass-fail course only)		Pass	

Master's Degrees (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definitions	
A+	4.3	Excellent	The qualifiers, such as "Excellent", "Good", "Marginal" etc., define student performance with respect to the achievement of course intended learning outcomes (CILOs).
A	4.0		
A-	3.7		
B+	3.3	Good	
B	3.0		
B-	2.7	Marginal	
C+	2.3		
C	2.0		
F	0.0	Failure	
P (Pass-fail course only)		Pass	

5.8 Unless otherwise specified, the minimum grade to progress without repeating the course is D for Undergraduate Degrees, and Master's Degrees and C for Master's Degrees (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024). Failure to achieve the minimum grade is regarded as failing the course.

5.9 Assessment Panels may deviate from the grade descriptors only under exceptional circumstances.

5.10 Situations in which deviation may be justified include:
- professional accreditation requirements;
- when applying compensation for mitigating circumstances;
- when adjustments are deemed necessary to compensate for error on the part of the University;
- in borderline cases (e.g. between classifications), where there is sound evidence that a student is deserving of a higher grade; and
- in cases of academic dishonesty.

Chapter 6   Assessment Tasks

Policy Statements

1. **Assessment tasks must be defined in the course outline for each course so that academic staff and students understand their rights and responsibilities at the beginning of the course.**
2. **Information in the course outline must include a description and weighting of each assessment task, along with the formula for determining the final course grade.**
3. **Assessment tasks must be manageable and sufficient to provide an accurate view of students' learning and achievement of the course intended learning outcomes without overburdening either students or academic staff and is scheduled accordingly.**
4. **Changes to the scheduled date for completion of assessment tasks during the semester must be approved by Programme Leaders.**
5. **Assessment shall be completed in the semester in which the course is completed.**
6. **Assessment tasks must reflect the topics and relative importance of the intended learning outcomes of the course.**
7. **Decisions on the form the end of course examination will take and the material students can bring into the examination must be consistent with the course intended learning outcomes and take account of the conditions under which the examination is written.**
8. **No changes (except for corrections of typos) should be made on the examination questions during examination. Course Leader is required to report to the Assessment Panel if there are any changes made unavoidably.**

Principles

6.1   Formative and summative assessment tasks must be included in each course.

6.2   Assessments used for summative purposes must be accompanied by clear assessment criteria.

6.3   Assessment tasks are designed to align with the course intended learning outcomes to provide evidence on how well each student has achieved the intended learning outcomes. Such evidence could be provided by groupwork, case studies, assignments, examinations, laboratory work, peer assessment and reports, practicals, practicum etc. The choice of assessment tasks should relate directly to the course intended learning outcomes.

6.4 End loading of semesters with assessment tasks for completion before the end of the semester is not in the best interests of students or academic staff.

6.5 The overall assessment load and the dates for submission of assessment tasks should be as evenly spread as possible and be monitored by Programme Leaders. Assessment tasks should be scheduled so that there is sufficient time for students to receive feedback before the end of the semester.

6.6 Information about assessment tasks, their timing, weighting, marking criteria, penalties for late submission, exceeding word limits, incorrect citing of authorities and incorrect use of English should be clearly stated in course outlines provided to students and the start of the course and accompany the assessment task when it is distributed. This information could also usefully be included in student handbooks.

6.7 Care should be taken to ensure that assessment tasks and procedures do not disadvantage any group or individual.

6.8 Assessments, particularly take-home assessments and examination questions should not be re-used in their original form as this unfairly advantages successive students.

6.9 Course Leaders have the responsibility to ensure that assessment and examination questions are not re-used in their original form, and no changes (except for corrections of typos) to the examination questions should be made during examination.

Groupwork

6.10 Groupwork assessments must be carefully planned and take account of the timing and balance of groupwork across the programme upon which the students are engaged.

6.11 Groupwork assessments used for summative purposes must clearly define the expected achievement and the marking criteria for students within the group.

6.12 Students undertaking groupwork should receive adequate instruction, guidance and support before the start of the groupwork to enable them to understand how to approach the groupwork and how it will be assessed.

6.13 Groupwork tasks should not normally be used for summative assessment purposes unless this type of activity is essential to the intended learning outcomes of the course.

6.14 Assessment of courses should not normally be based entirely upon groupwork unless this pattern of assessment is essential to the intended learning outcomes of the course.

<u>Peer Assessment</u>

6.15 Peer assessment may be used to develop students' ability to work cooperatively, to be constructively critical of others' work and receive constructively critical appraisals of their own work.

6.16 Assessment criteria and intended learning outcomes shall be published to students at the start of the course so that students can identify whether, and to what extent, the work of their peers has met the intended learning outcomes and award a reasoned grade for that work.

6.17 Measures should be in place for peer assessments to be moderated by the member of the academic staff responsible for the course. Moderators must be particularly alert to subjective peer assessment.

6.18 Assessment of courses should not be based entirely on peer assessment.

<u>Examination</u>

6.19 Examinations may be closed book or open book. The form of the examination should be included in the course outline. Students should be told not later than the end of the second week of the semester or, where a student subsequently joins a course within two weeks of their joining, whether the examination will be open book; with limited material; with defined material or closed book.

6.20 Formal written examinations should have duration of 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5 or 3 hours.

Chapter 7   Late Submission of Assessment Tasks

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1. **Penalties for failure to submit assessment tasks on time must be stated in course outlines.**
2. **Students must be provided with a schedule showing the assessment tasks they will be required to undertake, the date they will receive the assessment tasks and the date for submission of the assessment tasks not later than the end of the second week of the semester or, where a student joins a course subsequently, within two weeks of joining. Information on penalties that will be incurred for failure to submit assessment tasks on time must also be included.**
3. **Heads or Deans of academic units, Heads of course-offering academic support units and Course Leaders must ensure that the penalties within a course are consistently applied.**

Principles

7.1   Students are responsible for managing their time to meet the published deadlines for submission of assessment tasks.

7.2   Deadlines for submission of assessment tasks will not be extended except in the specific circumstances defined in the University's Academic Regulations.

7.3   Failure to submit any summative assessment task will result in no marks being awarded for that assessment component.

Chapter 8 Preparation, Printing, Storage, Delivery and Security of Examination Papers

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Policy Statements

1. **Security and confidentiality of all examination materials is essential to the integrity and credibility of the examination process.**
2. **Heads or Deans of academic units and Head of course-offering academic support units have the responsibility to ensure the security and confidentiality of all examination materials, including examination answer books.**
3. **Preparation, handling, storage, printing and transportation of examination materials must be conducted with due regard to security and confidentiality.**
4. **All academic staff involved in the preparation of examination materials must comply with deadlines set by ARRO/SGS for the delivery of examination materials to ARRO/SGS.**

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Principles

8.1 Heads or Deans of academic units and Head of course-offering academic support units should nominate two full-time members of the academic staff as the Examinations Officers ("EO") to take control of the preparation and security of examination materials for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes respectively and provide them with the necessary support from administrative staff.

8.2 EOs should ensure that examination materials are prepared in a timely manner to facilitate internal and external moderation and the delivery of examination papers to ARRO/SGS. Examination papers for printing should be delivered to ARRO/SGS by hand and under confidential cover. The EOs should keep a written record of compliance with time limits.

8.3 Where examination papers are printed within the units, EOs are responsible for the security of those papers and for ensuring the papers reach the correct examination room in good time for the scheduled start of the examination.

8.4 EOs should make a written report to the Head or Dean of academic unit or Head of course-offering academic support unit where examination materials are not prepared by the specified dates. The Head or Dean of academic unit or Head of course-offering academic support unit should then take appropriate action.

8.5 Emailing examination materials to Departmental Academic Advisor and/or External Academic Advisors is permitted only where the email is encrypted or password protected. Emailing of examination materials within units is similarly permissible only where the email is encrypted or password protected.

8.6 Hard copies of examination materials kept within the unit should be kept in a safe or in a locked metal cabinet. Measures should be in place to guard against theft, accidental loss, damage or destruction of examination materials. Where hard copies of examination materials are sent to Departmental Academic Advisors, External Academic Advisors or external examiners, care should be taken to maintain security and to avoid misdirection of the materials.

8.7 Where examination answer books are removed from the unit for marking elsewhere, the academic staff member concerned should notify the relevant EO of the removal and location of the books. That EO should be notified of the return of examination answer books to the unit.

Chapter 9   Marking/Grading

Policy Statements

1. **All assessment tasks must be marked objectively and impartially applying published assessment criteria, marking schemes and grade descriptors.**
2. **Markers must comply with the University's policy on breaches of academic honesty.**
3. **Marking must not discriminate on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief, age, social origin or disability.**
4. **Wherever possible, assessed work must be marked anonymously.**
5. **Marks will only be awarded to legible assessment tasks. Students will not be permitted to re-write illegible work.**

Principles

9.1   Methods utilised in marking students' work should enable all those involved in the process to be confident that the marks awarded fairly reflect the level of achievement of intended learning outcomes demonstrated by the work submitted.

9.2   Students should ensure that their assessment tasks are legible. Where an assessment task is wholly or partially illegible to the extent that the ability of the marker to assess its quality is impaired, it will be assessed on the basis of the legible part or parts and a mark awarded accordingly.

<u>Promotion of Good Marking Practices</u>

9.3   Marking should normally be undertaken by the Course Leader responsible for the delivery of the course. Other academic staff engaged in the delivery of the course may also be involved in marking. Where other academic staff are involved in marking, the Course Leader has the responsibility for ensuring that good marking practices are deployed and that there is a consistent approach to marking.

9.4   Marking carried out by staff who are not full-time academic staff should be supervised by a full-time member of the academic staff.

9.5   Students should not gain marks simply by attending lectures, seminars and/or tutorials.

Chapter 10   Moderation

Policy Statements

1. **Moderation of all assessment tasks is an essential component of acquired best practice.**
2. **Heads or Deans of academic units and Heads of course-offering academic support units are responsible for setting policy of the units on moderation, making arrangements for internal and external moderation of assessment tasks, marks and grades, and for ensuring that the policy is adhered to by all academic staff.**

Principles

10.1   Moderation involves a range of activities which provide confirmation that assessment has been conducted accurately, consistently and fairly. Moderation addresses the quality of the assessment process, measures the outcomes and helps assess the overall fitness for purpose of the course and the programme.

10.2   Moderation provides valuable feedback and contributes to the constructive alignment of marking standards across the unit.

10.3   Incorporating a moderation element into the design of a course directs attention to how standards and attainment of course intended learning outcomes will be verified, the consistency of the course and the way in which it is assessed.

10.4   Information on policies of the unit on the moderation of assessment tasks, marks and grades should be published to students and academic staff.

Moderation of Assessment Tasks

10.5   The purpose of moderating assessment tasks is to provide assurance that the design of a specific assessment task is a valid and reliable measure of the intended learning outcomes.

10.6   Moderation of assessment tasks should ensure that:
- each task is a valid and reliable means of providing students with an opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes for the course;
- the questions or instructions are clearly worded, written in student-friendly language, and are unambiguous;
- the assessment workload is appropriate to the course being assessed, particularly where there are multiple components to the assessment;
- the time-scale allowed for completion of the assessment task is reasonable;

- all students can reasonably be expected to have access to the resources required for completion of the assessment task; and
- there are clear assessment criteria, a marking scheme and grade descriptors.

<u>Moderation of Marks/Grades</u>

10.7 Moderation of marks/grades aims to reinforce assessment reliability by ensuring consistency and standards between markers. There are a number of moderation mechanisms available:
- double marking, i.e. two academic staff marking the same piece of work (not splitting the total marking task between two or more academic staff);
- audio/video recording of assessments with no tangible output, e.g. presentations, music or drama performances, practical demonstrations, which are used by a second marker, who was not present at the original assessment;
- simultaneous moderation of assessments with no tangible output by the presence of a second assessor or by a panel of assessors at the time of the assessment, either in person or using teleconferencing or similar technology; and
- analysing marks across a cohort of students and against those of previous cohorts of students.

10.8 Double marking is considered as a good practice in borderline cases and cases in dispute. In double marking, the mark of the first marker usually stands unless there are significant discrepancies between the marks of the two markers. Units should determine their own policies in this area, including a clear definition of what would constitute a significant discrepancy, as appropriate to the marking practices in the units.

10.9 The nature and intensity of the scrutiny will depend on the perceived risk associated with each assessment task. In particular:
- how well defined the assessment task is;
- whether different people mark the same assessment task, e.g. whether team teaching is involved;
- the experience and employment status of the marker, e.g. academic staff not familiar with marking processes, inexperienced part-time academic staff;
- whether mark distributions for the same cohort of students differ noticeably for different assessments;
- whether different students perform different tasks; and
- the importance of the mark, in terms of both its weighting and its academic level.

10.10 In many cases it is sufficient for a sample of the assessed work to be moderated. Sample size should be determined by taking account of the risk factors described above and should be representative of the size of the cohort.

10.11 Heads or Deans of academic units and Heads of course-offering academic support units should establish a policy of the unit on arrangements for appropriate moderation of

marks/grades and are responsible for ensuring that the policy is known and adhered to by all academic staff involved in assessment. An evaluation of moderation arrangements should be included in the annual programme report.

External Moderation

10.12 External moderation plays a key role in maintaining academic standards. This may be undertaken by the External Academic Advisor (guidance on the role of the EAA: www.cityu.edu.hk/qac/ppp/QE_guide_G.htm) or other parties as deemed appropriate.

Chapter 11   Feedback and Retention of Students' Work

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Feedback

1. **Timely feedback must be provided on all assessment tasks.**

2. **Feedback on assessment tasks must normally be provided within 20 working days after the date for submission of the assessment task.**

3. **Feedback may be written or oral, and given either on an individual or collective basis.**

Retention of Students' Work

4. **Heads or Deans of academic units and Heads of course-offering academic support units must implement appropriate procedures for the return, retention and disposal of completed assessment tasks.**

5. **Students must have access to all marked work.**

6. **Completed work should not be retained indefinitely.**

7. **Completed work not returned to students and copies of any returned work kept by units must not be destroyed earlier than one year after the meeting of the Assessment Panel for the course to which the work relates.**

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Principles

Feedback

11.1 To facilitate the development of learning, students should receive prompt, adequate and meaningful feedback on all assessment tasks.

11.2 Feedback on assessment tasks should enable students to:
   - understand the reasons for the grade awarded;
   - identify the strengths and weaknesses in the work submitted; and
   - improve their future performance.

11.3 The format and manner of the feedback is a matter for Course Leaders. It is good practice for units to develop a standard format and a standard procedure in the interests of accuracy and certainty of feedback and of record keeping.

11.4 Whilst oral feedback is valuable, students will benefit more from written feedback. A record should be kept of the feedback and when it was provided.

<u>Retention of Students' Work</u>

11.5 To safeguard the integrity and objectivity of the assessment process, procedures of units should ensure that students' work is available for:
- internal and external moderation;
- procedures relating to allegations of academic dishonesty; and
- review procedures.

11.6 Students should be permitted to access their marked examination scripts. Students who would like to receive a copy of their marked examination script are encouraged to follow the data access procedure prescribed in the University's Code of Practice on Personal Data (Privacy) Issues.

11.7 Students should not be permitted to remove original examination scripts from the unit.

11.8 It is recommended that a record is kept of student access to examination scripts.

11.9 Heads or Deans of academic units and Heads of course-offering academic support units should ensure that retained work and any copies of returned work kept by the units are disposed of securely and confidentially after the expiration of the retention period.

11.10 Retained work and any copies kept by the unit may be retained for more than one year after the meeting of the Assessment Panel for the course to which the work relates where the Head or Dean of academic unit or Heads of course-offering academic support units considers retention is necessary and/or appropriate, for example in relation to professional accreditation. The University's Code of Practice on Personal Data (Privacy) Issues should be adhered to where students' work, or copies of that work, is retained.

11.11 Detailed information on the retention of student work and copies of returned work and requests for personal data related to assessed work is contained in the University's Code of Practice on Personal Data (Privacy) Issues.

Chapter 12   Assessment: Students with Special Education Needs

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Policy Statements

1. **Students with special education needs (SEN) must not be disadvantaged.**
2. **Units must ensure, in conjunction with the Student Development Services, that justifiable procedures and mechanisms are in place to adequately support the needs of students with SEN.**
3. **Students must have the opportunity to disclose a disability throughout their programme.**
4. **The assessment tasks of students with SEN must be marked in the same way as the assessment tasks of other students.**

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Principles

12.1 Section 24(2) of the Disability Discrimination Ordinance Cap. 487, ("DDO") subject to certain exceptions, makes it unlawful for an educational establishment to discriminate against a student with a disability by:
- denying that student's access, or limiting that student's access, to any benefit, service or facility provided by the educational establishment;
- expelling that student; or
- subjecting that student to any other detriment.

12.2 Under Section 2 of the DDO "disability" means:
- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions;
- total or partial loss of a part of the person's body;
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness;
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness;
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body;
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour.

12.3 Students should be advised that units need not consider the effect of a disability upon the performance in an assessment if that disability has not been disclosed and supported by medical evidence prior to the assessment.

12.4 A student with SEN requires additional support or adjustments to assessment should notify ARRO/SGS by completing an online "Special Educational Needs Declaration" via AIMS. Medical confirmation of the disability and consequent needs must be provided. A

time limit can be placed upon providing this information. If the medical confirmation and information of required special needs is not provided within that time the unit, in conjunction with the Student Development Services, should adopt appropriate and justifiable procedures to address the student's needs.

12.5 Units, in consultation with the Student Development Services, should make justifiable adjustments to assessment procedures to ensure that students with SEN have an equality of opportunity when undergoing assessments.

12.6 Without limiting the modification in the particular case, adjustments to assessment may involve:
- taking the assessment in a separate room;
- allowing extra time;
- providing additional or special equipment; and
- allowing rest breaks, amanuensis or the presence of a carer, particularly where regular medication is required.

Chapter 13   Academic Honesty and Penalties for Breach

Principles

13.1   The University's Rules on Academic Honesty should be adhered to.

13.2   Heads or Deans of academic units and Heads of course-offering academic support units are responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place in accordance with the University's Rules on Academic Honesty to address, detect and respond to academic honesty issues and that such procedures are consistently applied.

13.3   All academic staff have the professional responsibility to provide guidance and feedback on academic honesty to students and to lead by example by ensuring that the work of others is acknowledged in their teaching and research.

13.4   When setting assessment tasks, in whatever form, Course Leaders should:
   - design the task to avoid or at least reduce opportunities for academic dishonesty;
   - design the task and the accompanying instructions in the way most likely to lead to prompt identification of academic dishonesty;
   - avoid re-using the same, or very similar assessment topics, and/or examination questions used in previous semesters;
   - provide clear instructions on how the work should be presented to comply with the requirements and obligations of academic honesty, for example as to attribution and citing of authorities and sources;
   - provide clear instructions, particularly where the assessment task is to be completed in students' own time, on the extent to which, if at all, students can make use of third party assistance; and
   - provide clear guidance where the task involves joint or group activities on the acceptable level of joint work, how that joint work should be acknowledged, what amounts to acceptable co-operation and collaboration, what amounts to unacceptable collusion and how individual contributions to joint or group work will be assessed.

13.5 When marking assessment tasks, in whatever form, markers should:
- be alert for academic dishonesty in work presented;
- investigate suspected academic dishonesty; and
- respond to instances of academic dishonesty in accordance with procedures laid down in the University's Rules on Academic Honesty.

13.6 Students should ensure that they comply with the University's Rules on Academic Honesty.

Chapter 14   Mitigation and Review

Policy Statements

1. **Students who have been unable to attend or complete an assessment task, or who believe their performance has been impaired by medical or other circumstances beyond their control, must have the opportunity to apply for mitigation in accordance with the Academic Regulations of the University.**
2. **Students must be provided with an opportunity to request a review of any grade awarded or any decision made by an Assessment Panel in accordance with the Academic Regulations of the University.**
3. **Students dissatisfied with a decision of a Dean or the Associate Provost (Quality Assurance and Accountability) (for courses offered by academic support units) must be given the opportunity to request a review on the basis of the limited grounds defined in the Academic Regulations of the University.**
4. **Deans and Heads of academic units and Heads of course-offering academic support units are responsible for implementing appropriate procedures for mitigation and review requests and ensuring those procedures are adhered to by all academic staff. Procedures must comply with the Academic Regulations of the University on mitigation and academic reviews.**

Chapter 15   Classification of Awards

Principles

15.1   Academic awards should accurately reflect the student's achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the programme. Decisions on award classifications should comply with the Academic Regulations.

15.2   Upon completion of all appropriate graduation requirements, students will be awarded an appropriate degree with one of the following classifications:

Bachelor's Degree
First Class Honours
Upper Second Class Honours
Lower Second Class Honours
Third Class Honours
Pass

Bachelor's Degree For Students on Programmes of a Normal Study Duration of 4 Years or More (Admitted from 2020/21 to 2023/24), Advanced Standing I Students (Admitted from 2021/22 to 2023/24) and Advanced Standing II Students (Admitted from 2022/23 to 2023/24)
summa cum laude (Highest Distinction)
magna cum laude (High Distinction)
cum laude (Distinction)

Master's Degree/Associate Degree
Distinction
Credit
Pass

15.3 The various classifications are based on CGPA. The general guidelines are as follows:

Bachelor's Degree	CGPA
First Class Honours	3.50 or above
Upper Second Class Honours	3.00 – 3.49
Lower Second Class Honours	2.50 – 2.99
Third Class Honours	2.00 – 2.49
Pass[#]	1.70 – 1.99

[#]Applicable to students admitted in 2019/20 and before.

Bachelor's Degree For Students on Programmes of a Normal Study Duration of 4 Years or More (Admitted from 2020/21 to 2023/24), Advanced Standing I Students (Admitted from 2021/22 to 2023/24) and Advanced Standing II Students (Admitted from 2022/23 to 2023/24)	CGPA*
summa cum laude (Highest Distinction)	Top 2%
magna cum laude (High Distinction)	Next 5%
cum laude (Distinction)	Next 8%

*Based on CGPA ranking for students in the respective departments/schools graduating in the same semester/term

Master's Degree For Students Admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter, and all students admitted to the Postgraduate Certificate in Laws programme	CGPA
Distinction	3.50 or above
Credit	3.20 – 3.49
Pass	2.00 – 3.19

Master's Degree For Students Admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024, except students admitted to the Postgraduate Certificate in Laws programme	CGPA
Distinction	3.65 or above
Credit	3.30 – 3.64
Pass	2.85 – 3.29

Associate Degree	CGPA
Distinction	3.40 or above
Credit	3.00 – 3.39
Pass	1.70 – 2.99

15.4 Heads of academic units should recommend award classifications to the Dean for review and endorsement. The Dean reserves the right, upon the recommendation of the Heads of academic units, to make exceptions from Section 15.3.

15.5 In making exceptions from Section 15.3, the Dean should ensure that decisions are reached with objectivity, are highly consistent over the years and across cohorts, and can be reasonably explained and justified.

Appendix A - References

Biggs, J.B. and Catherine Tang. *Teaching for Quality Learning at University (3rd edition)* England: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press, 2003

Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, The Quality Assurance Agency of Higher Education, UK, 2006

Assessment Policy of the following universities:

Australia
Australia National University Bond University
Curtin University of Technology Flinders University
Griffith University
University of Adelaide
University of New South Wales
University of Queensland

Singapore
Nanyang Technological University

United Kingdom
University of Bristol
University of Edinburgh
University of Exeter
London Metropolitan University
University of Loughborough
University of Manchester
University of Nottingham
University of Plymouth
University of Sheffield
University of Southampton
University of Sunderland
Swansea University
University of Warwick

Hong Kong
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

United States of America
University of California, San Diego
University of Texas, Austin

ARRO web page, City University of Hong Kong

OBTL web page, City University of Hong Kong

SGS web page, City University of Hong Kong

The University Policy on Personal Data (Privacy) Issues, City University of Hong Kong

The approved structure of 4-year Undergraduate Degrees, City University of Hong Kong

Academic Regulations, City University of Hong Kong

Appendix B - Terms of Reference and Constitution of Assessment Panel

I. For Courses Offered by Academic Units

Terms of Reference

1. To maintain the academic standards of assessment in courses for which they are responsible.

2. To determine the final grades for students in courses and report them to ARRO and SGS.

3. To decide what action to take as a result of a substantiated claim for mitigation notified to them, any changes made by the Course Leader on the examination questions during an examination and/or errors found on the examination questions.

4. To ensure the grading of each course is fair and transparent and does not discriminate according to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief, age, social origin or disability.

5. To ensure grade descriptors are applied consistently.

6. To consider the implications of any variation of grades in the courses under consideration and the implications of variations between the grades on courses currently under consideration and grades on those courses in previous years.

7. To award 'I' or 'X' grade to students or adjust the grade awarded, where mitigation circumstances have been established.

8. To ensure the discussions at the Assessment Panel are confidential.

9. To ensure meetings be held prior to the release of grades to students in accordance with schedule announced by ARRO or SGS.

Constitution

Chair:	Head or Dean of academic unit or nominee (in the absence of the Head)
Members:	Programme Leader for the course being considered Course Leader for the course being considered#
Optional members:	External Academic Advisor of the programme or the course Authorised representatives of relevant professional bodies where a programme is required for, or leads to, professional accreditation
Secretary:	Head's or Dean's nominee

 # Where a Course Leader is excused attendance at the Assessment Panel, the Associate Course Leader or the designated members of the academic staff as the case may be should attend the Assessment Panel.

II. For GE Courses Offered by Academic Support Units

Terms of Reference

1. To maintain the academic standards of assessment in courses for which they are responsible.

2. To determine the final grades for students in courses and report them to ARRO.

3. To decide what action to take as a result of a substantiated claim for mitigation notified to them, any changes made by the Course Leader on the examination questions during an examination and/or errors found on the examination questions.

4. To ensure the grading of each course is fair and transparent and does not discriminate according to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief, age, social origin or disability.

5. To ensure grade descriptors are applied consistently.

6. To consider the implications of any variation of grades in the courses under consideration and the implications of variations between the grades on courses currently under consideration and grades on those courses in previous years.

7. To award 'I' or 'X' grade to students or adjust the grade awarded, where mitigation circumstances have been established.

8. To ensure the discussions at the Assessment Panel are confidential.

9. To ensure meetings be held prior to the release of grades to students in accordance with schedule announced by ARRO.

Constitution

Chairperson:	Associate Provost (Quality Assurance and Accountability)
Members:	Course Leader(s) for the course(s) being considered#
Optional members:	External Academic Advisor of the course
Secretary:	An administrative staff appointed by the Head of the host unit

 # Where a Course Leader is excused attendance at the Assessment Panel, the Associate Course Leader or the designated members of the academic staff as the case may be should attend the Assessment Panel.