

University of Sydney and School of Public Health Policies Assessment

Plain English summaries for students – Last revised August 2006

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ASSESSMENT

Submission of assessment tasks

You will be given details about the required assessment task for each unit of study you are undertaking, including subject and due date, by the end of the first week of the semester in which the unit of study is being taught. The date for the submission of final assignments will be *no less than two weeks after the completion of teaching* for which the assignment is set except where a shorter due date is expressly stated in unit of study information. All assignments carry a due date which will usually be a Monday, or a Tuesday if a public holiday falls on the Monday.

Assignments should be submitted via the WebCT assignment drop box unless the unit coordinator indicates otherwise at the beginning of the unit.

WebCT online assignment drop box:

The text of your assignment question and instructions for submitting your assignment electronically are both available on the entry screen of each assignment drop box in the unit of study's WebCT site. Please note that by submitting the assignment electronically, you are signing the compliance statement on that page, which includes allowing your assignment to be checked for plagiarism. Please read this statement carefully before submitting your assignment.

You should be aware that assignments are automatically date stamped when submitted online and late assignments are recorded as such.

Assignment box in SPH Student Office:

When submitting assignments through the Assignment slot in the Student Office (Room 328, Level 3 of the Edward Ford Building) you must attach a signed Student Declaration form available from:

http://www.health.usyd.edu.au/current/coursework/assign_declaration.pdf

The box will be cleared each morning by administrative staff. Each assignment will be date stamped with the previous day's date and given to the responsible Unit Coordinator.

For SPH policy, go to: http://www.usyd.edu.au/ab/policies/Assess_Exam_Coursework.pdf

Marking assessment tasks

All assignments must be deposited by the due date and time via the WebCT assignment drop box or, at the School's student office where they will be date and time stamped. The unit coordinator will have made the requirements clear on the WebCT site for each unit. Assignments must not carry any identifying information other than your university student number (on each page) so that markers are "blind" to the identity of the author of the assignment. Assignments that identify the author of the assignment will be returned by the student office to you for de-identification prior to being given to the Unit Coordinator for marking.

Assignments and exams are marked by the Unit coordinator or by suitably qualified people appointed by the Unit coordinator.

Any assignment marked as failing will be passed to a second member of staff for a second opinion, with the comments of the second marker being noted on the paper along with those of the original marker.

Marking template

All assignments written in essay or report format will be marked according to the criteria set out at: http://www.health.usyd.edu.au/current/coursework/guide_essay.pdf. The Student Office will append a blank template to the front of each such assignment and markers will score each criterion out of its maximum possible mark and then sum the marks to obtain a total mark for the assignment. Any late penalties applying will then be deducted.

Staff will complete their marking in time to provide final marks to the School's Examinations Committee at the end of each semester. The only exception to this is where a unit of study is programmed to run late in a semester, leaving insufficient time for marks to reach the scheduled meetings of the Examinations Committee.

Some units of study involve students completing a program of private study and an assessment that is then submitted to an agreed member of the academic staff. It is emphasized that these units also have explicit deadlines which will be set by the academic staff member supervising the program of private study. Later penalties will also apply to these units.

Grades

All assignments will be given a numerical mark out of the maximum possible mark for the assignment. In units where there is more than one assessable component, the numerical marks for each component will be summed for a final mark for the unit.

Supplementary assessments

If your mark for a unit falls between 40 and 45 (inclusive), you will normally be permitted to undertake a supplementary assessment following a period of remediation and further study which will normally not exceed two weeks. The supplementary assessment may involve all or part of the unit of study, at the discretion of the Unit Coordinator. If you have been offered a supplementary assessment, the maximum mark that can be obtained will be 50%.

If you are awarded between 46-49% for a unit of study, you will be offered either (a) a concessional pass ("PCON") which will appear on your transcript or (b) the opportunity to undertake a supplementary assessment where again, the maximum mark that can be obtained will be 50%. If you receive a concessional pass, you will not be able to do any subsequent unit of study for which the unit given a concessional pass is a prerequisite.

If you receive a pass or higher grade for an assignment, you **cannot** re-submit the assignment in an effort to obtain a better grade. Students are encouraged to discuss the reasons for their marks with their Unit Coordinators.

For University policy, go to: http://www.usyd.edu.au/su/ab/policies/Assess_Exam_Coursework.pdf

Academic honesty

The following information is provided to help you understand the principles of academic honesty. It is adapted from the University of Sydney's Academic Policy 'Academic Honesty in Coursework'. You will find this document at:

http://www.usyd.edu.au/ab/policies/Academic_Honesty_Cwk.pdf.

Some useful definitions from the policy document are given at the end of this discussion.

Using your own words

It is imperative that all assignments are written in your own words. If you use the words of a fellow student or copy text word for word from any published or unpublished source without placing that material in "quotation marks" and giving a formal reference to the source of the quotation (ie. *referencing* your source), you are engaging in plagiarism (see the definition below). If you are experiencing difficulties writing your assignments, you should attend one of the courses in academic reading and writing at the Centre for Teaching and Learning. It is also important that the work you submit has NOT been submitted as part of your assessment for a prior unit of study. Resubmitting work in this way is known as recycling (see definition below).

Citations and referencing

The source of any statement that is not your own must be cited in your work. This is good academic practice. To assist you with correct referencing, the School has a referencing guide at its web page:

http://www.health.usyd.edu.au/current/coursework/referencing_styleguide.pdf.

Collaboration

Postgraduate study provides many opportunities for learning through collaboration. However, unless your assignment involves group work (see definition below), each assignment that you submit must be your own work.

You are encouraged to discuss your assignments with fellow students. Acceptable collaboration (termed “legitimate cooperation” – see definition below) on individual assessments involves only “discussion of general themes and concepts, interpretation of assessment criteria, and informal study/discussion groups”.

You must not share draft or completed assignments with any student who is currently enrolled in the unit. It is also unacceptable to base your assignment on one submitted by any former student. Check with the unit coordinator if you are unsure if collaboration in which you engage is legitimate according to University guidelines.

Procedures relating to academic dishonesty

The University policy at: http://www.usyd.edu.au/ab/policies/Academic_Honesty_Cwk.pdf provides details of the procedures to be taken to deal with alleged academic dishonesty. School teaching staff must follow these procedures. Exceptions cannot be made.

Definitions

Plagiarism means knowingly presenting another person’s ideas, findings or work as one’s own by copying or reproducing them without due knowledge of the source. (This includes published and unpublished text, the work of other students, and other materials, for example material obtained from the internet.)

Recycling means the submission for assessment of one’s own work, or of work which is substantially the same, which has previously been counted toward the completion of another unit of study, and credited towards a university degree, diploma or certificate and where the examiner has not been informed that the student has already received credit for the work. Recycling is not permitted and will result in failure in the Unit for which recycled material has been submitted.

Group work means a formally established project to be conducted by a number of students in common, resulting in a single piece of assessment or a number of associated pieces of assessment. Where group work assessment is made, each member of the group is required to sign a statement listing their contributions to the group’s piece submitted for assessment.

Legitimate cooperation means any constructive educational and intellectual practice that aims to facilitate optimal learning outcomes through interaction between students.

A useful resource supplied by the World Association of Medical Editors:

<http://facpub.stjohns.edu/~roigm/plagiarism/>

For University policy, go to: http://www.usyd.edu.au/ab/policies/Academic_Honesty_Cwk.pdf.

Submitting late assessment tasks

Assignments have due dates for three main reasons: (1) to ensure equity in that all students are given the same preparation time to undertake the work required (2) to demonstrate that students are capable of producing an appropriate amount and standard of work within a reasonable time (3) to allow staff reasonable time to mark assignments and to submit marks to the University's examinations office by the required dates.

Late penalties:

Late assignments that have not been granted extensions and are of a standard to receive a pass or higher mark will attract a penalty of 5% of the maximum mark per day late including weekend days (e.g. if the assignment is worth 40 marks, the penalty is 2 marks per day late) until the mark reaches 50% of the maximum mark (e.g. 20 marks if the maximum is 40 marks). Assignments that are not of a pass standard will not have marks deducted and will fail regardless.

Assignments submitted more than 10 days late without prior approval from the unit coordinator will not be accepted and will be given a zero (0) mark.

For SPH policy, go to:

http://www.health.usyd.edu.au/current/coursework/SPHpolicies_assessment.pdf

Extensions:

For various reasons, you may sometimes experience difficulties in getting your assignments submitted on the due date. Requests for an extension for an assignment must be made ***in advance of the due date for that assignment***. The normal grounds for an extension being granted are bereavement, personal illness or illness in a family member requiring you to exercise a significant carer role. Extensions on the grounds of extreme time pressure because of uncontrollable work commitments may be granted by the unit coordinator only in exceptional circumstances. It is assumed that most students have demanding lives and that they will plan their study commitments accordingly.

These requests must be made directly to the unit coordinator by email, telephone or in person. The unit coordinator will note the date and time of the request and reply to the request by email with the decision as to whether an extension has been granted and, if so, stating the length of the extension.

Length of extension: Extensions granted by the Unit Coordinator will normally be no longer than three days. This is because it is assumed that you commenced preparation for your assignments soon after being advised of the assignment and not a few days before they were due. The length of the extension granted will therefore be built on the assumption that work should have commenced on the assignment well before the reason for the extension being requested.

Special Consideration:

The University has developed a policy to address a wide range of problems of a more severe nature including those to do with health which interfere with a student's ability to meet assessment requirements. If you believe it is likely that you will be unable to satisfactorily complete an assessment (either an exam or an assignment), the policy sets out procedures for applying for Special Consideration:

http://www.health.usyd.edu.au/current/coursework/special_consideration.pdf

You should take particular note of the strict criteria the University has outlined for the granting of Special Consideration. For example: Special Consideration will not be given in the following instances:

- Occasional brief or trivial illness that occurs one week or more before the assessment task is due
- Workloads from other units of study
- Employment – unless made more than 4 weeks before date of assessment
- If requests for extensions are made after the assessment is due

- Computer related problems – except if a police report is provided indicating, for example, burglary of both computer AND backups (Note –It is assumed that students keep regular back-ups of their work)

For University policy, go to: http://www.usyd.edu.au/su/ab/policies/Assess_Exam_Coursework.pdf















In recognition of the strict requirements for Special Consideration, special arrangements may be made if you are unable to meet assessment requirements or attend examinations because of one or more of the following situations:

- essential religious commitments or essential beliefs (including cultural and ceremonial commitments)
- compulsory legal absence (eg. jury duty, court summons)
- sporting or cultural commitments, including political/union commitments where the student is representing the University, state or nation
- birth or adoption of a child
- Australian defence force or emergency service commitments (eg. Army Reserve)

Special arrangements in these circumstances will be made by the relevant unit coordinator and may include but are not limited to the following: alternative dates for submission of assessments; provision of alternative assessment tasks; or alternative examination times/arrangements. Please note, however, that these arrangements will not be made unless students adhere to the timelines specified in the University's policy (see below). In practical terms, notice of intent to apply for special arrangements should be made as soon as you become aware of the need for them (eg, when you enrol when the arrangement is due to an established religious belief and timetable), the formal application should be made within one week of giving notice of intent to apply, and the application must be made in advance of the date of the examination or other assessment requirement (eg, due date for submission of assignment).

For University policy, go to: http://www.usyd.edu.au/ab/Special_Arrangements.pdf

Following is a table which outlines different scenarios for submitting assessment tasks. This may help you to decide the most appropriate steps to take if you are unable to complete an assessment task by the due date.

Assessment task distributed				
Work on assessment task  Submit on or before due date	Work on assessment task  Bereavement, personal illness, or carer of an ill child  Contact unit coordinator - request Extension (if approved - maximum of 3 days) 	Work on assessment task  Suffer serious illness or misadventure  Apply for Special Consideration – if approved, a revised date for submission will be agreed 	Work on assessment task  Suffer serious illness or	Work on assessment task 
Assessment task due date or exam date				
Assessment task marked without penalty	 Submit assessment task at agreed date (maximum of 3 days after due date) without penalty	 Submit assessment task at agreed date without penalty	Misadventure.  Apply for Special Consideration – if approved, a revised date for submission or exam will be agreed  Submit assessment task at agreed date without penalty	 Submit assessment task after due date <u>without</u> prior approval. Lose 5% of total possible marks per day late. Assessment task will not be accepted more than 10 days after due date.

Disposal of examination scripts

You are permitted, on request, to see the numerical marks for each of the assessment tasks that contribute to the final numerical mark for a unit of study.

You may, on request, peruse and if you wish, obtain a copy of your examination script (paper), providing: the request is within the script retention period, and the examination paper is not confidential (that is, it will not be used on more than one occasion). If the examination paper is confidential, then you may peruse the paper under supervision, but not obtain a copy.

Examination scripts will be kept for 4 months and then disposed of according to University policy.

For University policy, go to: http://www.usyd.edu.au/su/ab/policies/Assess_Exam_Coursework.pdf

Unsatisfactory progress

If you are deemed to not be making satisfactory progress in your course, then you may be asked to “show cause” why you should be allowed to re-enrol in the course.

In this situation, it is your responsibility to provide evidence to show where there is good cause for your unsatisfactory progress. However you should note that the University does not consider demands of employers, or pressure of employment, as appropriate reasons for granting Special Consideration. The rules for applying for Special Consideration are quite strict, so students should read the guidelines carefully. Guidelines and the relevant form can be downloaded from:

http://www.health.usyd.edu.au/current/coursework/special_consideration.pdf

For University policy, go to: http://www.usyd.edu.au/senate/policies/Cwk_Rule.pdf

Attendance

The School of Public Health recognises that as post-graduate students, there may be times where outside commitments clash with teaching sessions. Individual unit coordinators will specify any attendance requirements for their units of study, and you should familiarise yourself with all assessment requirements, especially any that relate to attendance at or participation in any specified sessions, at the start of the unit.

Where a situation arises when you cannot attend as required or participate in the required number of online discussions, you should discuss your situation with the unit coordinator as soon as possible and it may be possible to make alternative arrangements.

For University policy, go to: http://www.usyd.edu.au/senate/policies/Cwk_Rule.pdf

Concerns regarding marks and academic decisions

If you have concerns and wish to question a mark awarded for an assessment task, you should discuss your concerns with the unit coordinator as soon as possible (and in any case within 3 months of receiving your final mark). The unit coordinator will give you a full explanation of the reasons for your final mark.

If you are not happy with the unit coordinator's explanation or the way in which the unit coordinator has dealt with your concerns, you should set out these concerns in writing to the course coordinator, within 2 weeks of meeting with the unit coordinator. If the unit coordinator is also the course coordinator, the approach can instead be made to the Director of Teaching and Learning, the Head of School, or another senior academic designated by the course coordinator.

Whoever receives your expression of concern should acknowledge receipt of it within 3 days and seek to resolve the complaint within 2 weeks. That person will then advise you, in writing, of their decision on the matter.

If you are still not satisfied, you should approach the Head of School, if he or she has not already received your expression of concern, or the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine to discuss the matter – using a similar process to the above.

Please note that you can only request a re-mark of an assignment if you originally **failed** the assignment. Failed assignments are always double-marked, and you will need to make a good case for the re-mark. You also need to keep in mind that the new mark could be lower than your original mark and this new mark is the one which will be recorded as final.

For University policy, go to: http://www.usyd.edu.au/ab/policies/Student_Appeals_Ac_AB.pdf