INSTITUTE OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

Assessment Policy and Procedure

Academic Board Approved Policy

Table of Contents

1. Preamble 4
2. Scope 4
3. Principles 4
4. Policy details 5
5. Notification to students of assessment requirements 6
6. Assessment submission 7
7. Reasonable adjustment 8
8. Special consideration 8
9. Grading criteria 8
10. Approval and publication of results 10
11. Assessment record keeping 11
12. Quality assurance 11
13. Review of an assessment decision 11
14. Appeal 11

Appendix 1: Sample Forms of Assessment 12

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Related Legislations	HEC Policy Manual for Implementation of Semester System in Higher Education Institutions of Pakistan Academic Regulations and Examination Statutes of RIHE Minimum Quality Assurance Standards of relevant Professional Accreditation Councils (e.g., NBEAC, NACTE, NCEAC, PEC as applicable)
Policy Benchmarking	University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) Southern Cross Institute (SCI) Australia University of New England Canterbury Institute of Management (CIOM) Australia

1. Preamble

a. Purpose

Richmond Institute of Higher Education ('the Institute' or 'RIHE') has developed the *Assessment Policy and Procedure* ('the Policy') to ensure that all student assessment tasks are properly designed to determine the extent to which students achieve the specified learning outcomes of their course of study. This Policy enables the academic staff to make decisions about the performance of individual students within a unit of study to improve performance outcomes. As outlined in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) 2015 and the Pakistan Qualifications Framework (PQF), all assessments must be standards-based and provide evidence of the level of achievement with respect to learning outcomes and graduate attributes, consistent with HEC's Self-Assessment and quality assurance requirements.

b. Background

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process and an important aspect of maintaining academic standards. This Policy establishes guidelines on how RIHE will ensure the assessment design is constructively aligned with the learning outcomes of each unit and the course they contribute towards, and that students are properly informed about assessment criteria and procedures.

c. Definitions

For definitions, please refer to 'Glossary of Terms'.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all students and academic staff at the Institute.

3. Principles

All assessments must be standards-based and provide evidence of the level of achievement with respect to learning outcomes and graduate attributes.

a. Assessment Design Principles

To evaluate student learning effectively assessments must:

i. satisfy HEC/NQF requirements and relevant professional accreditation standards;
ii. align explicitly with stated learning outcomes of the unit such that assessment tasks provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate attainment of those outcomes;
iii. follow a transparent procedure with fairness, integrity and confidentiality;
iv. be relevant to industry-needs focused curriculum and instruction;
v. encourage and improve learning by providing constructive, meaningful and adequate feedback;
vi. promote academic integrity and good academic practice through appropriate acknowledgement and accurate citation of sources;
vii. cover a variety of cognitive and skill-based tasks that students can fairly achieve;
viii. be marked by appropriately qualified markers, with grades applied consistently in accordance with the Marking/Grading Criteria; and/or rubric and
ix. consist of a combination of assessment items for each unit, weighed in accordance with HEC's recommended assessment weightage ranges, with a total of 100% for each unit.

4. Policy Details

The *Assessment Policy and Procedure* describe the mechanism for gathering relevant evidence and making informed decisions to determine student learning outcomes at the Institute. Where students are granted credit for prior learning, assessment decisions are informed by the criteria outlined in the *Advanced Standing Policy and Procedure*. Refer to the *Advanced Standing Policy and Procedure* for eligibility criteria, application procedures, and approval processes.

a. Rationale for Assessment

Assessment drives student learning and can be a powerful form of learning itself as well as a measure of achievement. The rationale for RIHE assessment is:

i. to support the developmental progress of students in the cognitive, procedural and affective domains of learning relevant to their discipline and beyond their discipline in the form of generic skills;
ii. to provide relevant industry relevant information for ongoing evaluation within professional practice environments;
iii. review and improve the quality of the curriculum and the efficacy of the teaching and learning cycle;
iv. to measure and confirm the standard of student performance and achievement in relation to a unit's defined learning outcomes;
v. to reward student effort and achievement with an appropriate grade; and
vi. to promote, enhance and improve the quality of learning by providing feedback that is valid, constructive, informative, accurate, positive and appropriate to the student's needs.

b. Forms of Assessment

i. Normally, assessment of a unit of study will involve several forms of assessment including formative and summative assessment tasks.
ii. Formative assessment provides opportunities for students to provide evidence of their learning during the unit and receive feedback that supports their further development and refinement of knowledge and skills stated in the unit learning outcomes.
iii. Summative assessment seeks to measure the degree to which students have achieved the unit learning outcomes, usually conducted at the conclusion of the unit.
iv. A combination of forms of assessment items is used at the Institute. Those assessment forms include but not limited to examinations, reports, essays, quizzes, reflective journals, presentations and case study-based assessments. Additional forms of assessment may be used in units with prior approval of the Academic Board.
v. The weightage of each form of assessment within a unit will be determined by the responsible academic staff member in accordance with the following ranges recommended by HEC, and will total 100% for the unit:

Nature of Assessment	Weightage (Min/Max)
Quizzes	5 – 10%
Mid-Semester Examination	20 – 25%
Assignments / Presentations / Practicals	5 – 25%
Sessional Examination (where applicable)	10 – 15%
Final Examination	35 – 40%

vi. In the case of a course with a composition of theory and practical components (e.g. 3 credit hours theory and 1 credit hour practical), the weightage for the practical component may be considered up to 25%, subject to approval by the Academic Board.

c. Late Submission Penalties

The submission deadline for all assessments will be specified in the unit outlines provided to the students. Late submission penalties will apply.

i. Written assessment tasks submitted after midnight on the due date will be deemed as a late submission.
ii. Every day for up to ten (10) working days, a penalty of 5% of awarded marks for each day will be applied. The penalty will be calculated by subtracting 5% after marking the assessment task.
iii. or work submitted ten (10) working days after the due date, a mark of zero will be awarded.
iv. No marks will be given to students with unexpected and/or unapproved absence from in-class assessments (quiz, test, presentation and others).

d. Assessment Task Guidelines

i. For first-year (Level 100) units, the first formative assessment task should be held between Weeks 4-7 and should be worth 10% to 30% (unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board) of the total grade.
ii. For advanced second/third-year units, the assessment strategy will incorporate advanced and diverse forms of evaluation to better measure students' depth of understanding, critical thinking, and application skills in their field of study. Assessments may include, but are not limited to, project-based work, comprehensive case studies, reflective journals, peer-reviewed assessments, presentations, and research papers.
iii. Final examinations will be between 1.5 and 2 hours in duration, with an additional 10 minutes of reading time, while formative quizzes will be between 30 and 45 minutes in duration with no additional reading time.
iv. For graduate courses, the initial formative assessment is typically scheduled between Weeks 4 and 7, with weightage ranging from 10% to a significant portion of the total grade (unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board). Assessments at this level are notably more rigorous.
v. Adjustments to assessment requirements, including assessment criteria, may be made to meet the standards of relevant professional accreditation bodies (such as PEC, PMDC, PBA, PCP or ICAP), subject to approval by the Academic Board.
vi. A minimum attendance of seventy-five (75) percent in a unit, in accordance with HEC guidelines, is required for a student to be eligible to sit an examination, unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board.
vii. Detailed information on assessment items and their weightage is provided to all students in all unit outlines.

5. Notification to Students of Assessment Requirements

Students are provided with clear, timely and comprehensive information regarding assessment requirements to support effective engagement and transparency.

a. Communication of Assessment Information

i. The unit outline will be made available to students in the Learning Management System (LMS) prior to, or at the commencement of, the teaching period. Assessment requirements will be communicated to students early in the teaching period.
ii. The unit outline will provide the specifics of all assessment tasks including a description of the unit's objectives and learning outcomes including the relationship between each assessment task and the unit learning outcomes as well as the overall learning outcomes of the course and the

Institute's Graduate Attributes.

iii. The assessment schedule will provide the date and time that each assessment is due along with advice on how the assessment is submitted or conducted. The relative weighting of each assessment task is clearly stated and penalties for late submission are explained.

iv. The preferred referencing system (APA 7th Edition) is stated and links to resources for referencing are provided along with links to information regarding penalties for poor referencing and plagiarism.

v. No changes to assessment tasks will be actioned during a term unless exceptional circumstances require this and only with the approval of the Principal.

b. Assessment Feedback

i. Students must receive feedback that refers to the criteria in the rubric on their work in a timely manner with guidance on how to improve the quality of their work in subsequent assessments.

ii. The provided feedback should acknowledge the efforts of the individual student and should draw on the unit learning outcomes to explain achievement and areas for improvement.

iii. The students will receive assessment feedback in a timely manner. The turnaround period for assessment items is ten (10) working days from the submission date.The ten (10) working days assessment feedback applies to moderated and/or unmoderated assessment items.

6. Assessment Submission

Assessment submission requirements are designed to ensure fairness, transparency and academic integrity in the submission and management of student assessment tasks.

a. Submission Requirements and Extensions

All assessment items must be submitted in accordance with the requirements and due dates as outlined in the unit outlines. Assessment items submitted after the due date will attract penalties. The assessment due date extensions can only be granted under compassionate or compelling circumstances, with documentary evidence and in accordance with this Policy.

i. Assessment tasks must be submitted by the students by the due date unless the student has an approved extension.

ii. Students must apply for an extension to the Student Support Manager before the due date by submitting *Assessment Extension Application Form*.

iii. Assessment extensions may be granted for whole unit or individual assessment under the discretion of lecturer for a limited time only (maximum of 5 working days).

iv. Applications for longer extensions will be considered as a special consideration and must be submitted in advance of the submission date to the Academic Director. The student must provide a valid reason and evidence for their request for extension. Please see section *'Special Consideration'* for detailed information.

v. To maintain the integrity of the assessment extension process, RIHE will keep records of the extension applications as per the *Records Management Policy*.

b. Requirements for Successful Completion of a Unit of Study

i. In order to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes, students must attempt all summative assessment tasks and achieve at least 50% of the total marks for the unit of study to pass, consistent with HEC's minimum passing threshold. Where professional accreditation conditions apply, assessments will comply with the accrediting body's conditions.

ii. Consistent with HEC's semester examination guidelines, there is no supplementary examination in the semester system; a student who fails a unit (F grade) is required to repeat the unit. An Incomplete (I) grade may only be awarded in exceptional circumstances beyond a student's control, such as a serious accident, family tragedy, or serious health condition, in accordance with the *Special Consideration* provisions of this Policy.

iii. Students who are unable to complete an assessment task due to compelling or compassionate circumstances may be granted a Deferred Assessment in accordance with the *Special Consideration* provisions of this Policy, subject to submission of appropriate supporting documentation.
iv. For professional practice units, students must demonstrate an attained competency of practice to pass the professional practice placement.
v. Students are required to submit all assessment work online so that it can be subject to electronic scanning to detect plagiarism, artificial intelligence use and/or academic misconduct through 'Turnitin' or an equivalent similarity-detection software. Such software primarily focuses on detecting plagiarism and artificial intelligence use by comparing submitted documents with a vast database of sources, including academic papers, websites, books, and other documents.

7. Reasonable Adjustment

RIHE is committed to providing reasonable adjustments to support equitable access to learning and assessment for students with additional needs, in accordance with relevant legislation and institutional policy.

a. Provision of Reasonable Adjustment

Request for reasonable adjustment must be made to the Principal by submitting *the Reasonable Adjustment Application Form*. Where the requested reasonable adjustment has financial implications, the Principal will seek the approval of the Governing Council.

i. RIHE also recognises students may have additional needs that can affect learning, including but not limited to:
- mental health conditions;
- medical conditions or ongoing illnesses;
- learning difficulties;
- other relevant circumstances.

ii. Reasonable adjustment to the learning environment or assessment tasks will be determined based on an assessment of the application for reasonable adjustment.

8. Special Consideration

RIHE provides a formal process for students to seek special consideration where compelling or compassionate circumstances impact their ability to complete assessment tasks.

a) Application and Determination of Special Consideration

Students seeking special consideration must submit a Special Consideration Application Form within five (5) working days of the relevant assessment due date.

i. Special consideration may be granted where a student experiences compassionate or compelling circumstances that adversely affect their ability to complete an assessment task. Students should contact the Academic Director for advice regarding possible outcomes including deferment, or an extension to the assessment due date.
ii. Academic Board will make reasonable efforts to support students facing unforeseen circumstances and RIHE will ensure appropriate support mechanisms are in place for students granted special consideration.

9. Grading Criteria

a. General Grading Structure

i. Student assessment performance in individual units shall be graded in accordance with the relative grading methodology recommended by HEC for adoption in Higher Education

Institutions, using the following letter grades and percentage ranges:

Grade	Code	Percentage Range	Description
Excellent (outstanding performance)	A	85% and above	Complete and comprehensive understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to an outstanding level; demonstration of an extremely high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and excellent achievement of all major and minor unit learning outcomes.
Very Good	A-	80-84%	Very high level of understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to a very high level; comprehensive achievement of all major and minor learning outcomes of the unit.
Good	B+	75-79%	High level of understanding of the unit content with strong interpretive and analytical ability; achievement of all major learning outcomes and most minor learning outcomes.
Above Average	B	71-74%	Good understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to a good level; achievement of all major learning outcomes with some minor outcomes not fully achieved.
Satisfactory	B-	68-70%	Satisfactory understanding of the unit content and adequate development of relevant skills; achievement of most major learning outcomes.
Average	C+	64-67%	Adequate understanding of most of the basic unit content; adequate interpretive and analytical ability; achievement of the majority of major learning outcomes.
Adequate	C	61-63%	Adequate understanding of the basic unit content and satisfactory development of relevant skills; achievement of major learning outcomes with some minor outcomes not achieved.
Below Average	C-	58-60%	Basic but incomplete understanding of the unit content; limited interpretive and analytical ability; achievement of some major learning outcomes.
Marginal	D+	54-57%	Minimum acceptable understanding of the basic unit content; limited development of relevant skills; achievement of the minimum required learning outcomes.
Pass (competent level of performance)	D	50-53%	Adequate understanding of most of the basic unit content sufficient to demonstrate achievement of the minimum required learning outcomes of the unit.
Fail (unsatisfactory performance)	F	below 50%	Inadequate understanding of the basic unit content; failure to develop relevant skills;

			insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve some or all major and minor learning outcomes of the unit.

ii. The Grade Point Average (GPA) for a semester and the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) will be computed in accordance with the HEC-prescribed formula, based on the credit hours and grade points earned for each unit. The following additional grade/status codes may also apply:

Status	Code	Description
Incomplete	I	A final grade is yet to be awarded as the student has not completed all assessment tasks due to exceptional circumstances beyond their control (e.g. serious accident, family tragedy, serious health condition). This is a temporary grade that must be finalised within the timeframe set by the Academic Board.
Withdrawn	W	The student has withdrawn from the course within the approved add/drop or withdrawal period without academic penalty; the grade has no impact on GPA/CGPA calculation.
Repeat	R	The student has repeated a unit in which an F grade (or, where institutionally approved, a D grade) was previously obtained; only the better grade is used in the calculation of CGPA, in accordance with HEC guidelines.
Advanced Standing	AS	Credit has been granted for the unit of study following an application and its approval for Advanced Standing / credit transfer.
Deferred Assessment	DEF	Deferral of one or more assessment tasks has been granted via Special Consideration.
Absent Fail	AF	The student did not attempt one or more required assessment tasks without approved special consideration and scored less than 50% of the total marks for the unit of study.

10. Approval and Publication of Results

RIHE ensures that student assessment results are approved, ratified and released through a formal governance process to maintain accuracy, integrity and accountability.

a. Approval and Release of Results
   i. Following the conclusion of the teaching period, the unit lecturers will submit the Gradebooks of each unit's in-semester assessment marks to their relevant Academic Director.
   ii. Following the conclusion of final exam/assessments, the lecturers will submit finalised Gradebooks including all marks and grades to the relevant Academic Director.
b. The Academic Directors will conduct an internal review meeting to examine assessment data and gradebooks on a student-by-student basis prior to submission to the Principal.
c. The Principal will present semester grades to Learning & Teaching Committee for approval.
d. The Principal will present the Learning & Teaching Committee approved grades to the Academic Board for ratification.
e. The Academic Board ratified grades will be handed to the Student Support Manager for release.
f. If the supplementary assessment marks/grades are not available with the rest of the student grades of a semester, those results will be approved by the Academic Board under special submission by the

Principal.

g. The Student Support Manager is responsible for publication of the official examination timetable, the release of official result statements and unofficial semester academic records.
h. Results in individual assessments and grades awarded in a unit will be displayed or published to each student on the Institute's Learning Management System.
i. No student's grade or mark will be lowered after it has been officially released except in the case of proven academic misconduct by the student or an administrative error, with the final decision to be made by the Principal.

11. Assessment Record Keeping

RIHE will ensure an ongoing record of student marks and grades is securely maintained in accordance with the *Records Management Policy and Procedure*.

12. Quality Assurance

The integrity of academic assessment at the Institute will be maintained as per the *Academic Integrity Policy.*

13. Review of an Assessment Decision

A student may request a review of an assessment decision. In the first instance, students should approach the lecturer to discuss their concerns about the assessment decision. Students must submit a request for appeal within five (5) working days of receiving formal notification of the assessment result. A student may request a review of an assessment decision in accordance with the appeal process provided in *Student Grievance Management Policy and Procedure.*

14. Appeal

Students may appeal against a decision made under this Policy and associated Procedure. The student's appeal will be dealt with in accordance with the Institute's grievance handling procedures outlined in the *Student Grievance Management Policy and Procedure.*

Appendix I: Sample Forms of Assessment

Quizzes	Quizzes test whether students study regularly and have a good grasp of material covered in lectures and tutorials. Quizzes usually involve short descriptive or computational answers that allow academic staff to assess understanding as well as English language proficiency. Words such as 'explain', 'describe' and 'relate' should characterise quiz questions.
Mid-Semester and Final Examination	Examinations are (usually) closed-book assessments that test knowledge acquired during the semester and may include a combination of practical, theoretical, self-reflective and case-study questions covering topics taught up to that point in the term.
Case Study / Written Report	Case studies and reports encourage students to apply academic learning to real-world scenarios. While they vary in length, they must adhere to the same academic standards as an essay, including appropriate referencing (APA 7th edition) and evidence of adequate research, typically demonstrated through a literature review.
Project / Practical Exercise	Projects and practical exercises may be undertaken individually or in groups and address a practical element of a unit. They may use various media to resolve a material or technical problem and frequently include a written report, allowing students to demonstrate applied or technical skills.
Group Work and/or Presentations	Group presentations are usually accompanied by a written report of adequate length and appropriate format that demonstrates the research problem, key literature, findings and recommendations. Group work demonstrates a student's ability to work and interact with others and reflects common professional practice.