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Assessment Policy

This assessment policy applies to postgraduate courses offered by Kaplan.

Commencement

This policy was ratified by the Academic Committee in December 2009 for commencement on January 1, 2010

Purpose

The purpose of the Assessment Policy is to:

- outline the principles that underpin Kaplan's approach to the development and implementation of assessment for its postgraduate courses
- establish the responsibilities and obligations of Kaplan and their student's in relation to assessment
- set out the procedures, rules and regulations governing assessment

The Assessment Process

The following information provides details of the stages in the assessment process. These stages are provided to facilitate the design, development and implementation of assessment by Kaplan.

Designing the assessment

Assessment standards

The following standards underpin assessment strategies applied by Kaplan.

1. Assessment will comply with the principles of fairness, equity, validity, reliability, flexibility, authenticity and sufficiency.
2. Assessment will involve the evaluation of sufficient evidence to enable judgments to be made about whether the subject learning outcomes and related course outcomes have been achieved.
3. Assessment will focus on the application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace and will be aligned with the generic attributes of a Kaplan graduate
4. Assessment will comply with the assessment requirements specified in Australian higher education courses and will lead to the issuing of a qualification and be completed in English.
5. Assessments will be validated by reference to Task Force members, practitioners and Kaplan educators
6. Students will be provided with information about the assessment process, the context and purpose of the assessment tasks and the procedures for reassessment and appeals of assessment results
7. Formative assessment will be used to provide students with progressive feedback on their learning to enable improved performance on current or subsequent tasks.

8. Summative assessment will be used to determine a student's level of knowledge and skill at the conclusion of a subject. It certifies the attainment of a standard, and is used as the basis for progression in a course.
9. The assessment process will provide for credit transfer, recognition of prior learning and recognition of professional and workplace experience.

Assessment events

The following principles apply to assessment events:

- each subject will contain at least two assessment events constructed in a form and conducted in a manner appropriate to the subject and student cohort.
- each assessment event will have a value of no more than 70% or no less than 30% of the total subject requirement.

Variations to this general pattern may be designed as required to ensure that assessment events are appropriate to the subject and the learning outcomes.

Assessment instruments

Assessment instruments, which may include examinations, written papers, presentations, participation etc, will be designed and developed:

- in collaboration between Kaplan and the subject matter experts/Task Force members
- to reflect the integration and application of skills, knowledge and attitudes required for the learning outcomes being assessed
- to ensure that students have an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their level of achievement in relation to the purpose of the subject
- to ensure they are appropriate for the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level of the course

Assessment instruments will be trialled prior to implementation where practicable.

Developing the Marking Guide

Marking Guides will be provided for all assessment tools and will be developed and validated by subject matter experts, practitioners, Task Force members and Kaplan educators. Validation will occur to ensure the content is technically correct, that the answers address the assessment questions and learning outcomes, that the level of assessment is appropriate and that the mark allocation is fair and clear to students and markers. The National Manager, Higher Education must approve exceptions to this approach.

Prior to the release of the Marking Guide to all markers, the following internal quality assurance process will be implemented. This involves:

- lead markers will mark a sample of at least three student assessments
- lead markers meeting to review the marked papers for intra-marker discrepancy to eliminate Marking Guide ambiguity
- adjusting the Marking Guide as required

In some cases a marker briefing for all markers or for new markers may be included in this process as a means of support and training.

Conducting the assessment

Supporting the student

Kaplan provides strategies to support students through their learning and assessment including:

- access to subject matter experts through discussion forums and other online formats
- subject rooms that provide a range of resources and information to assist students in their studies (e.g. case studies, web sites, library resources, data bases)
- opportunity to practise and acquire skills and knowledge through self assessment items and other resources
- Student Advisors who can assist students with specific study needs such as special consideration, reasonable adjustment (see below). For other learning support needs such as basic literacy, numeracy or English students may be referred to specialists in a particular area for assistance.
- Students should refer to the course entry requirements if their previous study was not completed in English, or whose work in the finance industry was not carried out in English.

Assignments

Students have access to their assignment via their online Subject Rooms:

- in week one (1) of the trimester for assessments due in week 5/6
- by week six (6) of the trimester for assessments due in week 11/12

Students must follow the guidelines set out on the assignment cover page and submit their work according to the instructions provided.

Assignments will vary in length depending on the task at hand and may be a combination of short answer or essay type questions. Word counts will be specified within the item, will not exceed 6000 words in total for any one assignment.

Examinations

Students can gain access to information on their examination via their online Subject Rooms. Examination will vary in length and type may be a combination of short answer or essay type questions, or multiple choice questions. No examination will be longer than 3 hours for a 6 credit point subject.

Students are not permitted to remove any items from the examination room. This includes exam papers, answer booklets, scrap paper, or other items that may be deemed to put the examination, or future examinations at risk. Any student who breaks these rules will be subject to the penalties outlined in the Student Misconduct policy

Kaplan may employ external invigilators at exam venues to manage the examination. Information on the administration of these events will be provided to invigilators at these venues.

Kaplan uses appropriate strategies to ensure that examination papers are kept secure at all times.

Assessment timetable

Assessments are scheduled to ensure that a student's academic demands are taken into consideration. No student will be required to sit more than two examinations in one day. Details of the assessment due dates for a subject are available prior to enrolment with specific dates made known to students at the beginning of the trimester.

Students with special needs or circumstances

Kaplan provides support for students with a range of needs. These are outlined below.

Reasonable adjustment

Reasonable adjustment is the process used to ensure that a student with documented special needs is still able to attempt the assessment requirements of a subject by modifying or adjusting the assessment without lessening the quality or demand of the assessment. The determination of 'reasonableness' requires judgement that must take into account the impact on the organisation and the need to maintain the integrity of the subject or the learning outcome.

Adjustments/assistance students receive (without compromising the academic integrity of the course) will be based on the documentation provided and discussions with the student and staff. Reasonable adjustment may include (but not be limited to):

- the use of adaptive technology or equipment (e.g. seating, PC)
- alternative methods of assessment, such as oral assessment
- individual conditions of assessment (e.g. seating arrangements, toilet/rest/exercise breaks, bite sized food/drink)
- large print materials and/or coloured exam paper
- scribes (up to 10 minutes per hour additional time), or
- additional time during an examination for resting/writing (up to 10 minutes per hour)

For further information refer to the 'Reasonable Adjustment' form in the Study Information section of the Kaplan website or speak to an Academic Advisor.

Special consideration

Students may apply for special consideration if, through events such as serious illness, bereavement or personal trauma they are prevented from completing an assignment or sitting an examination, or if they feel their performance has been affected by the event.

Applications for special consideration must be made using the 'special consideration form' as soon as possible before the due date of the assessment (or within 24 hours after the event). Options for students may include:

- deferring the assessment to the next study period the subject is offered
- sitting the exam within 48 hours of the original date
- having their assessment grade or final grade adjusted, or
- having extra time to complete their assignment (or complete a different assignment if available)

Work pressures and other personal or business commitments, unless exceptional, will not be accepted as valid reasons for special consideration. Students feeling the negative impact of these pressures should discuss their enrolment with their nominated student advisor.

Record of all applications for special consideration are maintained, the basis on which the decision is made and any changes made to a student's records or results.

Marking and providing feedback

Assessor and marker qualifications

Assessors will be drawn from a pool of qualified practitioners who have relevant experience in the subject topic being assessed.

Marking and assessment criteria

Marking an assessment will be conducted in accordance with the Marking Guides provided. Kaplan uses a criterion based-referencing approach to assessment where students are assessed against a pre-determined set of criteria.

100% multiple choice question examinations will be marked by digitally scanned and marked by an Optical Mark Reading Scanner.

Feedback to students

Constructive feedback is provided to students in a timely manner throughout the trimester and assessment process. Methods of providing feedback in the formative stages of learning may include:

- self-assessment exercises and learning activities throughout the subject material
- summaries that check a student's progress
- Discussion Forums or other online formats
- individual feedback on a student's assessment
- modified answer guides provided to the cohort in the form of a summary sheet.

Feedback following summative assessment should provide students with sufficient information to act on any identified competency or learning gaps.

Internal results moderation and ratification

Prior to their release, assessment results are reviewed by Kaplan's Results Ratification Committee. The committee will analyse the results for each assessment entered in the Kaplan database following completion of marking and consider any anomalies and to monitor marker/assessor variability and reliability of the assessment instrument. Based on the analysis the committee may:

- accept the results
- order a review or remark of assessment items based on marker means falling outside the acceptable range
- scale the assessment marks

The Ratification Committee will present any findings to the Academic Committee each trimester.

Provision of Assessment results

Assessment results, both individual and overall, are generally available 4 weeks after the assessment due date. Students can access their results in the Subject Room via their personal ID number and password. Final subject results are mailed to students.

To ensure student confidentiality and compliance with privacy legislation Kaplan **will not** release assessment results over the telephone, by email or to another party without the student's written permission. Students may obtain a copy of the Privacy Policy from Kaplan's website.

Reporting results

Pass requirements

Students must make a reasonable attempt in all assessment events in order to be eligible to complete the subject and must achieve a combined result from all assessment events of at least 50% to pass the subject.

If a student fails any individual piece of assessment they will be eligible to continue in the subject and attain a pass in the subject, provided their combined result from all assessment events in the subject is 50% or above.

Assessment results

Subject results on student records and transcripts will be recorded as grades and reported in the table below.

Grade	Mark range	Comment
High Distinction	85 – 100	
Distinction	75 – 84	
Credit	65 – 74	
Pass	50 – 64	
Fail	0 – 49	
Absent Fail	0	This result indicates that a student did not submit or sit any assessment events for a subject the student did not formally withdraw from the subject.
Withdrawn no penalty		This result indicates that a student has formally notified Kaplan of their withdraw from the subject 48 hours prior to the first assessment date.
Withdrawn fail		This result indicates that a student has formally notified Kaplan of their withdrawal from a subject after the first assessment date and prior to the final assessment date. Assessment items already completed in the subject may be carried over to the next assessment period in special circumstances
Exempt		This result indicates that a student has achieved the assessment requirements for the subject through previous study or through mutual recognition.
Disciplinary fail		This result applies where a student is awarded a fail in a subject as a result of misconduct. A 'Disciplinary fail' will be recorded internally and a Fail result reported on the Transcript. (See Kaplan's Student Misconduct Policy available on Kaplan's website for further information).
Deferred		A temporary result indicating that a student has been prevented from completing an assessment through illness or exceptional circumstances and a formal application for special consideration has been approved. Deferred subjects should be finalised by the end of the next trimester in which the subject is offered.

Re-marks and grievances

Kaplan documents and implements policies and procedures for dealing with student grievances and appeals in a constructive and timely manner. Complete information on the grievance process is outlined in detail in the Student Grievance Policy. Students may obtain a copy of the policy from Kaplan's website.

Students should speak to their academic advisor if they believe that there has been:

- a calculation error in the totalling of marks

- questions, or parts of questions that have not been marked
- inconsistency between marks awarded and feedback provided.

The advisor may complete a check of the calculations or arrange for the original marker to complete the marking or check the feedback relative to the marks awarded. There is no fee for this service.

Re-mark of assessment

Students may apply to have an assessment event[^] re-marked, for a fee, if there is just cause to do so. The re-mark process is outlined below:

- The student must submit a completed 'Remark request form' available from the 'Study information' section of the Kaplan website, within ten (10) working days of release of the assessment results.
- If Kaplan approves a re-mark, the student will be advised and the re-mark fee will be applied.
- An independent lead marker will review the marking of the original assessment.
- If the lead marker confirms that the original marking is accurate, the original mark allocation will stand. There will be no refund of the re-mark application fee.
- If the lead marker confirms that the original marking did not accurately reflect the result of the assessment item, the item will be remarked by the lead marker and the results amended. The revised mark (higher or lower) awarded by the lead marker will be recorded as their final result.
- All outcomes of re-marks are reviewed and signed off by the Kaplan Results Ratification Committee or its nominated representative prior to release to students.
- The student will be advised of the re-mark result within fifteen (15) working days of the Re-mark request form being received by Kaplan. The re-mark fee will be refunded, minus a \$70 admin fee.
- Students are permitted one re-mark per assessment event.

[^] Where the assessment event is a 100% multiple choice examination, a fee of \$50 will be charged should the student wish to have their paper manually remarked. This fee will be refunded where an error in the marking allocation is identified.

Students not satisfied with the re-mark process may wish to lodge a student grievance. Details can be found in the 'Study information' section of the Kaplan website.

Guidelines for releasing student marks

Kaplan students are entitled to access their final subject mark, raw and adjusted assignment mark and raw and adjusted examination mark upon submission of a 'request for marks' form for a period of up to 12 months from the date marks are released.

The release of marks does not entitle the student to contest the allocation of marks or the quality assurance processes adopted by Kaplan to ensure equity within and between student cohorts and marking batches.

Viewing examination papers

Students may view their marked examination papers (paper based and computer answer sheet) under supervision. Requests to view examination papers should be made separately in writing to the student's local Kaplan office. Students may not copy the examination paper or remove it from Kaplan's premises. There is no charge to a student for this service.

General information

Rights and responsibilities

Student

Students have a right to:

- be informed of all aspects of assessment policies and practices;
- consistent application of policies and practices;
- the timely return of the results with appropriate feedback;
- information which allows them to calibrate their performance against the criteria for each subject;
- review their assessment papers for the duration of the assessment retention period;
- have access to their student file and any other documents relating to the assessment;
- appeal against academic decisions made on the basis of flawed processes, during the appeal period; and be informed of mechanisms for appeal.

Students have a responsibility to:

- behave ethically and appropriately, avoiding any action or behaviour which would unfairly disadvantage or advantage another student, or put Kaplan at risk;
- be aware of the rules of progression for each subject and the requirements for the award;
- be aware of, and abide by any Kaplan's education policies available on the web site (including assessment, progression, academic misconduct and grievance);
- be aware of the means for seeking assistance within Kaplan and to notify advisors as early as possible if difficulties arise with the timing or other requirements of assessment tasks
- be aware of any requirements, including timetables, for examinations and other assessment tasks;
- submit assessment items on time, including a declaration that the assignment is their own work and that they are aware of the requirements relating to collusion and plagiarism;
- advise Kaplan of any substantial absence and be aware of the appropriate use of medical and other certificates in applications for special consideration.

Kaplan

Kaplan have a responsibility to ensure that:

- academic policies are explicit and consistently applied;
- assessment practices are explicit, fair, transparent and consistent across the institution and are available to staff and students;
- information on assessment type, weighting and due week is available to students at enrolment;
- resources are available to provide staff and practitioners with access to information and expertise on the theory and practice of assessment;
- formative and summative feedback is available to students in a timely manner;
- assessment tasks reflect the relevant learning outcomes of the subject, the outcomes of the course and the generic attributes of graduates, as appropriate to the academic level of the students;

- examination scripts and other forms of summative assessment are held for the mandated script retention period and appeal period for review by students;
- any scaling or adjusting of marks is undertaken with appropriate strategies;
- staff and practitioners have the opportunity to evaluate their own performance based on agreed standards and other methods of feedback;
- students privacy is maintained in relation to any matters relating to assessment;
- do not discuss results or disclose personal information about students to anyone who does not have a legitimate right and need to have access to the information in order to carry out their duties;

Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related Kaplan policies and documents:

- Student Grievance Policy
- Access and Equity Policy
- Student Misconduct Policy
- Refund Policy

Students may obtain a copy of Kaplan's policies and documents from Kaplan's website
<<http://www.kaplanprofessional.edu.au>>

Responsible Officer

The responsible officer for the implementation and relevant training of this policy is the Manager, Education Design and Governance.