



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

# Guide for Reviewing Assessment

**Prompts and guidelines for monitoring and  
enhancing assessment practices**

**For subject coordinators, course coordinators  
and others involved in assessment practice  
and policy development**

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The *Guide for Reviewing Assessment* was developed for the University of Melbourne by Dr Kerri-Lee Harris of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education.

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# Guide for Reviewing Assessment

The University of Melbourne recognises the central importance of the assessment of student learning in the educational process. Well-designed assessment helps to define the curriculum and to guide effective learning. Well-designed assessment is also fair to all students and provides both helpful and timely feedback.

The *Guide for Reviewing Assessment* is a question-based checklist of the fundamental aspects of effective assessment. The guide can be used to evaluate current assessment practice, and to test the merits of alternative approaches. It is a tool for practical application, not a reference document. It provides a framework, not a prescription.

This guide was developed during 2005 in response to a recommendation arising from an extensive review of assessment practices at The University of Melbourne (2002-4), and subsequently incorporated into The University of Melbourne's Teaching and Learning Management Plan, 2005:

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), The University of Melbourne

In 2002 the Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee (TALQAC) established the Working Group on Assessment, charged with the responsibility of conducting a review of assessment and grading practices at University, faculty, and departmental level. The Working Group on Assessment released a report of its findings in 2004. It recommended that, while it is inappropriate to set in place constraints on faculties and departments with respect to their diverse approaches to assessment, the University should develop guiding principles to encourage the improvement of assessment policy and practice.

Source: <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/dvc-academic/responsibilities.html#d> (accessed 6/9/05)

Teaching and Learning Management Plan 2005

Strategy 3:

Ensure that modes of assessment are making an effective contribution to the quality and standards of learning outcomes

3.1: Establish the *Sixteen Indicators of Effective Assessment in Higher Education* in educational practice of faculties, departments, and in the expectations of academic staff and students

Development of checklists for assessment practices, developed by the CSHE for distribution to faculties and departments to assist efforts to improve assessment along the lines of the Sixteen Indicators.

Source: <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/dvc-academic/docs/TeachingPlan05.pdf> (accessed 6/9/05)

Helpful comments and suggestions were received from numerous academic staff during the development of this guide. In particular, the contribution of members of Academic Programs Committee (APC), Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance Committee (TaLQAC) and the Assessment Implementation Working Group is gratefully acknowledged.

The *Guide for Reviewing Assessment* is primarily designed for use by coordinators of subjects and courses. However, it may be of use to anyone involved in assessment design, assessment practice or assessment policy development.

## The multiple purposes of assessment

Effective assessment of student learning is a complex and challenging task. Many factors contribute to this complexity, but perhaps the principal challenge relates to the multiple purposes of assessment.

Assessment is used:

- to **measure** students' preparedness for further study or professional accreditation;
- to **rank** students, relative to one another, for the purposes of competitive scholarships or other opportunities;
- to **provide feedback on student learning** for both students and staff;
- to **provide feedback on teaching** for staff;
- to **define** and **protect academic standards**; and
- to **direct** students' learning.

We encourage users of this guide to bear in mind these multiple purposes of assessment as they review and evaluate their assessment design and practice. Effective assessment for a subject or course will typically include a mix of assessment types, selected and designed to meet these multiple and various demands.

## Structure of the *Guide for Reviewing Assessment*

The *Guide for Reviewing Assessment* is a question-based checklist of the fundamental aspects of effective assessment. It is structured around the following themes:

- Matching assessment, learning exercises and objectives  
In what ways is it ensured that assessment is matched to subject and course objectives, including generic skills?
- Variety and complexity in assessment  
In what ways is it ensured that students experience appropriate variety and increasing complexity in assessment tasks?
- The timing of assessment  
In what ways is it ensured that assessment tasks are timed appropriately?
- Informing students  
How are students informed about assessment purpose, requirements and expectations?
- Equity and fairness  
In what ways is student diversity considered and fairness of assessment ensured?
- Feedback to students  
In what ways are opportunities for timely and helpful feedback provided to students?
- Feedback to staff  
In what ways do assessment tasks provide staff with feedback on student learning?

Each theme is supported by trigger questions and example responses. The example responses are provided as illustration only. They are not intended as exemplars or models of best practice. They are context-specific, as all responses will be. Departments and/or faculties are encouraged to supplement or replace these examples with ones they believe best illustrate thoughtful and practical approaches to assessment relevant to their disciplines and teaching and learning environments.

Included as appendices to the guide are the following:

Appendix 1. The *16 Indicators of Effective Assessment in Higher Education* – the principles which underpin this guide.

Appendix 2. Some of the 'Frequently Asked Questions' regarding assessment – with suggestions and references for further reading.

## Potential applications of the *Guide for Reviewing Assessment*

While primarily designed for subject coordinators, the *Guide* may support assessment review at a number of levels.

<i>Who might use the Guide?</i>	<i>For what purpose?</i>	<i>How?</i>
Subject coordinators	<b>1. Subject review, planning and development</b>	By addressing each of the questions at the level of a specific subject
Course coordinators Major or stream coordinators Associate Deans	<b>2. Course / program review, planning and development</b>	↓ Using responses collected from subject coordinators (step 1) to review and coordinate assessment practices across a course.
Teaching review committees Heads of departments Associate Deans Deans	<b>3. Accountability and reporting</b>	↓ Using the consolidated information (collected & collated in steps 1-2) as the basis for reporting.
Heads of departments Associate Deans Deans	<b>4. Formulating assessment policies</b>	↓ Using the reports (step 3) to identify assessment issues and approaches requiring policy support. Such policy statements might form part of either departmental or faculty-level assessment policy statements.

The *Guide for Reviewing Assessment* addresses the broad, pedagogical issues surrounding effective assessment of student learning. It is not a comprehensive checklist for formulation of assessment policy. For example, assessment policies of departments and/or faculties need to describe administrative and procedural matters such as 'special consideration', composition and role of the examination board, and security of examinations. Such matters are not addressed in this guide.

For more ideas, strategies and resources for quality student assessment in Australian universities, visit the **Assessing Learning in Australian Universities** website:  
<http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/>

## Matching assessment, learning exercises and objectives

<b>Questions</b>	<p><b>In what ways is it ensured that assessment is matched to subject and course objectives, including generic skills?</b></p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the relationships between subject objectives, learning exercises and assessment tasks made explicit?</li> <li>• Taken together, does the suite of assessment tasks that a student experiences over the course of their studies align with the graduate attributes specified for that course?</li> </ul>
<b>Examples</b>	<p><b><i>Critical analysis &amp; oral communication</i></b></p> <p><b>Subject objectives</b> include: “<i>Students develop the ability to critically analyse scientific research papers</i>”; and “<i>Students develop oral and written communication skills, including public speaking</i>”</p> <p><b>Learning:</b> Student groups are <b>assigned a scientific paper</b> to review and describe as an <b>oral presentation</b> (several weeks later). One lecture is devoted to <i>modeling the process</i> of analysing a scientific paper. Students are encouraged to <i>practise</i> their talks and provide feedback within their group (<i>peer review</i>).</p> <p><b>Assessment:</b> Students are assessed, individually, on the part of the paper that they each analysed and presented. 70% of the mark is for demonstrated understanding and explanation, 30% for the technical quality of the presentation.</p> <p>The <b>connections</b> between the <b>objectives, learning process</b> and <b>assessment</b> of the group assignment are <b>made explicit</b> to students early in semester, both in class and via the subject website (but are not detailed in the Handbook entry).</p> <p><b><i>Course mapping of a major by a Department</i></b></p> <p>For those degree majors that include several subjects taught by this Department:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the core subject combinations for the major are identified;</li> <li>2. this information is used to produce a ‘course map’, showing the most common subject combinations across the three year levels of the course;</li> <li>3. information is collected for each of these subjects (E.g. the subject coordinators’ completed copies of the ‘Guide for Reviewing Assessment’, supplemented by other descriptive material such as lecture outlines)</li> <li>4. learning and assessment tasks for these subjects are plotted onto the course map.</li> </ol> <p>This course map is used to <b>identify gaps or redundancies</b> in the development and assessment of the <b>graduate attributes for the course</b>, and to check that the tasks (both learning and assessment) <b>increase in complexity*</b> across the year levels.</p> <p>*see also, <i>Theme 2 Examples</i></p>

**In what ways is it ensured that assessment is matched to subject and course objectives, including generic skills?**

**Current practice**

**Issues, future actions, responsibilities**

## Variety and complexity in assessment

<b>Questions</b>	<p><b>In what ways is it ensured that students experience appropriate variety and increasing complexity in assessment tasks?</b></p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taken together, does the suite of assessment tasks that a student experiences over the course of their studies:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ steadily increase in complexity with later year levels?; and</li> <li>○ form a set of complementary, rather than repetitive, tasks?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do individual subjects include a variety of assessment methods, yet avoid 'over-assessing' students?</li> <li>• Are students offered choice in assessment, where appropriate?</li> </ul>
<b>Examples</b>	<p><b><i>Increasing complexity across an undergraduate course</i></b></p> <p>During the <b>first year</b> of this degree, most assessment consists of short practical <b>tests</b> and <b>quizzes, multiple-choice style</b> mid-semester tests, and end-of-semester exams that include <b>multiple-choice, short</b> and <b>longer-answer style questions</b>.</p> <p>At the <b>second year</b> level, there is more emphasis on the development of <b>writing skills</b>. Several core subjects include written assignments, and students are provided with opportunities for peer review and non-graded, formative feedback on early drafts. This support acknowledges the limited opportunities for the development of these skills during first year.</p> <p>At <b>third year</b>, many subjects include written assignment tasks and several also involve <b>group work</b> and <b>oral presentations</b>. Students are provided with guidance on effective group work, and given opportunities for early, low-stakes practise to develop public speaking skills and confidence.</p> <p><b><i>Topic choice</i></b></p> <p>In this fourth year subject, 40% of the assessment is based upon a critical review of the literature. Students are invited to <b>choose a topic</b> from a list of <b>suggestions</b>, or to <b>propose</b> a related topic of particular interest to them. Their topic choice must be negotiated and approved within the first three weeks of semester.</p> <p><b><i>Portfolio assessment</i></b></p> <p>This postgraduate subject aims to develop students': 1) ability to critically evaluate contemporary art pieces; 2) confidence in developing and communicating informed opinions, ideas and observations regarding artwork; and 3) skills in planning and directing the creation of public art. Students are required to prepare and select evidence that <b>effectively demonstrates their abilities in each of these areas</b>. Students must, therefore, be <b>discerning</b> in the compilation of their <b>portfolios</b>, and provide a narrative that describes their choice of pieces of work and the contribution made by each.</p>



**In what ways is it ensured that students experience appropriate variety, choice and complexity in assessment tasks?**

**Current practice**

**Issues, future actions, responsibilities**

## The timing of assessment

<b>Questions</b>	<p><b>In what ways is it ensured that assessment tasks are timed appropriately?</b></p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the timing of assessment across core subjects in a course coordinated in order to avoid periods of ‘overload’ on students?</li> <li>• Are students provided with formative and meaningful assessment tasks early in semester?</li> </ul>
<b>Examples</b>	<p><b><i>Choosing an optimal time for a mid-semester test</i></b></p> <p>Assessment in this third year subject involves a 50-minute, mid-semester written test (30%), a 1500 word practicum report (20%) and a 2-hour, end-of-semester, written exam (50%).</p> <p>In determining the timing of the mid-semester components, consideration was given to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the <b>aims</b> of the mid-semester test [ie to encourage <i>student diligence</i> across the semester; to test students’ learning of the core <i>concepts introduced in Weeks 1-7</i>; to provide students <i>feedback</i> on their progress in time for them to direct their efforts, as necessary, in subsequent weeks – and before the final exam];</li> <li>2. the need for <b>flexibility</b> in the timing of submission of the practicum report, due to the variable timing of student placements; and</li> <li>3. the <b>overall course workload</b> for the students. Information regarding the timing of assignments was sought from the coordinators of concurrent core subjects and popular elective subjects. The course coordinator facilitated as a point of liaison between subject coordinators.</li> </ol>

**In what ways is it ensured that assessment tasks are timed appropriately?**

**Current practice**

**Issues, future actions, responsibilities**

## Informing students

<b>Questions</b>	<p><b>How are students informed about assessment purpose, requirements and expectations?</b></p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What details are provided to students, beyond the standard handbook entry? When and how is this information provided?</li> <li>• Is the logic behind the choice of assessment tasks made explicit?</li> <li>• Are the criteria made clear and explicit?</li> <li>• Who do students contact for assistance, and how do they know?</li> <li>• Is the process of grading explained to the students?</li> </ul>
<b>Examples</b>	<p><b><i>Written assignments</i></b></p> <p>The subject coordinator ensures that explicit assessment information is listed on the <b>subject website</b>, including clearly articulated <b>criteria</b> for each assessment task and an <b>explanation</b> of how the assessment task aligns with the teaching and the subject/course objectives.</p> <p>The appropriate <b>style guide</b> is linked to the subject website, and there are also links provided to online Library tutorials and resources, including information regarding correct referencing.</p> <p>Advice as to the appropriate staff member to <b>contact</b> should students have any concerns or questions about the assignment task is also provided.</p> <p>The Department's policy for anonymous assessment and the use of marking schemes (based on the criteria described) is explained to students.</p> <p>This information is provided at the <b>beginning of the semester</b>, and may be supplemented during semester, if appropriate (e.g. by the provision of exemplars or examples). Students are reminded to check the website regularly for updated information.</p> <p><b><i>A group project</i></b></p> <p>Assessment in this subject includes a <b>group project</b>. One lecture in Week 3 is devoted to forming groups and <b>explaining</b> the task, including the <b>assessment</b>. Students are told that they will be assessed both individually and as a group, and that the <b>process</b> is as valuable (and <b>valued</b>) as the <b>product</b> - it is explained that they will be assessed on both. <b>Questions</b> are encouraged from the students, both during this information session and later (via email or personal contact with the lecturer involved). An explanation of the assessment strategy is also provided on the <b>subject website</b>.</p> <p>Note: for more information on strategies for assessing group work, see:  <a href="http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/group.html">http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/group.html</a></p>

**How are students informed about assessment purpose, requirements and expectations?**

**Current practice**

**Issues, future actions, responsibilities**

## Equity and fairness

<b>Questions</b>	<p><b>In what ways is student diversity considered and fairness of assessment ensured?</b></p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the language used unambiguous, appropriate and inclusive of all students?</li> <li>• Is assessment anonymous wherever practical?</li> <li>• How is consistency ensured where multiple assessors are involved?</li> <li>• Have students with identified special needs been accommodated?</li> </ul>
<b>Examples</b>	<p><b><i>Consistency in assessing essay-style exam questions for a large class</i></b></p> <p>The final, 2-hour exam paper consists of 4 essay-style questions. In preparing the exam, draft questions are <b>checked</b> by at least two other teaching staff, specifically looking for <b>ambiguity</b>, unnecessary <b>jargon</b> and <b>colloquial terms or phrasing</b>.</p> <p>The (350) students typically write 3-4 page responses to each question. The papers are assessed by a team of eight tutors, and for this reason it is necessary to have in place specific steps aimed at ensuring consistency:</p> <p><b>Specific and detailed criteria:</b> The lecturer responsible for each question develops a marking scheme in advance.</p> <p><b>Reducing the number of questions per tutor - and tutors per question:</b> Each tutor is responsible for just two questions (and so marks 25% of the responses for any one question). This allows the individual tutor to focus more narrowly than if they were grading the entire paper. It also means that there are just three other tutors, rather than seven, to liaise with during the grading of any single question.</p> <p><b>Consultation and peer review:</b> After grading 10-15 papers each, the tutors discuss the marking scheme with one another and with the lecturer (who set the question) - is the marking scheme robust and yet inclusive of the range of 'good' answers students have provided? The tutors also exchange and review the grading of a sample of papers to ensure that they are each interpreting the marking scheme in the same way.</p> <p>The risk of personal bias is further reduced by:</p> <p><b>De-identified papers:</b> ensuring that papers are identified by student number only, not names.</p> <p><b>Separating papers:</b> removing the 'halo effect' for individual students. The four answers from any given student are separated, which means a tutors' objectivity is not influenced by the quality of a student's answers to other questions.</p>

**In what ways is student diversity considered and fairness of assessment ensured?**

**Current practice**

**Issues, future actions, responsibilities**

## Feedback to students

<b>Questions</b>	<p><b>In what ways are opportunities for timely and helpful feedback provided to students?</b></p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is explanatory feedback provided for in-semester assessment tasks?</li> <li>• Is feedback prompt and in time to encourage improvement in subsequent, related tasks?</li> <li>• Is online feedback, where appropriate, used to full advantage?</li> <li>• If the subject has an end-of-semester exam, are students able to practise (during semester) tasks similar to those assessed in the final exam?</li> </ul>
<b>Examples</b>	<p><b><i>Practise &amp; explanatory feedback</i></b></p> <p>This second year subject is assessed by a combination of essay (submitted during semester) and final, end-of-semester examination.</p> <p><u>Opportunities to practise</u></p> <p>For the <i>essay</i>, a system of <b>peer review</b> has been incorporated that provides students with an opportunity to see the approach 2-3 other students are taking, and to <b>get feedback on their own work</b>. Students are given guidance on how to <b>provide constructive feedback</b>, as essential preparation for this peer review exercise. The exercise encourages student diligence and a timely approach to the task. No marks are allocated to this process.</p> <p>The <i>final exam</i> involves both short and long answer questions. Papers from past years are not recommended as a study aid in this subject, as the subject content and approach has been modified significantly this year. Students have been given this advice. However, <b>sample exam questions</b> are provided early in semester, and a tutorial in Week 9 is devoted to working through the <b>process</b> of answering questions of this type. Model answers are not given, and it is explained to the students that there is no single answer to such questions, and therefore we consider model answers less useful for them than ensuring they are comfortable with the process of answering the questions.</p> <p><u>Explanatory feedback for individuals and for the group</u></p> <p>Tutors grade the mid-semester written assignments. They are given training in use of the marking scheme (prepared by the lecturing staff), and <b>advice on the type of feedback to include</b>. It is stressed that a grade alone does not constitute useful feedback. After grading five papers, each tutor is required to meet with the subject coordinator to confirm that their <b>approach</b> and standards are appropriate.</p> <p>The feedback provided by the tutors is <b>individual</b>. In addition, after all papers are graded, the subject coordinator prepares some <b>general comments</b> on the <b>student group's work overall</b> (aspects well done; concepts that seemed to cause difficulty), based upon discussion with the tutors. This information is made available to the student group via the subject website, and includes links to relevant resources. Students receive this feedback no later than Week 10.</p>



**In what ways are opportunities for timely and helpful feedback provided to students?**

**Current practice**

**Issues, future actions, responsibilities**

## Feedback to staff

<b>Questions</b>	<p><b>In what ways do assessment tasks provide staff with feedback on student learning?</b></p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do assessment tasks allow staff to identify areas or topics that are problematic for students?</li> <li>• Is such information available early enough to inform a response within the teaching semester?</li> <li>• Where grading is a widely shared task (as it is for many large classes), how is meaningful feedback provided to the relevant teaching staff?</li> <li>• Where teaching is widely distributed (as in the case of clinical education or placements), how are teaching staff provided with feedback on student learning?</li> </ul>
<b>Examples</b>	<p><b><i>Feedback for lecturing staff when grading is performed by tutors</i></b></p> <p>25% of the grade awarded for this subject is based on an essay, submitted in Week 8. The essay is based upon concepts developed in the first six weeks of lectures and is <b>graded by the tutors</b> (mostly postgraduate students). The essay question tests students' ability to apply these concepts to a novel situation, and thereby <b>identifies misconceptions and areas of confusion</b>. With this feedback, staff can address the problems in the second half of the semester.</p> <p>The tutors grade to a set of pre-determined criteria, and also consult with the lecturing staff during the initial phase of grading to resolve any unexpected issues that arise. The assessment criteria are aligned explicitly with the learning objectives for the assignment.</p> <p>As they grade each essay, the tutors <b>record the marks awarded against each of the listed criteria</b>. This information is then <b>collated</b> by the subject coordinator, and made available <b>to all teaching staff</b>. As the criteria are clearly linked to specific learning objectives, teaching staff can readily identify areas or topics of concern.</p> <p><b><i>Collaborative approach to assessment design and grading</i></b></p> <p>All lecturers and tutors involved in teaching this subject are <b>encouraged to contribute</b> to the design and marking of examinations, and to the assessment of students' clinical skills. Generally, and at any time, lecturers and tutors can <b>obtain assessment results</b> for their particular subject areas (lecturers) or tutorial groups (tutors).</p>

**In what ways do assessment tasks provide staff with feedback on student learning?**

**Current practice**

**Issues, future actions, responsibilities**



## Appendix 1

The Guide for Reviewing Assessment is based upon the:

### 16 Indicators of Effective Assessment in Higher Education\*

- 1 Assessment is treated by staff and students as an integral and prominent component of the entire teaching and learning process rather than a final adjunct to it.
- 2 The multiple roles of assessment are recognised. The powerful motivating effect of assessment requirements on students is understood and assessment tasks are designed to foster valued study habits.
- 3 There is a faculty/departmental policy that guides individuals' assessment practices. Subject assessment is integrated into an overall plan for course assessment.
- 4 There is a clear alignment between expected learning outcomes, what is taught and learnt, and the knowledge and skills assessed — there is a closed and coherent 'curriculum loop'.
- 5 Assessment tasks assess the capacity to analyse and synthesise new information and concepts rather than simply recall information previously presented.
- 6 A variety of assessment methods is employed so that the limitations of particular methods are minimised.
- 7 Assessment tasks are designed to assess relevant generic skills as well as subject-specific knowledge and skills.
- 8 There is a steady progression in the complexity and demands of assessment requirements in the later years of courses.
- 9 There is provision for student choice in assessment tasks and weighting at certain times.
- 10 Student and staff workloads are considered in the scheduling and design of assessment tasks.
- 11 Excessive assessment is avoided. Assessment tasks are designed to sample student learning.
- 12 Assessment tasks are weighted to balance the developmental ('formative') and judgmental ('summative') roles of assessment. Early low-stakes, low-weight assessment is used to provide students with feedback.
- 13 Grades are calculated and reported on the basis of clearly articulated learning outcomes and criteria for levels of achievement.
- 14 Students receive explanatory and diagnostic feedback as well as grades.
- 15 Assessment tasks are checked to ensure there are no inherent biases that may disadvantage particular student groups.
- 16 Plagiarism is minimised through careful task design, explicit education and appropriate monitoring of academic honesty.

\* <http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/05/index.html#16>

For more ideas, strategies and resources for quality student assessment in Australian universities, visit the **Assessing Learning in Australian Universities** website:

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## Appendix 2

### Frequently asked questions about assessment

The following questions are topical, frequently arising during departmental and faculty discussions of teaching and learning.

*Should our subject have an end-of-semester examination, and what should it be worth?*

*How should we assess the group project?*

*When and how should we use online assessment in our subject?*

*Is there any value in peer-assessment (beyond time-saving for staff)?*

*Should the examination be unseen, timed, and closed-book, or would another approach be better?*

There are rarely simple answers to any of these questions. However, when reviewing assessment practice it helps to view these questions as subsidiary to the **more fundamental questions** regarding effective assessment (as addressed under Themes 1-7 of the *Guide for Reviewing Assessment*). Addressing the fundamental questions goes a long way towards addressing specific questions such as these.

The following table expands on each of these questions, with reference to further reading and specific links to the *Guide for Reviewing Assessment*, where appropriate.

<p><i>Should our subject have an end-of-semester examination, and what should it be worth?</i></p>	<p>This guide does not offer a formula for the relative weighting of examinations, in-semester assignments or other assessment tasks. Such decisions need to be made at the level of individual subjects and courses. Coordinators need to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what are the purposes of assessment in this subject (particularly Themes 1 and 2)?; and</li> <li>• what are the practicalities, including resource limits?</li> </ul> <p>Recognition of the multiple purposes for assessment is essential in choosing the appropriate form, design and combination of assessment tasks. For example, in situations where ranking and measuring is of prime concern, end of semester examinations may be appropriate. However for the purposes of providing feedback to students and directing their efforts, more formative and 'continuous' assessment tasks may be preferable.</p> <p><i>For a comprehensive review of assessment and its impact upon student approaches to learning (including a comparison of assessment by examination and by coursework):</i> Gibbs, G. &amp; Simpson, C. 2004-5. Conditions under which assessment supports students' learning. <u>Learning and Teaching in Higher Education</u>, Issue 1, pp 3-31.</p>
<p><i>How should we assess the group project?</i></p>	<p>For some assessment tasks, it is necessary to consider whether assessment should be based only upon the <i>product</i> of the students' efforts, rather than the <i>process</i>. For example, if the aim of a group project is largely to encourage effective team work and communication skills, some direct assessment of the process may be appropriate. Such assessment might involve peer-assessment or self-assessment.</p> <p><i>For more information and suggestions regarding assessment of groupwork:</i> <a href="http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/group.html">http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/group.html</a></p>

<p><i>When and how should we use online assessment in our subject?</i></p>	<p>New information and communication technologies provide a range of tools for assessment. These include online ‘quizzes’ with automated feedback and grading, and administrative functions such as online assignment submission. In deciding which tools to use and when, Themes 3, 5, 6 and 7 are of particular importance.</p> <p><i>For more information regarding online assessment:</i>  <a href="http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/online.html">http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/online.html</a></p> <p><i>For a current overview of the influence of learning management systems on university teaching in Australia, including a discussion of assessment:</i>  Coates, H., James, R. and Baldwin, G. 2005. A critical examination of the effects of learning management systems on university teaching and learning. <u>Tertiary Education and Management</u>, 11: 19-36.</p>
<p><i>Is there any value in peer-assessment (beyond time-saving for staff)?</i></p>	<p>There is growing interest in peer and self-assessment in higher education. Peer assessment has been shown in numerous studies to be highly motivational, and it has been argued that students gain as much, if not more, from providing feedback as they do from receiving it. Self-assessment, when explicitly incorporated into the assessment of a subject, can help students understand the assessment criteria and encourage critical reflection.</p> <p><i>For more information and ideas regarding peer and self assessment:</i>  <a href="http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/group.html">http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/group.html</a></p> <p><i>There are numerous books and published case study articles on the use of self and peer assessment, including:</i></p> <p>Boud, D., Cohen, R., &amp; Sampson, J. 2001. Peer learning and assessment. In <u>Peer Learning in Higher Education</u>. Ed. Boud, Cohen &amp; Sampson. pp 67-83.</p> <p>Falchikov, N. 2005. <u>Improving Assessment Through Student Involvement: Practical solutions for aiding learning in higher and further education</u>. RoutledgeFarmer, NY.</p> <p>Gibbs, G. 2001. Using assessment strategically to change the way students learn. In <u>Assessment Matters in Higher Education: Choosing and Using Diverse Approaches</u>, Ed: Brown and Glasner. pp 41-53.</p> <p>Jordan, S. 2001. Self-assessment and peer assessment. In <u>Assessment Matters in Higher Education: Choosing and Using Diverse Approaches</u>, Ed: Brown and Glasner. pp 172-182.</p>
<p><i>Should the examination be unseen, timed, and closed-book, or would another approach be better?</i></p>	<p>While there are often good reasons for examinations of this type, there is also a tendency for this to be the default form of testing. It is worth considering variations on this approach. For example, teachers in some subject areas find that closed book examinations limit their questions to those that can be answered on the basis of factual recall – memory. In response, they adopt more ‘open book’ approaches, allowing students to access detailed information during the examination (from books or other resources) and to then use this as the basis for solving integrative, problem-based questions.</p>