IRU Academic Calibration Process

External Reviewer Report – Guidance notes for reviewers

This document has been created as a guide; it presents possible themes that you might like to consider when peer-reviewing a unit/subject for a partner IRU. Use these prompts when reviewing your report and be aware that not all prompts will be relevant for the unit/subject and assessment task you are benchmarking.

For your convenience, the document layout aligns with the sections and questions included in the formal Calibration report.

Background to Calibration

Calibration was derived from a need to fulfill legislated requirement and assurance that ongoing standards in learning and teaching are maintained. The Higher Education Threshold Standards require universities to include regular external referencing of the success of student cohorts against comparable courses of study as part of review and improvement activities

compare performance on teaching and student learning outcomes with other higher education providers. The Academic Calibration Process (ACP) supports the IRUs in meeting the standards set out in the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) as required by TEQSA. The standards include:

5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement

> *"4. Review and improvement activities include regular external referencing of the success of student cohorts against comparable courses of study, including:*
> *b. the assessment methods and grading of students' achievement of learning outcomes for selected units of study within courses of study.*

> *7. The results of regular interim monitoring, comprehensive reviews, external referencing ... are used to mitigate future risks to the quality of the education provided and to guide ... improvements ..."*

While the information provided by reviewers may be collated and published by the University, individual review reports and the names of reviewers will not be publicly available.

Completing the Report

- *Please ensure the calibration report includes aspects of **positive feedback** as well as commenting on areas that **need improvement**.*
- *For all sections, please provide **explanations** for your observations.*
- *If the unit/subject under review forms part of a professionally accredited course, consider making comment in relation to **compliance with accreditation body requirements**.*
- *If any material is missing from the Calibration package that would assist you in compiling this report, please notify the Calibration Coordinator who will request that on your behalf.*
- *You will be asked to complete a conflict of interest declaration at the beginning of the report.*

Student Samples - Review of Grades Awarded

Student Sample Name	Grade	Mark	Total Mark	Grade Assessment
S01				Choose an item.
S02				Choose an item.
S03				Choose an item.
S04				Choose an item.
S05				Choose an item.

Please select your grade assessment for each of the sample provided. Options are:

- *Agree with Grade Awarded (this is the default display)*
- *Grade is Unduly High*
- *Grade is Unduly Low*

Section 1: Executive Summary

Please select one of the following three options for your overall summary judgment of the unit/subject you have reviewed.

1. The grading, learning outcomes, assessment design and feedback for the unit/subject I have reviewed are appropriate. Any recommendations made are for the purposes of enhancement to the unit/subject and its assessment.	☐
2. The grading, learning outcomes, assessment design and feedback for the unit/subject I have reviewed are appropriate. There are, however, some risks to the future quality assurance of the unit/subject and its assessment as outlined in my recommendations.	☐
3. There are immediate concerns or risks relating to the grading, learning outcomes, assessment design and/or feedback elements of the unit/subject I have reviewed. These require immediate action on behalf of the University to prevent re-occurrence in the next review.	☐

Executive Summary Comment:

Constructive Alignment
- *Are the learning outcomes and assessment tasks constructively aligned?*

Authentic & Transferrable Skills
- *Comment on the authenticity of the task and relevance of the task.*
- *Where relevant: How does the assessment task provide opportunity for students to develop general graduate attributes such as communication, organizing and planning, problem solving, conflict resolution, teamwork, decision making.*

Clear & Sufficient Detail
- *Are the assessment requirements explained in sufficient detail ensuring students are clear in their understanding of expectations?*
- *Where a rubric has been provided, does it provide students with enough breakdown that both markers and students know how much weight has been given to each criterion?*

Scaffolding, Weighting & Balance
- *Provide overall impression of the balance between assessment tasks (for example, commenting on the assessment plan that may include formative developmental tasks early in the semester through to the summative tasks at the end of semester/trimester).*
- *Are the assessment tasks scaffolded as students move from first assignment to last? i.e. progression of assessment.*
- *Comment on the weighting distributed across assessment tasks, does this reflect value in learning?*

Workload
- *Comment on the spacing of assessment tasks. Is this appropriate, does the assessment layout give students adequate time to understand content before being assessed. Is there enough time between assessment task to allow students adequate time to reflect on the outcome of the previous task?*
- *Consider how the assessment tasks might impact overall student workload with respect to a student studying in a semester or trimester model.*

Overall
- *Summarise what you understand the expectations of the unit/subject to be.*
- *Provide any suggestions or recommendations to nuance the assessment or unit/subject.*

Section 2: Review of Grades Awarded

Have the students been graded appropriately for their achievement of learning outcomes?

Not at all	Somewhat	Adequately	Very Well	Completely
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please provide your rationale for making this rating, including reasons for disagreeing with any of the grades awarded.

Definition of Learning Outcomes: "Learning Outcomes are statements that describe or list measurable and essential mastered content-knowledge — reflecting skills, competencies, and knowledge that students have achieved and can demonstrate upon successfully completing a unit of study".

John Biggs provides a description of the intended learning outcomes in his discussion on constructive alignment.

Biggs, J. (2014). Constructive alignment in university teaching. HERDSA Review of Higher Education, 1, 5-22.
https://www.herdsa.org.au/herdsa-review-higher-education-vol-1/5-22

Include feedback for each student sample that you feel has been graded unduly high or low. Your feedback could include commentary on the following:

- *Students adequately addressing learning outcomes for the assessment task, quality of discursive argument in the paper, critical analysis, relevant and appropriate referencing.*
- *Consistency in marking context, grammar and/or referencing.*
- *The quality of feedback given to students. Does the feedback provide constructive commentary that students can action to improve future work?*
- *What grade would you award to the student instead (noting that grade nomenclature may vary across different institutions)?*

Section 3: Review of Learning Outcomes

Are the learning outcomes clear and appropriate for the unit/subject in its delivery year?

Not at all	Somewhat	Completely
☐	☐	☐

Please provide your rationale for giving this rating.

Consider the following aspects about the learning outcomes:

- *What aspects make the learning outcomes clear or unclear?*
- *Can a student understand the learning outcome and know what level of learning is needed?*
- *Are the learning outcomes measurable and easily assessable?*
- *Is the design of the learning outcomes theoretically informed (e.g. Bloom's taxonomy)?*
- *Is the number of learning outcomes appropriate?*
- *Do the learning outcomes cover the aims of the unit/subject (if applicable)? Or is there something that should be added that would benefit student learning?*
- *Do the learning outcomes represent the content of the unit/subject well?*
- *Do the learning outcomes target the appropriate thinking skills for the year level? For AQF criteria (where relevant) refer to: https://www.aqf.edu.au/framework/aqf-levels*

How do the specified learning outcomes compare to those with which you are familiar?

> ***Things to consider:***
>
> - *Comment on similarities of learning outcomes with a similar unit you teach.*
> - *Include a brief internet search to analyse learning outcomes for equivalent units at similar universities and comment on the quality of learning outcomes under review in comparison.*
> - *Include a list of your topic learning outcomes to offer a comparison (optional).*

Section 4: Review of Assessment and Feedback

Are the assessment methods suitable and how well aligned are they to the learning outcomes?

Not at all	Somewhat	Completely
☐	☐	☐

Please provide your rationale for making this rating.

> ***This question is asking about constructive alignment. In your view, comment on how the assessment task has embedded the learning outcomes appropriately in its design or instructions. The following prompts can be used in the review of assessment task:***
>
> *Aims and Learning Outcomes*
>
> - *Do the aims of the assessment task meet learning outcomes?*
> - *How does the assessment task 'pull together' the learning outcomes in a meaningful way?*
> - *Does the wording of the assessment task match the wording of the learning outcomes?*
> - *Include feedback on whether the assessment task could be enhanced to incorporate other learning outcomes (if applicable).*
>
> *Application and Understanding*
>
> - *How does the assessment task allow students to demonstrate their understanding and application of knowledge and development of graduate attributes?*
>
> *Exams*
>
> - *If the assessment task is an exam, comment on how well the exam covers the most important concepts within the unit/subject and reflects the learning outcomes.*
>   - *Is there sufficient evidence in the exam for students to demonstrate application of knowledge (e.g. problem solving, case scenario)?*
>   - *Comment on the clarity of exam questions in terms of the marks assigned and expected response to gain full marks (e.g. if a question is 10 marks, is it clear how many responses are expected for the 10 marks).*

Are the assessment tasks and associated rubrics or marking criteria well designed and suitable for use?

Not at all	Somewhat	Completely
☐	☐	☐

Please provide your rationale for giving this rating.

> ***The following prompts can be used in the review of assessment task:***
>
> *Language and Expectations*
> - *Comment on whether the marking criteria are generally clear and measurable.*
> - *How well will students be able to interpret the marking criteria to meet the expectations of the assessment task and assist in responding to the task?*
> - *Is the assessment task aligned with the marking criteria?*
> - *Do the marking criteria incorporate the same language used in the learning outcomes, for example if a learning outcome asks students to 'critically evaluate'; do the marking criteria also contain reference to 'critically evaluate'?*
> - *Do the marking criteria contain a summary of minimum expectations to assist students in their understanding of assessment expectations?*
>
> *Marks and Weighting*
> - *Comment on the marks allocated to content, structure, flow and referencing.*
>
> *Design of Rubric*
> - *Comment on the layout and design of the marking rubric, e.g. is it easy for students to interpret?*
> - *If no marking rubric/criteria is present, please comment how this impacts quality assurance for marking and student learning.*
> - *Consider supplying a copy of the rubric you use.*

How does the assessment task and the marking criteria compare with unit/subjects with which you are familiar?

> ***Provide insights into your assessment practices for an equivalent assessment task.***
> - *Comment on how the assessment task compares with the assessment at your university (or others that you are familiar with).*
> - *Include a brief internet search to analyse the assessment tasks for equivalent units/subjects at similar universities.*
> - *Does the assessment task capture the learning, critical thinking skills and graduate attributes students should achieve for the year level?*
> - *Include a review of the overall assessment plan as presented in the unit/subject outline. Is the assessment plan appropriate?*
>
> ***This section may also include comments on the assessment task with respect to:***
> - *The number of assessment items in the unit/subject.*
> - *The weighting of the assessment task under review in relation to other assessment tasks.*
> - *Whether there is enough variety in assessment tasks for the year level.*
> - *Whether tasks are distributed adequately during a teaching period.*
> - *Does the assessment task contain enough originality and complexity reflecting what students might do in the real world or for the year level?*

To what extent is the marker's feedback appropriate and constructive in supporting student learning?

> *Comment on feedback with respect to:*
>
> - *Was the feedback provided by the marker*
>   - *Mark or grade only*
>   - *Mark of grade plus a rubric*
>   - *Mark or grade plus written comments (no rubric)*
>   - *Mark or grade plus rubric with written comments*
> - *Does it enable students to make judgements on their performance and enact improvements in future assessment tasks?*
> - *Could the quality of feedback be improved?*

Section 5: Gen AI and Academic Integrity

Has Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) been incorporated into the assessment design?

Yes, and it enhances the assessment	Yes, but its impact on assessment quality is unclear	Yes, but it does not significantly enhance the assessment	No, GenAI has not been incorporated	Not applicable
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please provide your rationale for giving this rating. Where you have indicated above that no GenAI has been incorporated, feel free to suggest ways in which it could be.

If Gen AI has not been used or is not appropriate for the unit, how has the assessment task been designed to safeguard academic integrity and ensure assessment authenticity?

Please provide any additional feedback regarding the integration of Gen AI, including feedback on areas where further integration or improvement could be beneficial.

> *Authentic assessment requires students "to perform real-world tasks to demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills… [and are like] those tasks that are encountered in the real-life workplace, where individuals are free to use various reference resources, consult with experts and take guidance from supervisors.*
>
> *Sridharan & Mustard (2015), Authentic Assessment Methods: A Practical Handbook for Teaching Staff Part I - Detailed Guide, Deakin University*
> *https://vhost2013.hosted-sites.deakin.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Part-1.pdf*
>
> *Considerations when the assessment design discourages the use of GenAI:*
>
> - *Ensure that emphasis is on critical thinking and reasoning.*
> - *Focus on the process as well as the product.*
> - *Assess on material discussed in class.*
> - *Ask students to reflect on and embed their own experiences into the response.*
>
> *Refer to the TEQSA resources that provide guidance on ways assessment practices can take advantage of the opportunities, and manage the risks, of AI, specifically GenAI.*

Section 6: Final Comments

Please provide any additional comments you may consider useful or use this space to elaborate on any of the sections above. If the unit/subject under review forms part of a professionally accredited course, consider making comment in relation to compliance with accrediting body requirements.