ABOUT ONLINE ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

“As with any assessment processes, the integration of technologies into the assessment design must be driven primarily by the intention to support a high quality learning experience for students. Improved efficiency in the management of assessment brought about by technology use is a secondary, albeit very significant, benefit” (website: Using technologies to support assessment, Learning and Teaching Centre, Macquarie University).

This guide on online assessment and feedback explains how the assessment process is supported across UOW and outlines the benefits of implementing online assessment. It should be read in conjunction with the Teaching and Assessment Policy Suite: Assessment and Feedback (http://www.uow.edu.au/about/policy/alphalisting/UOW222910.html), which outline the minimum standards and requirements e.g. Digital Learning Threshold guidelines for subject development.

Online assessment takes advantage of teaching and learning technologies to support the learning and assessment process. Often, online assessment is perceived as assignment submission, marking and return of students’ work but this is just one element of the online assessment process.

Figure 1 illustrates both the visible and the hidden aspects of online assessment. When moving to online assessment, initially, there is a focus on the process of submission, marking and return of assignments but the power of assessing online is in teacher and student engagement with feedback where opportunities are given for active discussion, sharing and peer review of students’ work. This rich feedback loop promotes learning and provides opportunities for students to put the feedback into practice (http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13538320120045058).

Within the UOW Learning Platform Suite of online tools, Moodle and Turnitin provide tools for teachers to use for written and oral feedback. Assignment marks are recorded in the Moodle Gradebook, and SMP can import the Gradebook marks for a specified class or cohort. Information about the Learning Platform Suite of tools can be found on the TEL Resource Hub at http://www.uow.edu.au/dvca/ltc/tel/resourcehub/index.html.

Figure 1: The Online Assessment Process – the visible and the hidden
WHY ONLINE ASSESSMENT?

*Students learn not what teachers think they should learn, but what students perceive the task to demand of them.* (Biggs, 1999)

Assessment is key to the learning experience as it not only measures achievement, it focuses students towards key aspects of the curriculum, building discipline specific knowledge and skills that can be measured and qualified.

At UOW, we aim to prepare our graduates with high-level digital skills that equip them for a professional life that takes advantage of current and emerging technologies. Through integration of technologies into the learning process from first year onwards our students gain the confidence and skills required for their professional careers (UOW TEL Strategy, 2015 and Curriculum Transformation hybridlearning@uow).

What are the benefits of online assessment over non-digital methods? Tools and technologies should only be integrated into assessment design if they improve the quality of the student learning experience. Online assessment supports the development of digital literacy and digital skills that are being sought in the workplace and offers flexibility for staff and students with submission and feedback on assessment tasks. The flexibility offered by online assessment reflects a subtle shift in responsibility and management of the learning experience towards the students as they transition from university into the workplace.

BENEFITS OF ONLINE ASSESSMENT

Figure 2 outlines some of the benefits of implementing online assessment in an educational context.

![Figure 2: Some benefits of online assessment. Adapted from, Selecting Assessment Technologies | UNSW Teaching Staff Gateway, https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/assessment-technologies](https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/assessment-technologies)

The use of a learning management system such as Moodle makes online submission of open-ended assignments such as essays an attractive proposition. Some of the reasons that Australian universities are adopting online submission include the ability to quickly and efficiently retrieve and mark assignments and provide feedback in a timely manner. The submission activity is recorded for each student, with a date stamp of when the file was uploaded, providing a convenient and secure means of submitting assessable tasks. Teachers can access the subject Moodle site and mark online or bulk download assignments and return to students with feedback electronically. This also fulfils the requirements for quality assurance of assessment as a permanent record of student work is kept. Many students also appreciate the opportunity to submit assignments without having to travel to campus (Centre for the Study of Higher Education, 2002).

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**Students**

- Allows flexibility for assignment submission.
- Enhances students' assessment-as-learning experiences.
- Gives students different ways to learn and to demonstrate their learning.
- **Builds assessment literacy**
  - Facilitates timely formative feedback.
  - Builds students digital literacies.

**Teachers**

- Helps staff to reconsider learning and teaching approaches.
- Helps staff assess in innovative ways.
- Helps staff provide timely and comprehensive feedback.
- Can make it more efficient to manage large volumes of marking and administration.
- Helps build a community of practice.
TIPS FOR GOOD PRACTICE IN ONLINE SUBMISSION:

- Be specific with your instructions, especially regarding file naming protocol.
- Provide a practice submission space to allow students to become familiar with the environment prior to submitting.
- Make sure that all staff in the teaching team are similarly aware of the process of submission.

EXAMPLES OF ONLINE ASSESSMENT PRACTICE AT UOW

Online assessment is widely used across UOW to support all aspects of the assessment process for example:

Communicating a Task

- Personal Capture Device (PCAP), a desktop application that is part of ECHO360, was used to record and publish a short video for students to explain details of an assessment task, and to outline the academics expectations for grading (SOC102, Jan Karp, Faculty of Social Sciences).

Supporting Learning

- Moodle was used to host an online, interactive Chemistry simulation. Student learning is supported through interaction with the rich content, answering problems and reviewing key aspects of the curriculum (CHEM102, Glennys O'Brien).
- Early identification of first year students who may be experiencing difficulties with their study was done through a report provided by UOW Learning Analytics team. As a result, the coordinator was then able to make contact with individual students and resolve problems, reducing the dropout and failure rates. Analytics harvested from Moodle and the Library online systems were integral to this report (LHA101, Jen Roberts, Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts).
- Group-based learning activities within the Earth and Environmental Science curriculum support students understanding of the content. Using the Computers On Wheels (COWS), which is an integrated technology within the Science Teaching Facility, these tasks enable students to reflect on their personal learning, to collaborate with small groups and share findings across the whole class (Laurie Chisholm, Faculty of Science, Medicine and Health).

Task Submission

- Online submission of assignments can be done within Moodle using either the standard assignment submission tool or the Turnitin tool that has been integrated into the platform, allowing the students to submit tasks both on and off campus. The teacher can view the time and date of submission and have the option to issue a receipt for submission to students.
- Digital media students created videos and uploaded them to ABC online. The link to the assessment was provided to the academic for grading and student peer review and feedback (Andrew Whelan, Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts).

Grading and Feedback

- Individual audio or video feedback is provided to students when grading and feedback of written work and presentations (PSYC356, Gerard Stoyles, Faculty of Social Sciences).
- Grademark, a tool integrated into the Moodle Turnitin Assignment, enables online submission, grading and feedback. Submitted papers can be reviewed for academic integrity and the students writing skills as Turnitin data provides colour coded text matching that indicates poor paraphrasing and referencing. Rich feedback can be given via drag and dropping comments onto the submission (MIST910, Susan Engel, Faculty of Law, Humanities, and the Arts).
Recording Marks

- When a student’s paper is marked via any of the assessment tools in Moodle the marks are automatically recorded into the Moodle Gradebook, where subject coordinators can choose to hide or show them to students. SMP allows marks to be imported from the Moodle Gradebook for a specified class or cohort of students.

Returning a Submission

- Assignments submitted via Moodle enable grading and feedback to be done online and returned to students online for collection and review.

Reflection on Learning

First year computing science students review a graduate position to identify gaps in their existing skills and investigate how they can gain those skills as they progress through their degree. At the end of the first semester, the students showcase an ePortfolio of skill development, their reflections on what they had done well and how they could improve, together with some assessment examples as evidence of their progress and development in their first year of the degree (Gene Awyzio, Computing Science, Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences).

THREE THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN MOVING ASSESSMENT ONLINE

To take advantage of the opportunities provided by online assessment, the following points should be considered:

1. Which tasks might be best suited to quality student learning and feedback?
2. How might the tasks take advantage of the teaching and learning technologies?
3. How might the Marking and Feedback of the task be done to provide timely quality feedback for students?

TOOLS FOR FEEDBACK AND ONLINE SUBMISSION

The UOW Learning Platform has a selection of tools that support quality feedback for online submissions, including the standard Moodle Assignment and the integrated Turnitin Assignment. The Learning Teaching and Curriculum (LTC), Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Resource Hub is an online repository of information and guides to support the set up and management of online assessments with the Learning Platform tools.


Moodle

Moodle is UOW’s online learning environment for staff and students. It is used for interaction, communication, content delivery, assignment submission, quizzes, and other resources. The Moodle Assignment tool allows teachers to set up a space for students to submit and collect digital content online. The lecturer can review assignments, annotate papers and deliver feedback and marks within the Moodle tool. Refer to Moodle Guides at http://www.uow.edu.au/dvca/ltc/tel/resourcemhub/moodle

Turnitin

Turnitin is a comprehensive assessment program integrated into UOW’s Moodle. It enables teachers to provide rich and meaningful feedback on students’ written work using three tools: OriginalityCheck, GradeMark and PeerMark. Turnitin supports the university in maintaining a high standard of academic integrity, and many academics have found that using Turnitin saves and maximises marking time, engages students, and promotes self-directed learning. Refer to Turnitin guides at http://www.uow.edu.au/dvca/ltc/tel/resourcemhub/turnitinstaff

Turnitin Grademark

Grademark is a tool within the Turnitin suite that supports grading and feedback of tasks online. It enables teachers to “mark student’s written work (i.e. papers, essays, thesis, PowerPoint files), non-written work (including images, videos, music files) or work not submitted to a Turnitin assignment (i.e. speeches, presentations, performances, or works of art).” (Turnitin, 2016). It allows teachers to provide voice recorded feedback or comments in the body of the document, highlight grammar and punctuation mistakes, evaluate with rubrics, and enter marks. Turnitin capabilities are synchronised with the Moodle Gradebook. Refer to the Turnitin website for more information about what Grademark
can do
https://guides.turnitin.com/01_Manuals_and_Guides/Instructor/Instructor_User_Manual/25_GradeMark%C2%AE.

The iPad App by Turnitin is a powerful tool that enables teachers to record feedback and marks on submitted papers and within a live teaching space. This list of “Grade anything” series of videos illustrates some useful features of the App.

- Presentations: https://vimeo.com/88075526
- Maths and Stats: https://vimeo.com/88075728
- Visual Arts: https://vimeo.com/88075730
- Economics: https://vimeo.com/88075727
- Science: https://vimeo.com/88075729
- Performance: https://vimeo.com/88121464
- Visual Arts:  https://vimeo.com/88075730

Figure 3: Grade anywhere, anytime with the Turnitin iPad App

**RUBRICS AND MARKING GUIDES**

Rubrics and marking guides are advanced marking tools that enable teachers to mark students work against specific criteria or standards. They can increase students understanding of the task and the markers expectations of the submission. Once marked, they allow students to quickly review their performance in each criterion and discuss areas of strength and weakness with teachers.

**EXAMPLES OF RUBRICS AND MARKING GUIDES**

Figure 4 Moodle Assignment Marking Guide 1 Moodle Assignment Marking Guide
Figure 5 Moodle Assignment Rubric (Student View)

Figure 6 Moodle Assignment, Annotate PDF

Figure 7 Turnitin GradeMark, with Quickmarks
ONLINE ASSESSMENT EXAMPLES AND CASE STUDIES

An overview of some key online assessment tools and strategies across UOW

Case Study - Sasha Nikolic - Self and Peer Assessment (Video)

Case Study - Dr Mitch Byrne - Formative and Summative Assessment (Video)

Dr Andrew Whelan presenting on the evidence-based case for online assessments, in terms of the pedagogical benefits to students in self-presentation or self-reflection, and in producing content for public audiences.

OpenUOW YouTube Playlist on Online Learning
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLK07koFy5HtReyqZ9b3MTWevGCIstIfs7

Figure 2: Adapted from, Selecting Assessment Technologies | UNSW Teaching Staff Gateway,

E-Assessment Glossary (developed by JISC in the UK) accessed 18 October, 2016.

University of South Wales – Good Practice Exchange: Online Assessment Practices

Macquarie University, Learning & Teaching Centre, Assessment Toolkit

REFERENCES