

Subject (Different Instances) Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) To ensure that students enrolled in different instances of the same subject have a comparable learning experience, are assessed against the same criteria and achieve the same learning outcomes regardless of the delivery location, method or mode.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) Applies to:

- a. all campuses
- b. all Subject Co-ordinators
- c. all members of Subject Teaching Teams

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(3) A subject of La Trobe University may be offered in different instances.

(4) La Trobe University subjects offered in different instances must have the same assessment criteria and share some common assessment tasks.

(5) Each instance of a subject must:

- a. be of the same standard;
- b. lead to the same learning outcomes for the student;
- c. involve comparable workloads for the student; and
- d. cover the same material.

(6) Variations in timing, teaching and technology may be used to maximise the benefits to students in ways appropriate to the circumstances.

(7) Where instances are conducted by different people, Schools should appoint Instance Leaders in the other teaching locations to provide instance level leadership of the subject.

(8) There is to be one Subject Co-ordinator who will:

- a. after consultation with Instance Leaders, prescribe learning outcomes, assessment criteria and standards;
- b. consult with Instance Leaders over subject reviews and revisions;
- c. ensure regular communication between all members of the Subject Teaching Team during the teaching period.

(9) Subject Co-ordinators may be appointed from any Campus with the decision based on relevant knowledge and experience, rather than location.

(10) Processes, including moderation, must be in place to ensure commonality of learning outcomes and standards between instances. There should be identical assessment criteria and standards between instances. Assessment tasks totalling at least 50% of the final grade must be identical between instances.

Section 4 - Procedures

Subject Coordinator

(11) The Subject Coordinator will consult with different instance teaching staff (the Subject Teaching Team) to determine the set of learning outcomes, the assessment criteria and standards, the Subject Learning Guide, the textbooks to be used and the materials to be presented.

(12) The Subject Coordinator will then prescribe, in consultation with Instance Leaders, learning outcomes, assessment criteria and standards. This will involve taking responsibility for defining and setting the assessment criteria and standards clearly enough so that the desirable level of achievement is upheld in marking and that where different learning activities occur in different locations, they lead to the same learning outcomes.

Appointment of the Subject Coordinator

(13) The Head of School will appoint the Subject Coordinator. Where the subject is taught in more than one School, the Subject Coordinator will be appointed by agreement between the relevant Heads of School. The decision should be based on relevant experience and knowledge rather than campus location.

Instance Leaders

(14) The School should appoint Instance Leaders in addition to the Subject Coordinator, to provide agreed delegated instance level leadership and management of the subject. The appointment(s) will be made as for a Subject Coordinator (see above).

Location of Subject Coordinator

(15) Subject Coordinators may be appointed from any campus. Ideally the School should try to spread subject co-ordination responsibilities throughout all of its teaching campuses.

Autonomy in Teaching

(16) The Teaching Team may deliver learning activities prepared by the Subject Coordinator or prepare their own learning activities based on the intended learning outcomes in the Subject Learning Guide as agreed with the Subject Coordinator.

Required Course Materials

(17) Required course materials may be developed for all instances by the Subject Coordinator or varied between instances after consultation between Subject Coordinator and other members of the Teaching Team.

Activities and Assessment

(18) Details of major assessable activities or tasks (requirements and assessment criteria) should be agreed in advance and included in Subject Learning Guides.

(19) Assessment tasks totalling at least 50% of the final grade must be identical between instances. Assessment criteria must be identical between instances.

Assessment Standards

(20) Common assessment standards across instances must be ensured. This may be achieved through the development of marking schemes that specify for each assessment criterion an indication of the performance required to achieve a particular standard.

(21) Cross marking or some degree of double-marking must also be used to moderate assessment standards.

(22) This may be exchange or check-marking of samples, such as:

- a. Exchange marking of a selection of examination scripts
- b. Exchange marking of a selection of major pieces of assessment
- c. Double marking of a sample of 'A' results and Fails.

Differences in Cross-Marking Outcomes

(23) Major differences in outcomes after cross- or double-marking should be resolved between the parties. If this is not possible, a third party should be provided with both earlier reports and asked to adjudicate.

Differences Between Subject Coordinators and Instance Teaching Staff

(24) Where the Subject Coordinator and one or more members of the Subject Teaching Team are unable to agree on matters including the setting of learning outcomes, the assessment criteria and standards, activities and tasks, the Subject Learning Guide, the textbooks to be used and the materials to be presented, the matter is to be resolved by the relevant Head(s) of School concerned.

Section 5 - Definitions

(25) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. **Assessment Criteria:** Used to measure the degree to which a student has achieved the intended learning outcomes for the subject.
- b. **Assessment tasks:** Examples include examinations, essays or other forms of writing, verbal presentations, clinical practicum performance, multi media or digital presentations, performance, portfolio development.
- c. **Blind Marking:** Double marking where the second marker does not see the original comments or marks.
- d. **Criterion-referenced assessment:** students work is assessed with reference to written criteria derived from explicit learning outcomes or capability standards. Each student's grade in a subject is determined by the degree to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes.
- e. **Double marking:** requiring two different staff to mark the same piece of work submitted for assessment, where the original marks and comments are seen by the second marker. Instance: each distinct offering of a subject. Instances may differ in one or more particulars, for example: location, mode, length and intensity of teaching period, facilities and resources (e.g. staff, equipment, space).
- f. **Exchange marking:** requiring two staff members to exchange certain pieces of work for marking so that for example, the Bundoora lecturer in the subject marks examination scripts for the Albury Wodonga lecturer and vice versa.
- g. **Instance Leader:** provides co-ordination of subjects at instances other than the one for which the Subject Coordinator is also Instance Leader.

- h. Moderation: the process of scrutinising a selection of pieces of work from an assessment task to review and verify the level and consistency of the marks allocated by the markers against published assessment criteria.
- i. Standards: The actual levels achieved by the students against the assessment criteria.
- j. Subject Learning Guide: the document distributed or provided online to students at the beginning of semester with substance including details of subject content, expected learning outcomes, assessment and assessment criteria, reading guide, staff contact information, advice on plagiarism.
- k. Teaching Team: The Subject Coordinator, Instance Leaders and other staff teaching the subject, including sessional and marking staff.

Section 6 - Stakeholders

Responsibility for implementation – Heads of School; Subject Coordinators; Subject Instance Leaders and Teaching Teams.

Responsibility for monitoring implementation and compliance – College Pro Vice-Chancellors; and Heads of School.

Status and Details

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