

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

**GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT FOR ANU COLLEGES TO FOLLOW
from the University Education Committee of 11 April 2008
(Reference document 361/2008)**

1. Reflecting the content of past examination papers in examination papers.

Current Status:

There are no prescribed internal ANU College or College-wide policies, and practices may vary according to the nature of the assessment (i.e. whether problem-solving or essay form).

Six Colleges regard the practice to be appropriate, even encouraged (for benchmarking), and in some cases unavoidable (i.e. to meet professional admission standards), provided there is extensive modification to ensure that the examination assesses knowledge on a subject as well as conceptual understanding.

Recommendations for Colleges to follow:

- (i) That ANU Colleges adopt the practice of making past examination papers available routinely to students (other than in exceptional situations where access may be prohibited by the lecturer);
- (ii) That course outlines, including those available on-line:
 - (a) state whether past examination papers are available either from the Library or the ANU College offering the course;
 - (b) indicate the extent to which students may expect past examination papers to reflect the examination content of the forthcoming assessment in a course.

2. Release of examination questions to students prior to a closed book examination.

Current Status:

Different practices are in place with regard to access to questions prior to open book examinations and vary from full or part disclosure at the discretion of the lecturer to a blanket non-disclosure policy across the ANU College. Marking standards may be adjusted. Some Colleges are opposed to the release of questions prior to closed book examinations on the ground that the purpose of learning would not be achieved.

Recommendations for Colleges to follow:

- (i) that ANU Colleges articulate their policies for lecturing staff on the release of examination questions to students prior to both open book and closed book examinations;

- (ii) the release of examination questions prior to an examination must comply with the broad principles of:
 - (a) equal access through timely electronic notice to all students in a class of the availability of the examination questions normally two weeks in advance of the examination, and by announcement in class;
 - (b) full disclosure of the process for making examination questions available.

3. Access to past answers to examination papers and ‘model’ answers.

Current Status:

Practices on the issue of model answers and availability of past examination answers vary largely according to whether or not the lecturer considers this would aid student learning and is appropriate for the form of assessment (i.e. problem-solving or essay). Where examination script books are returned routinely, students are able to borrow from students in previous years.

Recommendations for Colleges to follow:

- (i) that ANU Colleges articulate their policies for lecturing staff on the issue of “model’ answers and past answers to examination questions;
- (ii) the issue of ‘model’ and/or past answers to examination questions must comply with the broad principles of:
 - (a) equal access for all students in a class to ‘model’ and/or past answers to examination questions provided by the lecturer through publication on websites;
 - (b) full disclosure and notification of the practice to be followed in course outlines;
 - (c) clear advice to students about the University’s policies and rules about academic honesty, plagiarism and discipline with links to the relevant sites

4. Access to non-returnable assessment items, including examination script books

Current Status:

The University’s *Assessment Review and Appeals Policy* reads:

“2.1 Students are permitted to inspect non-returnable assessment items, including examination scripts, up to four months after the completion of the assessment in the course.

2.2 Such inspections of non-returnable assessment items must be undertaken with the supervision of University staff.

2.3 The University cannot charge fees for inspections, other than the cost recovery associated with the reproduction of any relevant documents requested by the student.”

Practices engaged in by ANU Colleges in applying the University's policy range from 'controlled conditions' such as students being permitted to attend a location to view their scripts only and with opportunity for subsequent communication with the lecturer or viewing by appointment with the lecturer-in-charge, to unrestricted return of exam scripts to students following confirmation of results. Access to non-returnable assessment items is generally supported for learning purposes and as a feedback mechanism. Concerns about unrestricted return of these items relate to loss of integrity of the process.

Recommendations for Colleges to follow:

- (i) that ANU Colleges ensure that the University's minimum expectations for students to be able to inspect non-returnable assessment items and consult their lecturers in respect of their performance in an examination are brought to the attention of all lecturing staff;
- (ii) that ANU Colleges articulate for staff and students their procedures for applying the University's policy, i.e. supervised viewing times or viewing by appointment;
- (iii) that ANU Colleges adopt the following:
 - (a) That on request students be permitted to photocopy the item of assessment, provided that:
 - the right to possession of the original script remains with the University;
 - where, in the opinion of the Course Authority, the photocopying of scripts in a particular course would seriously prejudice the proper conduct of future examinations in that course, such photocopying not be permitted;
 - the procedure be available only after results in the courses concerned have been published and no later than the expiration of a period of four months from the date of the publication of results.
 - (b) Delegated Authorities be authorised to permit the return of the original examination scripts to students where this is the policy in their ANU College;
 - (c) Procedures in situations where a student requests a photocopy of an original script:
 - the student should request the photocopying of the script through the Course Authority;
 - the script may be photocopied either by the student in the presence of a member of the academic or general staff of the ANU College, or photocopied by a member of the academic staff or general staff of the ANU College;
 - the student be responsible for paying any costs involved.

5. Anonymous marking of written assessment

Current Status:

The ANU College of Law uses 'blind' marking and have a field for the student number on the script books used for law examinations. All other areas use script books that ask for name and student number. How assessments are collated and graded is at the discretion of academic staff. ANU Colleges (other than Law) have commented that even if anonymous marking could be implemented at the level of final examinations, final results are decided at meetings of examiners where students are considered at the individual level, and they have also questioned the evidence base for adopting it in limited form. Responses, however, are generally not opposed to anonymity at the time of marking the exam.

The University Education Committee **agreed** that the recommendation that the University require student numbers only on examination script books should be adopted and implemented in 2008.

NOTES:

- (i) The policies for the consideration of individual student performance at examiners meetings remain unaffected by the decision to introduce anonymous marking for written examinations.
- (ii) Requiring student numbers only on examination script books was implemented from the 2008 end-of-year examination session.

UEC 11 April 2008

Updated 8 April 2009