



OASES Graduate School

Assessment Policy and Procedures and Review

Approved by:	Academic Council
Last reviewed:	08 December 2014

Table of Contents

Preamble	1
1. Principles of Assessment	3
2. Setting Assessment and Informing Participants	4
3. Receiving Assessment Work	4
4. Reviewing Results and Ensuring Comparability	4
5. Special Consideration and Special Assessment	5
6. Supplementary Assessment	5
7. Review of Result	6
8. Quality Assurance and Assessment	6
9. Examination of Masters Projects/theses/exegeses	6
Version control	7

Preamble

Assessment, which we prefer to call accounting for learning, of participants in the OASES graduate program is embedded within its values and ethical guidelines. Please see separate documents on values and ethical guidelines.

In using a multi-modal epistemology and approach to learning we encourage assessment tasks that use a range of forms, including conceptual, practical/action, presentational and experiential (see e.g. John Heron and Peter Reason A Participative Inquiry Paradigm Q.I. Vol. 3(3) 1997). For an extended account of

the value and pedagogical bases for assessment please view the relevant section of part 2 of our handbook (see attached) which all participants have a copy of.

Our assessment is premised on different learning styles and different individual learning trajectories and life/work goals which are identified and explored in the foundational year of the program, the Graduate Certificate and continues throughout the program.

Learning is continuous and assessment or accounting for learning is an integrated part of this continuous learning

We have responsibilities to apply our policies and practices consistently

In all OASES units, assessment tasks are designed to reflect evidence of the learning outcomes specified for the unit and the overall learning outcomes for the program. Responsibility for assessment is shared within the learning community including self-assessment, peer assessment and review by the unit facilitator. Help and support by the facilitator and by other participants is available, as all teaching and learning in OASES are conceived of as reciprocal. There are four relevant dimensions against which the quality of participants' work in multiple expressions is judged:

- The substantive knowledge and wisdom as represented in the global debates and discourses within the relevant areas of study and the available attempts at integration and transformation as represented in the relevant literatures nationally and internationally and – where relevant – as represented by and through participants' lived individual and collective experiences.
- The overall standard and level of knowledge, wisdom and experience of the learning community involved in the specific units and the level and quality of substantive work done and experienced together in each.
- The personal learning trajectory of the individual learner/participant as critically examined through self-assessment, peer assessment and facilitator assessment; this learning trajectory has obviously substantive as well as cognitive, emotional and social-learning components, which will be duly examined in the assessment process.
- The emergence of appropriate evidence of newly discovered transformative and integrative change and of new ways of being and doing occurring in the participant's life through the application of insights/practices/relationships from the learning in the respective units and in general.

At all moments, *transparency* – and therefore *contestability* - will be a characteristic of the assessment process in all its facets.

1. Principles of Assessment (Accounting for Learning) for OASES program Units

- a. Care is taken that the need to assess participants does not conflict with the important educative role that assessment can perform in both conveying to participants the kinds of intellectual, social, aesthetic, ecological and spiritual engagements desired and in providing feedback on their performance. The role to be performed by individual assessment tasks shall be made clear to participants from the outset.
- b. It is expected that members of the Academic Collegium responsible for course and unit development demonstrate professional expertise in devising modes of assessment which accurately reflect the relevant educational objectives of OASES and which suit the particular assessment goal and which are in tune with the style of presentation adopted for the subject matter.
- c. Participants will be advised of all the requirements for assessment at the beginning of each semester.
- d. The quantity of assessment that contributes toward a final result will be the minimum amount necessary to ensure a valid result. Ideally, there will be more than one assessment task for each unit and these will occur across the semester rather than being concentrated at the end.
- e. When negotiating assessments, members of the Academic Collegium will be mindful of participants' total workloads within the particular time frame.
- f. Where an assessment panel wishes to include an assessment hurdle requirement (for example, a requirement that participants must obtain a passing grade in an individual assessment task in order to obtain a passing grade overall) that requirement will be demonstrably related to acquiring certain knowledge/understanding/skills necessary for satisfactory progress in the subject, meeting professional or other accreditation requirements or mastery of the discipline.
- g. Each individual assessment task need not test all goals for the unit; instead, the fulfilment of all goals will be assessed over the total assessment experience.
- h. The only "grades" that will be used for any assessment task or final assessment for a unit is successful completion or not completed. Please view other documentation in Participant Handbook on how to be successful in this program. We realise that if participants wish to pursue other studies at another institution they may require more detail about their "level" of success or a grading. We ask all of the Academic Collegium to keep sufficiently details notes about their feedback to participants to enable this detail to be given if necessary.

2. Setting Assessment and Informing Participants

- a. All descriptions of units in the Handbook will contain a statement of assessment requirements. In unit guides, participants will be informed of other details including topics, dates by which assignments must reach a member of the Academic Collegium, word limits and requirements for presentation. If there is provision for some negotiation of assessment tasks (for example allowing participants to nominate topics), the procedures for this negotiation shall be clearly stated.
- b. OASES will make special arrangements for assessment tasks for participants with a disability so that all are provided a comparable opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and competencies for assessment purposes.
- c. Members of the Academic Collegium will make clear to participants the guidelines for submission and assessment, including such matters as assessment modes, extensions, and final submission date.

3. Receiving Assessment Work

- a. Assessed work is normally returned to participants, within 2 weeks of submission and members of the Academic Collegium will inform participants of this commitment in setting unit assignments. For late submissions this return is open to negotiation.
- b. Members of the Academic Collegium will ensure that assignment whereabouts are tracked and that marked assignments are made available to participants in a secure manner.
- c. When participants submit work by the due date, they will receive feedback on their work in time to benefit them in preparing for the next assessment task.

4. Reviewing Results and Ensuring Comparability

OASES will use approved methods for ensuring, as far as practicable, comparability of assessment within and between units between different markers. The Academic Board is responsible for monitoring this comparability.

5. Special Consideration and Special Assessment

- a. Participants who consider their assessment was or is likely to be adversely affected on medical, compassionate or hardship/trauma grounds may apply for special consideration.
- b. Special consideration is only given in serious and exceptional circumstances that are beyond the participant's control and that prevent the participant from performing at his or her best for a particular piece of assessment.
- c. Applications should be made to the Academic Board via the Chair or via Unit Facilitator, outlining reasons
- d. Applications must normally be received by the relevant member of the Academic Collegium or Chair of Academic Board no later than three working days after the due date for submission of the assessment task
- e. An application for special consideration shall be referred to the relevant member of the Academic Collegium for determination as to whether or not special consideration should be granted.
- f. Participants shall be notified of the outcome of their application no later than the date of the publication of results.
- g. The relevant member of the Academic Collegium shall determine in accordance with the academic progress requirements of OASES the form of the grant of special consideration and may, at his or her discretion, require additional forms of assessment, subject to the overall authority of the Course Advisory Committee.

6. Supplementary Assessment

- a. The granting of supplementary assessment will be viewed as the exception not the rule, and will only be awarded in the case of genuine doubt with regard to a participant's performance in the specific unit. It will not be awarded to resolve a case where a participant is close to a pass.
- b. The decision to award supplementary assessment will not be subject to an assessment of a participant's progress in the course as a whole and/or progress in other subjects.
- c. Supplementary Assessment will be allocated where a participant has already attempted all assessment requirements of the subject and has been granted a supplementary form of assessment and will not be used for participants who have been granted special consideration.
- d. Supplementary assessments are additional to the initial assessment and are awarded by the Course Advisory Committee.

7. Review of Result

Once a result has been officially released, a participant cannot apply for special consideration; however an application may be made to the Academic Board for a review of a result. This request must be submitted within 10 working days after the official result release.

8. Quality Assurance and Assessment

Quality assurance and continuous quality improvement *related to assessment* will be the responsibility of the Academic Collegium and the Academic Board who will consider ***as a minimum***:

- the number of units assessed each semester
- the number of units for which comparability of assessment was ensured using approved methods
- the number of units for which fail marks were verified using approved methods
- actions taken or planned to ensure compliance with this policy in future assessment
- any other information requested by Academic Board, notably modes and modalities of assessment and their continuous review, appeal procedures and appeal cases initiated by participants, balance of assessment within and across units and the several dimensions of the aesthetic, spiritual, ecological and social.

The Academic Board shall exercise overall quality assurance by considering feedback from participants, considerations of the Academic Collegium and Reports from the Integrative Conversation facilitators, one of whose responsibilities is to monitor accounting for learning including feedback to participants throughout the different years of the program.

9. Examination of Masters Projects/theses/exegeses

The examination of the final thesis in whatever presentational modality/form will be in several stages to reflect the learning outcomes for the Masters in Sustainability and Social Change as well as our relational ethics approach to accounting for learning

- a. A public presentation of some aspect of the project and its findings at an OASES breakfast or similar public forum, at which members of the OASES learning community together with members of the wider community are present
- b. Examination by one internal and one external examiner of the final documentation of the project. A letter and examination template to be sent

(see attachment) to examiners outlining our approach to accounting for learning and the criteria against which the thesis should be examined and the form of feedback to participants we are seeking. The participant and examiner to engage in some form of conversation around the project. No contact prior to viva between the 2 examiners of the thesis.

- c. A viva at which members of the OASES learning community, examiners of the thesis and including Head of School and Chair of Academic Board, together with co visor and other participants engaged in their research projects will engage in conversation with the examinee around questions, dilemmas, elaborations as well as feedback from the examiners. All participants at the viva will have access to the thesis/exegesis
- d. Recommendations from the examiners and the “outcomes” from the viva will go to Academic Board who will consider further action, confirmation of successful completion, and/or any modifications, additions required together with or prior to confirmation of successful completion.

Policy Owner	Chair of Academic Council
Next review	October 2016

Version No.	Approval date	Approved by	Amendment
3.0	08 December 2014	Academic Council	Change of program name from 'Integrative and Transformative Studies' to 'Sustainability and Social Change'
2.0	October 2012	Academic Board (now Council)	Extension and clarification of procedures
1.0	November 2007	VRQA	