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| Aratohu Aromatawai Interim Assessment Handbook |
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# Te Hōkaitanga | Document scope

This Assessment Handbook aims to provide kaiako with guidance around the purpose and principles of assessment, assessment design, methods, timing and implementation. The Handbook is focused on assessment in Programmes of Study, without a specific focus the type of work-based learning and assessment that occurs in Programmes of Industry Training.

Also included is guidance on assessment submission and marking. This Handbook provides interim guidance for use while the Te Pūkenga frameworks to support assessment and moderation are under development.

# Te Takepū o te Aromatawai | Purpose of assessment

Assessment is a structured process of gathering evidence and making judgements on ākonga performance in relation to predetermined criteria and is integral to learning and teaching. Assessment should provide evidence of the achievement of learning outcomes and contribute to the development of skills, knowledge and competencies identified in the graduate profile outcomes of a qualification.

Te Pūkenga has a commitment to supporting ākonga to achieve to their full potential through quality assessment. Such assessment should fulfil the functions set out below.

**Foster ākonga learning**

Ākonga should be able to easily identify what is expected of them from the learning outcomes, which should be clearly aligned to the assessment activities. This allows ākonga to identify the purpose of the course and each assessment, and to develop confidence in achieving the learning outcomes. Feedback to ākonga on their achievement is essential in supporting their success.

**Assess ākonga achievement and quality of learning and teaching**

Assessment provides a method of determining to what standard ākonga have achieved the identified learning outcomes. It also provides an indication of the quality of the learning and teaching, thereby providing useful information to both ākonga and kaiako.

**Provide evidence of programme quality**

Assessment results serve as a measure of Te Pūkenga success in supporting ākonga ability to meet professional accreditation and other requirements associated with their programme of study. Comprehensive and effective assessment can serve to indicate that relevant knowledge, skills and competencies have been gained.

# Ngā Mātāpono o te Aromatawai | Principles of assessment

The seven key principles that underpin assessment are described below.

**Validity**

Assessments should be valid and fit for purpose. This ensures the assessment is aimed at the right level and addresses the learning outcomes and graduate profile outcomes. A valid assessment is an assessment that measures what it intends to assess.

**Authenticity**

Assessments should be relevant and reflect the conditions that ākonga might experience in the real world. Assessment activities should engage ākonga and contribute to the development of interest, skills, knowledge and competencies in a way that allows for diversity and cultural differences.

**Reliability**

Assessments should consistently and accurately measure ākonga performance. This is achieved if different kaiako and moderators come to the same conclusions about ākonga achievement when marking the assessment.

**Fairness and Inclusivity**

Varied assessments should provide all ākonga with an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their learning. No discrimination or bias should occur. Assessments need to be accessible to all ākonga, non-discriminatory, and culturally responsive and appropriate.

**Manageability**

Assessments should be reasonable and practicable in terms of time and resources for both ākonga and kaiako. They should be straightforward and not interfere with learning. Assessments should be planned within a course and across a programme to ensure a balanced workload.

**Transparency**

The assessment should clearly set out the expectations of ākonga. Detailed explanation of the tasks, the learning outcomes or unit/skills standards being assessed, pass/fail or competency criteria and grade weightings should be included, and exemplars should be provided where possible.

**Sustainability**

The assessment should be designed in such a way that it meets the current needs of the course/programme, but also prepares ākonga to meet their own future learning needs. Sustainable assessment considers the contribution the assessment makes to learning beyond the timeframe of the course (Boud & Soler, 2016).

# Ngā Momo Aromatawai | Assessment methods

The three main types of assessment are described below.

**Diagnostic assessment** is preliminary assessment to find out where ākonga are starting from. It may be used to inform learning and teaching plans and to provide differentiated teaching to meet ākonga needs.

**Formative assessment** is assessment that is embedded in the learning and teaching process and provides informal and formal feedback to the kaiako and ākonga regarding progress towards a learning outcome. It can also provide information to inform the next steps in teaching and learning.

**Summative assessment** is assessment that provides evidence that ākonga have or have not achieved a learning outcome. Summative assessment tasks may occur upon the completion of a topic or module and may also be used formatively for further learning.

When designing assessments, the context of learning and teaching must be considered to ensure the assessment is valid. It is expected that ākonga will be provided with opportunities to express themselves in a variety of ways that are appropriate to the learning and teaching experience.

Assessment should take the form most appropriate and valid for the ākonga, and for the learning and teaching, including oral, written and visual formats. For example, the process of pruning is taught in a practical manner and therefore the skills of pruning should be assessed in a practical manner, but justifications for different ways of pruning could be assessed in a range of ways (e.g., a verbal or written presentation, or a poster).

# Aromatawai ā-Rōpū | Group assessment

Group assessment activities provide an opportunity for ākonga to develop interpersonal skills and participate in a collaborative learning experience. Well planned group activities can foster competencies such as problem solving, communication, creativity, and social skills. Group assessment encourages listening, discussion and negotiation, questioning, debate and evaluation, and often reflects the real-world context.

Group assessment is recommended where the learning outcomes require evidence of collaboration, when the activity is too large or complex for one person to complete, or when there are resourcing implications. It is recommended that group assessment should contribute no more than 30% to the total grade for a course.

Group assessment activities require clear instructions, marking criteria and documentation to ensure that all group members participate and meet the identified learning outcomes. Group progress should be monitored and recorded regularly to support ākonga to stay on track and resolve any conflict that may arise. Although group assessment is sometimes viewed as time saving for kaiako, well planned group assessment may require additional planning and teaching time. Sufficient teaching should occur to support ākonga to understand group roles and responsibilities, and negotiation of the group project timeline and expected outcomes.

Following group assessment, it is essential to gather evidence that each ākonga has met the learning outcomes, has contributed to the group process and outputs and has had an opportunity to demonstrate achievement if the group activity fails to do so. Marking criteria may focus on the assessment product, assessment process or a combination of the two. It may include peer-assessment and self-assessment of the group process and contribution of individuals. Marking criteria should explicitly identify how individual participation and contributions will be assessed.

# He Kohinga Aromatawai Whaiaro | Assessment portfolios

An assessment portfolio provides evidence of what ākonga have learnt or mastered – it is the kete that contains the pieces of evidence that ākonga have met the learning outcomes. There may be multiple tasks or activities that generate artefacts for inclusion in the portfolio, and each of these may have individual weightings and due dates, and align with different learning outcomes. Evidence within any portfolio may include

* photos
* audio/video recordings
* reflections
* journal entries
* essays
* reports
* presentations
* invigilated examination scripts
* marking rubrics (e.g., of skills assessed via observation)
* attestations
* interviews etc.

The evidence selected to be included in a portfolio should be authentic and relevant. Ultimately, the assessment portfolio provides a record of all assessment completed within a course.

# Te Tuku Aromatawai | Assessment timing

Assessment activities should be scheduled to ensure ākonga workload is balanced and manageable across the courses in a programme and/or over the period of work-based learning. Ākonga should ideally not be expected to work on assessments during holiday breaks.

If a single assessment contributes 100% of the grade, then checkpoints should be included to provide opportunities for ākonga to receive feedback before final submission. Furthermore, it is recommended that ākonga are initially exposed to low-stakes formative assessment at the beginning of a course or work-based learning period, from which they can receive feedback and gain an understanding of expectations without compromising their ability to meet the learning outcomes.

# Te Waihanga Aromatawai | Assessment design

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### Constructive alignment

Well-designed assessments provide ākonga an opportunity to show their knowledge, understanding, skills, competencies and attributes, entailing the purposeful collection of evidence to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes. Constructive alignment within courses is key in this endeavour, and encompasses two principles: (i) ākonga construct their own understanding and knowledge, and (ii) the course developer aligns the learning outcomes, assessment and learning activities to provide opportunities for this to occur.

### Assessment scope

For achievement-based assessment, assessment design should consider the magnitude of the required activity in relation to the level and weighting of the assessment. A course’s credit value indicates the hours of learning typically required to achieve the learning outcomes of course, with one credit requiring 10 notional learning hours. The course content and assessment format will dictate the time and effort required to complete an assessment, but usually, approximately 30% of the course’s learning hours may be dedicated to completing assessments (e.g., 45 hours of a 15-credit course).

When developing an assessment, keep in mind that the end user is the ākonga. For this reason, the assessment should be carefully worded at a level appropriate to them. While designing an assessment, the following questions should be considered:

* What level is the course?
* What is the nature of the assessment? (written, oral, visual, manual, practical, etc.)
* Is the content of the assessment based on new knowledge, or is it integrated with previously acquired knowledge?
* Does the assessment require pure knowledge, comprehension, explanation, critical thinking, etc.?
* Is this assessment a practical that requires integration of theoretical knowledge?
* Is this assessment at the beginning of the course, the middle or the end?
* What percentage of the course content relates to achieving the outcome being assessed (as this should align with the assessment activity weighting)?

Answers to the questions above will also help kaiako avoid over-assessing – each learning outcome need not be assessed multiple times, and the scope of each assessment should be related to the proportion of the course content taught to meet the learning outcome/s being assessed. Furthermore, assessment methods should be varied within a course and across a programme, but each learning outcome does not need multiple assessment opportunities.

### Nature of assessment

Quality assessments provide ākonga with information on the process required to complete the task, and the level of achievement expected. There should be a relationship between the steps in the process (“How do I do it?”) and the criteria in the marking rubric (“What should it look like?”).

In short, effective assessment

* engages ākonga in activities that are productive and meaningful,
* provides specific and timely feedback to actively improve learning,
* encourages ākonga and kaiako to become responsible partners in learning and assessment,
* inducts ākonga into the assessment practices and cultures of tertiary education,
* focuses kaiako and the organisation on assessment for learning,
* provides trustworthy evidence of ākonga achievement, and
* is flexible, allowing ākonga to contribute personal context to the assessment and is inclusive of diversity and culture.

### Academic integrity

Quality assessments are designed to minimise breaches of academic integrity. Instructions should be specific, unambiguous and provide opportunities for ākonga to explicitly demonstrate how they have met all aspects of the learning outcomes. Assessments which require ākonga to contextualise and personalise their responses are least likely to result in breaches of academic integrity. Exams and generic assessment activities are more likely to provide opportunities for breaches. Teaching and resources on academic integrity and how to avoid breaching it should occur within each course, and be specifically related to the assessments for that course.

### Marking rubrics/guides

Assessments should provide the opportunity for ākonga to receive constructive feedback. This should be an integral element of assessment design and seen as a central part of the learning experience. A marking rubric or guide with clearly set out performance criteria should allow kaiako to give ākonga specific feedback in relation to the assessment activity, and should act as a tool for ākonga to understand what they have achieved and where they might need further development. For achievement-based assessment, the majority of marks in the rubric should be allocated to the evidence that directly relates to achieving the learning outcome.

# Te Whakawākanga me te Whakahoki Kōrero | Assessment marking and feedback

Assessments should be marked directly against the marking criteria that measure achievement of the learning outcome. Marking criteria should be clear and accessible to ākonga before they undertake assessment activities. Feedback may be verbal or written. It should be specific, transparent, timely and of a quality that expands and extends ākonga learning and understanding (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Constructive feedback about learning can be one of the most powerful influences on ākonga achievement. This includes both formal and informal feedback, celebrating successes identifying aspects to focus on. Feedback can be structured to provide valuable insights for ākonga and kaiako.

Constructive feedback includes restating the purpose of the assessment (“Feed up”), information about ākonga progress towards meeting the goal (“Feedback”) and actions they can take to improve achievement (“Feed forward”) (Wisniewski et al., 2020).

Top tips for making feedback count:

* Take an educative approach: Help ākonga understand the purpose of feedback and value for their learning; focus feedback both on strengths and opportunities for development.
* Provide feedback in a timely manner.
* Be mindful of the individual ākonga and their needs.
* Provide feedback against the criteria of the rubric, be specific.
* Have a learning conversation with individuals to discuss the feedback.
* Summarise themes from your observations and share with the cohort.
* Provide time for ākonga to reflect on and discuss feedback and develop goals or actions based on feedback. This may be done in class time, or at designated times during work-based learning.
* Be sincere with all aspects of your feedback.

# He Āpitihanga 1 – He Puna Tohutoro | Appendix 1 – References

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