

# Impact of assessment practice on student performance: An institution-wide study

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*“Assessment defines what students regard as important, how they spend their time and how they come to see themselves as students and then as graduates”* (Brown et al, 1997). There has been no shortage of principles (AAHE, 1996), conditions (McDowell, 2006), manifestos (Boud et al, 2010; Price et al, 2008), elements (Rust et al, 2012) and indicators (CSHE, 2002), that all advocate for assessment that provides a scaffolded learning experience that fosters learning rather than focusing on collecting marks. However, in practice we often find fragmentation of assessments, and marks accumulated into a final grade, resulting in students who focus on individual tasks and the related marks for those tasks. To address this there is a need for HE institutions to change their practice to a holistic or whole of degree approach to assessment with systems that recognise valid achievement in relation to degree level learning outcomes and away from compartmentalised unit/subject ones. As Haynes (2007) states, *“where there is a greater sense of the holistic programme students are likely to achieve higher standards than on more fragmented programmes”*. The University of Wollongong is determined to change their assessment and feedback practice across all programmes of study by introducing a new set of Assessment & Feedback Principles and revising the Codes of Practice for Teaching and Assessment. This work is being supported by reviewing baseline data of assessment practice and its impact on student performance prior to these newly instigated principles.

The research and/or issues under consideration include:

- Do the number of assignments in a task impact on student performance?
- Does the weighting of the task impact on student performance?
- Does the timing of the task impact on student performance?
- Does the type of assessment impact on student performance?
- Does the assessment method (online vs f2f or individual vs group) impact on student performance?

Baseline data has been sourced from the point-of-student- services databases for all subjects delivered in 2014 and 2015 to analyse the impact of current assessment practice on student performance. Early results support the need to change assessment practice to help maximise student success.