REVIEW

ASSESS

EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW
OF ASSESSMENT

A GUIDE TO SUPPORTING THE EXTERNAL
REFERENCING OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS

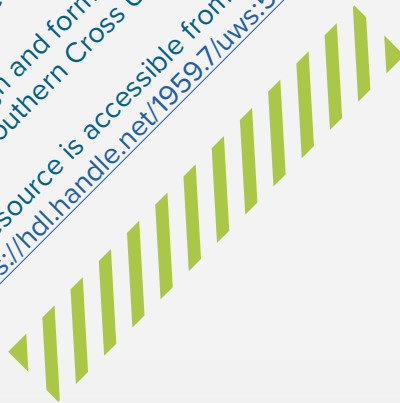**CAULLT** Council of Australasian University
Leaders in Learning and Teaching

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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❶ Introduction

Each section of this resource addresses a topic that you should think about.

Why?
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❷ What is external peer review of assessment?

> *"The practice of colleagues providing and receiving feedback on one another's unit/ subject outlines, assessment tasks and marking criteria to ensure that assessment is aligned to the unit/subject learning outcomes. It includes a calibration process to ensure comparability of achievement standards and an opportunity for professional learning". (Booth, Beckett, & Saunders, 2015, p. 6. https://ltr.edu.au/resources/Booth_Report_2015.pdf)*

Think of external peer review as a verification process that leads to improved alignment between learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks.

Engaging in peer review of assessment provides assurance that the marker/s have made the right judgements about students' work.

Engaging with colleagues collectively and collegially in peer review of assessment helps to improve the student experience.

As the peer review cycle continues over time, the quality of courses and judgements about student attainment standards improve and become more comparable across institutions. It also provides a professional learning opportunity for academic staff.

📄 See "TEQSA (2019, April 6). *Guidance Note: External Referencing (including Benchmarking)*" on page 18.

❸ What external peer review processes exist currently?

▸ The Group of Eight Quality Verification System (QVS)

▸ The IRU Academic Calibration Process (ACP)

▸ The External Review of Standards arising from the External Referencing of Standards (ERoS) project

▸ The Peer Review Portal, a cloud-based review management system. It supports a wide range of contexts for the peer review of assessment. The portal has automatic templates on the QVS, ACP and ERoS models mentioned above. Users can also customise their own templates.

❹ What learning and teaching projects focus on external peer review of assessment?

All projects listed below are available at the Learning and Teaching Repository. Search by project title to be linked to each project.

Booth, S., Beckett, J., & Saunders, C. (2015). *Peer review of assessment networks: Sector-wide options for calibrating and assuring achievement standards within and across disciplines and other networks*. Sydney, NSW: Office for Learning and Teaching.

Freeman, M., & Ewan, C. (2014). *Good practice report. Assuring learning outcomes and standards: Final report. Sydney, NSW: Office for Learning and Teaching.*

Hancock, P., Freeman, M., Abraham, A., De Lange, P., Howieson, B., O'Connell, B., & Watty, K. (2014). *Achievement matters. External peer review of accounting learning standards: Final report.* Sydney, NSW: Office for Learning and Teaching.

Krause, K., Scott, G., Aubin, K., Alexander, H., Angelo, T., Campbell, S., Carroll, M.,...Vaughan, S. (2013). *Assuring final year subject and program achievement standards through inter-university peer review and moderation.* Sydney, NSW: Office for Learning and Teaching.

❺ What else is in this resource?

A set of attachments that include the following:

▸ TEQSA Guidance Notes: External Referencing (Benchmarking) and ELICOS Direct Entry

▸ Guidance sheets focusing on six review questions

▸ One work sample of a fictional unit of study "Women and Work", within a BA Migrant Studies course. This sample contains a unit outline, an assessment task, a marking rubric, and three pieces of student work.

▸ A second work sample, drawing on the same fictional unit of study "Women and Work", showing the conversational approach to giving feedback applied to review question 3.

❻ How can this resource be used?

This resource was designed to be used independently or in small groups.

The conversational approach to feedback promoted in this resource can be used when feedback is provided in a written form, in online discussions or face-to-face meetings.

❼ Terminology

Throughout this resource we have used "unit" to mean a single component of a qualification, or stand-alone unit, that has been approved or accredited. Also called subject, course, module.

We have used "course" to mean a collection of units of study leading to an award or qualification. Also called program.

Visit the "Glossary" on page 15 for definitions of other terms used in this resource.

WHY?
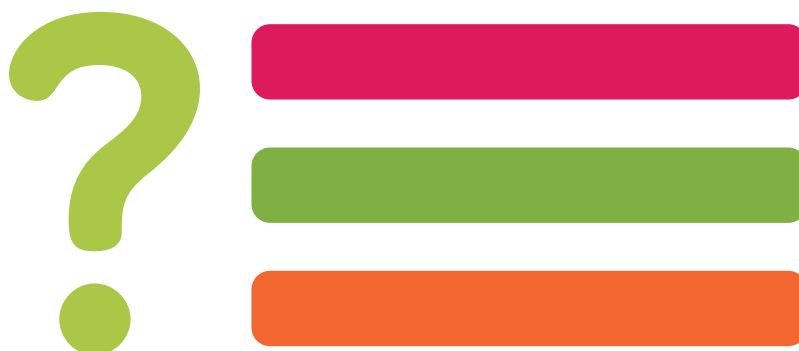
What is the purpose of external peer review of assessment?

❶ Assuring standards

You want to assure standards for:

▶ appropriate assessment design

▶ consistency and completeness of unit/course materials

▶ equivalence of the student experience, regardless of mode of study

▶ any other standard you want to ensure.

❷ Collecting evidence

Collecting evidence to ensure assessment standards involves looking for:

▶ de-identified student work samples

▶ attrition, retention and completion data

▶ assessment tasks

▶ alignment of assessment to disciplinary standards.

❸ Enhancing understanding

Engaging in the external peer review of assessment process enhances understanding of:

▶ assessment design

▶ rubrics and grading

▶ different types of assessment

▶ assessment for learning and assessment of learning (formative/summative).

WHAT?

Think about the evidence and data that can be submitted as part of the peer review process.

The more information provided to you as part of the review, the better.

❶ What can be peer reviewed?

▸ unit outlines

▸ a context statement for the unit or a curriculum map

▸ assessment tasks

▸ alignment of assessment tasks to course learning outcomes, unit learning outcomes and assessment standards

▸ rubric or marking guide and stated assessment standards

▸ student work samples

▸ quality of feedback given to students

▸ student data on attrition, retention and completion

❷ What is the focus of the review?

▸ The review is focused on a series of questions in relation to the unit and assessment in the unit.

▸ In this resource, we are using questions adapted from the External Referencing of Standards (ERoS) project completed in 2016.

▸ If you are using the Peer Review Portal to undertake the peer review, you will submit your answers to the questions through the Portal.

WHO?

This section assumes you have been contacted to do a review for a university or an independent provider.

❶ Who can be a reviewer?

▸ Some processes for peer review of assessment limit reviewers to a certain level of academic appointment.

▸ Don't assume that someone more senior or junior cannot be a 'peer'.

▸ In the Peer Review Portal, review applicants can broadcast their reviews and academics from other institutions can apply to become a reviewer.

▸ A person outside your institution can bring fresh ideas, and you may learn new things from a new disciplinary perspective.

❷ Workload and payment

If you have been approached to do an external peer review of assessment, this may be a workload issue as some institutions may consider this to be part of your workload.

You may be offered payment, or the idea of reciprocal peer review may frame the relationship, whereby you can ask the review applicant to undertake peer review of assessment for you.

The Peer Review Portal gives you an option of whether you would like to be paid as a reviewer, as well as the ability to pay reviewers.

HOW?

❶ Before you begin

▶ Review the material to which you have been given access. Ensure that everything you need to answer the the review questions is available to you.

▶ Contact the person who is coordinating the review process to clarify any aspect of the review process if required.

▶ Check the amount of time you have been given to do the review.

Respond to each of the questions asked in the review.

❷ Conversational approach to giving feedback

▶ Advice about using a conversational approach to the giving of written feedback is provided in "Giving Feedback: A Conversational Approach" on page 11.

This advice has been adapted from recent research and experience of using this approach.

❸ Reflection

An important part of the process is reflecting on your peer review experience and considering what you have learned from the process.

Further information is available about this in "Follow-Up" on page 14.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

❶ Introduction

This section focuses on six peer review questions. Questions 1 and 2 ask the reviewer to focus broadly on the fit between the Unit Learning Outcomes, Course Learning Outcomes and the AQF level of the unit being reviewed.

Questions 3 to 6 ask the reviewer to look closely at assessment tasks, performance standards, assessment methods, and grades awarded.

There will usually be a final question that asks you for any comments you wish to make on matters not covered by the previous questions.

For questions 1–6, a Guidance Sheet located in the "Attachments" on page 18 explains the context of the question, provides questions to guide your feedback, and offers resources to support further reading and reflection on the question.

All the review questions ask you to look at some aspect of the assessment evidence in relation to key indicators. A summary of these indicators and the level of assessment they address is shown below in Table 1.

Table 1: *Indicators and Level of Assessment*

Indicator	Level of assessment
Australian Qualifications Framework	Specifies performance for degree programs
Course learning outcomes	Should align with AQF levels and specify student achievement across a course of study
Unit learning outcomes	Specify the intended student performance from the unit and should relate to the Course Learning Outcomes
Bloom's Revised Taxonomy	Indicates tasks at a range of cognitive levels
Assessment task specification	Indicates learning and performance from the task through a rubric

❷ Review questions

Question ❶

📄 See "Guidance Sheet, Question 1. Are the specified Unit Learning Outcomes aligned with the relevant Course Learning Outcomes?" on page 19 for further information on this question.

Question ❷

📄 See "Guidance Sheet, Question 2. Are the Unit Learning Outcomes appropriate for the level of the unit at this AQF qualification level?" on page 20 for further information on this question.

Question ❸

📄 See "Guidance Sheet, Question 3. Does the assessment enable students to demonstrate attainment of the Unit Learning Outcomes and relevant Course Learning Outcomes?" on page 21 for further information on this question.

Question ❹

📄 See "Guidance Sheet, Question 4. Is the description of the performance standards (marking guide/marking criteria/assessment rubric/annotated work samples) appropriate for specified Unit Learning Outcomes and Course Learning Outcomes?" on page 23 for further information on this question.

Question ❺

📄 See "Guidance Sheet, Question 5. Is the method of assessment capable of confirming that all relevant Course Learning Outcomes and Unit Learning Outcomes are achieved?" on page 25 for further information on this question.

Question ❻

📄 See "Guidance Sheet, Question 6. Do the grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment?" on page 26 for further information on this question.

GIVING FEEDBACK: A CONVERSATIONAL APPROACH

❶ Background

In this resource we are advocating use of a conversational approach to giving feedback on each of the review questions.

The defining element of a conversational approach is *collaborative dialogue between professionals to promote learning.*

The learning that is gained from using the conversational approach is based on the idea of reciprocity, an opportunity for learning when both parties of the review process (the person/institution requesting and the person providing feedback) accept the peer review process as an opportunity for mutual or reciprocal learning.

The work of Earl and Timperley (2009, pp. 1–12), from their text *Professional learning conversations: Challenges in using evidence for improvement* and discussed below, has been adapted to offer a structured pathway to using the conversational approach.

While it is acknowledged that it is more difficult to activate the common elements of a conversational approach in writing, it is not impossible. Often external peer review is the only way feedback is given initially.

❷ Components of a conversational approach

The framework provided by Earl and Timperley (2009) features three distinct elements to a conversational approach to giving feedback to others as shown below in Figure 1:

Relationships of respect and challenge | **Inquiry habit of mind** | **Use of data and evidence**

Professional Learning Conversations

1   2   3

Figure 1. Elements of a professional learning conversation. Adapted from *Professional Learning Conversations* (pp 1–12), by L. M. Earl and H. Timperley (Eds.), 2009, New York, NY: Springer Science + Business Media.

❸ Establishing a relationship of respect and challenge

▸ Establish a relationship with the review applicant who provides information on the focus of the review.

▸ Promote thoughtfulness by building in reflection opportunities by asking questions as part of your review commentary.

▸ Respectfully challenge ideas behind the rationale for a task, the way a task has been structured or presented, etc.

▸ Introduce alternative viewpoint/s.

▸ Tackle troubling concepts.

▸ Change positions if the data and evidence suggest it.

❹ Adopting an inquiry habit of mind

▸ Recognise the challenges in developing a recursive, collaborative conversation in a written format.

▸ Accept that not all variables will be known by you as the reviewer.

▸ Consider a range of possible reasons for decisions about standards that have been made.

▸ Be open to difference.

▸ Seek deep understanding.

▸ Respect disciplinary context.

▸ Be mindful of the institutional focus.

▸ Provide feedback focused on improvement.

❺ Making use of data and evidence provided by the review applicant

▸ Artefacts and evidence are selected by the review applicant (the person requesting the review).

▸ The questions asked of the reviewer set the parameters of the review and areas of feedback.

▸ Ask yourself "What data exists?"

▸ Is the data comparable and relevant to the review?

▸ Be mindful of student confidentiality in relation to the information provided.

▸ Recognise sound and unsound evidence.

▸ Make interpretation paramount.

▸ Where are the gaps?

❻ Gaining practice in peer review

Practice your skills in answering the review questions.

You can do this by referring to two work samples:

📄 Attachment H, Work Sample 1, "Women and Work" on page 28.
The first sample provides a fictional unit of study "Women and Work" and other information associated with a peer review.

📄 Attachment I, Work Sample 2, "Applying the conversational approach to review question 3" on page 32.
The second work sample shows you how to respond to the review questions using the conversational approach previously outlined.

The Peer Review Portal has a professional learning workshop function which de-identifies data and enables professional learning and calibration with peers. Calibrating results with peers builds capability and practice in providing feedback during peer review, as well as developing academic and disciplinary networks.

FOLLOW-UP

▸ Discussion about the review can take place online or face to face.

▸ The institution requesting the review evaluates and reports the review results.

▸ Feedback from the review is used to improve the unit/s and course.

❶ Reflecting on the review process

▸ As a reviewer was the process worthwhile?

▸ Has your experience as a reviewer changed anything in your approach to assessment?

▸ Has your experience enhanced your assessment literacy?

▸ What have you learned about giving feedback to others?

▸ Did you find the conversational approach to providing feedback useful?

▸ Are there specific professional learning opportunities that you require to enhance your understanding of peer review?

GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Academic standards	An agreed specification (such as a defined benchmark or indicator) that is used as a definition of a level of performance or achievement, rule or guideline. Standards may apply to academic outcomes, such as student or graduate achievement of core discipline knowledge and core discipline skills (known as learning outcomes), or to academic processes such as student selection, teaching, research supervision, and assessment. (TEQSA, 2019, Glossary of terms).
Assessment	A process to determine a student's achievement of expected learning outcomes which may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration. It is expected to fairly, validly and reliably measure student performance of intended learning outcomes. Valid assessment refers to the explicit and clear alignment between intended learning outcomes and the assessment methods used to measure student achievement of those outcomes.
Assessment rubric or guide	A tool designed to measure the level of student achievement against consistent criteria and to award scored and/or graded outcomes. Assessment guides usually have three elements: ‣ Criteria for assessment ‣ Scored/graded outcome ‣ Descriptors of the performance criteria for each scored or graded outcome.
Assessment task	Illustrative task or performance opportunity that closely targets defined learning outcomes, allowing students to demonstrate their learning and capabilities. Assessment tasks include, but are not limited to: essays, tests, examinations, laboratory, clinical or field practicums, projects, compilations, productions, presentations, performances, web-based discussions and participation in forums.
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	The AQF is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.
Calibration	Calibration is a process of peer review carried out by members of a disciplinary and/or professional community who typically discuss, review and compare student work in order to reach a shared understanding of the academic standard which such work needs to meet (Advance HE, 2018, https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/project-section/what-is-calibration).
Consensus moderation	The process used to ensure comparability and equivalence of assessment practices within units and courses. Consensus moderation includes examination of the validity and reliability of assessment results and can be broadly defined as peer review that results in calibration and consensus being achieved (Nulty, 2018, https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/771954/consensus-moderation-essentials.pdf).

Term	Definition
Constructive alignment	When intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning tasks and assessment tasks are completely aligned, based on a constructivist view of learning.
Course	A collection of units of study leading to an award or qualification. Also called Program.
Course learning outcomes (CLOs)	These are the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a student has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning across the whole course.
External peer review of assessment	The practice of colleagues providing and receiving feedback on one another's unit/subject outlines, assessment tasks and marking criteria to ensure that assessment is aligned to intended learning outcomes and includes a calibration process to ensure comparability of achievement standards and an opportunity for professional learning (Booth et al., 2015, p. 6).
External referencing	A process through which a higher education provider compares an aspect of its operations with an external comparator(s) e.g. comparing the design of a course of study and/or student achievement of learning outcomes with that of a course from another provider. (TEQSA Guidance note: External referencing (including Benchmarking), 19 July 2018).
Feedback	In the context of this resource, a process involving collaborative dialogue between professionals to promote learning.
Learning conversation	Productive, evidence-informed conversation that is an iterative process, involving asking questions, examining evidence and thinking about what the evidence means in the particular context (Earl & Timperley, 2009, pp. 1–12).
Performance standard	Specific standards of student performance as required in an assessment task.
Unit	A single component of a qualification, or a stand-alone unit, that has been approved/accredited. Also called a 'subject', 'course' or 'module'.
Unit learning outcomes (ULOs)	These are the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a student has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning in an individual unit.
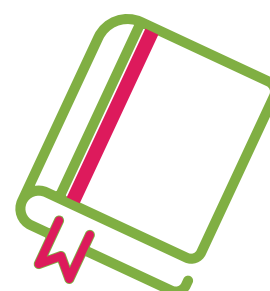
FURTHER RESOURCES

Beutel, D., Adie, L. & Lloyd, M. (2017). Assessment moderation in an Australian context: Processes, practices, and challenges. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *22*(1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2016.1213232

Bloxham, S., Hudson, J., den Outer, B. & Price, M. (2015). External peer review of assessment: An effective approach to verifying standards? *Higher Education Research Development, 34*, 1069–1082. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2015.1024629

Bloxham, S., Hughes, C., & Adie, L. (2016). What's the point of moderation? A discussion of the purposes achieved through contemporary moderation practices. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *41*, 638–653. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2015.1039932

Earle, L. M. & Timperley, H. (Eds.). (2009). *Professional learning conversations. Challenges in using evidence for improvement*. New York, NY: Springer Science + Business Media.

Sadler, R. (2013). Assuring academic achievement standards: From moderation to calibration. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*, *20*(1), 5–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2012.714742

Sefcik, L., Bedford, S., Czech, P., Smith, J. & Yorke, J. (2018). Embedding external referencing of standards into higher education: Relationships are the key. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *43*(1), 45–57. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2017.1278584
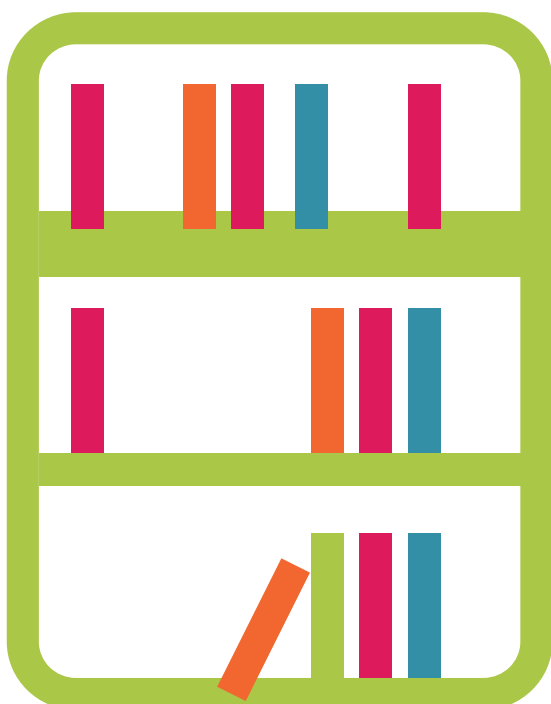
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A

TEQSA (2019, April 6). *Guidance Note: External Referencing (including Benchmarking)*

TEQSA (2019, June 5). *Guidance Note: ELICOS Direct Entry*

The Higher Education Standards Framework (2015) identifies the following standards which relate to external peer review of assessment (Standards 1.4.1, 1.4.3, 1.4.4 and 5.3.4). Higher education institutions need to demonstrate nationally and internationally, how they meet these standards by externally reviewing learning outcomes, assessment and student cohort data. Peer review of assessment is a valuable means of validating that the grades awarded reflect the level of student achievement, including a calibration of different markers' grading.

TEQSA has developed two TEQSA Guidance Notes which specifically relate to external review of assessment.

The *TEQSA Guidance Note on External Referencing* outlines how external referencing not only encompasses course design and methods of assessment, but also student achievement of learning outcomes, including an analysis of student performance data. Examples of student performance data includes retention, progression and completion rates, international students compared with domestic students, and different fields of education.

The *TEQSA Guidance Note on ELICOS Direct Entry* outlines four key ways ELICOS Direct Entry programs can undertake external referencing:

1. external referencing/benchmarking

2. benchmarking to validated language proficiency frameworks

3. tracer studies of student cohorts

4. external testing.

The explicit benchmarking of ELICOS Direct Entry programs includes:

▸ assessment inputs (tasks, marking criteria/rubrics and processes)

▸ assessment outputs (re-examination of samples of student work and grades awarded).

Sources

TEQSA (2019, April 6). *Guidance note: External referencing (including benchmarking).* Retrieved from https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-external-referencing-including-benchmarking

TEQSA (2019, June 5). *Guidance note: ELICOS direct entry.* Retrieved from https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-elicos-direct-entry

Attachment B

Guidance Sheet, Question 1. Are the specified Unit Learning Outcomes aligned with the relevant Course Learning Outcomes?

This question relates to HESF Domain No. 3 – Teaching

Context

In sound curriculum design, unit learning outcomes are aligned to the course learning outcomes through the principle of constructive alignment where learning outcomes for students are published before teaching takes place.

Constructive is linked to the idea that students construct meaning through their active engagement with learning activities which help them to complete assessment tasks.

Alignment means ensuring that assessment tasks are aligned with the intended learning outcomes.

Learning and teaching activities that help students to undertake assessment tasks need to support students to develop the skills, knowledge and capabilities to demonstrate their own level of achievement of the learning outcomes through the assessment tasks.

Questions to guide your feedback

How effective is the alignment between the Unit Learning Outcomes and the Course Learning Outcomes? What evidence exists to support your discussion? Is there a summary table that shows this link?

Do the rubrics provided for the assessment tasks clearly show what Unit Learning Outcomes are being addressed by the task?

Are the Unit Learning Outcomes written at a level higher than that which students (in first or second year of study) should be expected to perform?

Are the Unit Learning Outcomes written at too low a level on the Bloom's scale (e.g. describe or explain), that require a higher level analysis to complete?

Sources

Australian Qualifications Framework (2013). *AQF levels.* Retrieved from https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-levels

Biggs, J. (2013). Constructive alignment in university teaching. *HERDSA Review of Higher Education*, *1*, 5–22. Retrieved from http://www.herdsa.org.au/herdsa-review-higher-education-vol-1/5-22

Iowa State University, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. (2019). *Revised Bloom's taxonomy*. Retrieved from http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/effective-teaching-practices/revised-blooms-taxonomy/

Lawson, R. (2015). *Curriculum design for assuring learning – leading the way: Final report.* Sydney, NSW: Office for Learning and Teaching, Department of Education. Retrieved from https://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1541&context=asdpapers

TEQSA (2017, October 11). *Guidance note: Course design (including learning outcomes and assessment).* Retrieved from https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-course-design-including-learning-outcomes-and-assessment

University of Tasmania, Teaching and Learning (2018). *Intended learning outcomes.* Retrieved from https://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/ilo

Attachment C

Guidance Sheet, Question 2. Are the Unit Learning Outcomes appropriate for the level of the unit at this AQF qualification level?

This question relates to HESF Domain No. 3 – Teaching

See also HESF Domain No 1 – Participation and Student Attainment

Context

This question focuses on the learning outcomes, the level of the unit and the AQF level. The learning outcomes will vary in the degree of difficulty depending on the level of the unit within the degree course. Most institutions have introductory/foundational, intermediate and advanced level units, sometimes referred to as Level 100, 200 or 300.

Reviewers will need to ascertain if the learning outcomes apply to the appropriate AQF level.

Consideration should also be given to how the Unit Learning Outcomes apply to different disciplinary and accreditation standards.

The topics and nature of the learning activities will vary significantly between disciplines, so it is always important to consider how performance levels are defined, interpreted and assessed in each discipline. Examples of good practice may be very different from one discipline to another, while still reflecting development of performance capabilities across the course.

Questions to guide your feedback

The assessment tasks should validate that the performance specified in the Unit Learning Outcome has been attained by the students. Is it clear that by completing the assessment items the students have demonstrated their level of performance in relation to the Unit Learning Outcomes for the unit?

What is required for the student to do well in the assessment task? There may be a mismatch between active verbs in Unit Learning Outcomes, active verbs in the description of the task, and the real level of activity required, such as Unit Learning Outcomes or tasks starting with low level verbs on the Bloom's scale 'describe' or 'explain', that really require high level analysis to complete the task.

Are Unit Learning Outcomes more focused on content than on student performance? If that is the case, then the relationship between Unit Learning Outcomes and the assessment tasks is less clear. How can Unit Learning Outcomes be interpreted or improved in relation to performance levels and assessment tasks?

Sources

Australian Qualifications Framework (2013). *AQF levels.* Retrieved from https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-levels

Biggs, J. (2013). Constructive alignment in university teaching. *HERDSA Review of Higher Education,* 1, 5–22. Retrieved from https://www.herdsa.org.au/herdsa-review-higher-education-vol-1/5-22

Iowa State University, Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching (2019). *Revised Bloom's Taxonomy.* Retrieved from http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/effective-teaching-practices/revised-blooms-taxonomy/

TEQSA (2017, October 11). *Guidance note: Course design (including learning outcomes and assessment).* Retrieved from https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-course-design-including-learning-outcomes-and-assessment

Attachment D

Guidance Sheet, Question 3. Does the assessment enable students to demonstrate attainment of the Unit Learning Outcomes and relevant Course Learning Outcomes?

This question relates to HESF Domain No. 3 – Teaching

See also HESF Domain No 1 – Student Participation and Attainment

Context

A criteria and standards-based approach to assessment articulates expectations to students about what is required of them in an assessment task. Unit Learning Outcomes and, in turn, Course Learning Outcomes, inform students what to aim for in their learning and on what basis their work will be judged.

External peer review of assessment focuses on how students have achieved these learning outcomes. This involves an examination of the unit outline, assessment tasks, assessment rubric/marking criteria, student work samples, and student cohort data.

Calibration with peers forms part of this rigorous process to ensure that grades are consistent across the samples provided.

In Figure 2 below, peer review is shown as part of an institution's Assessment Quality Cycle which focuses on assessment quality assurance and improvement over time.
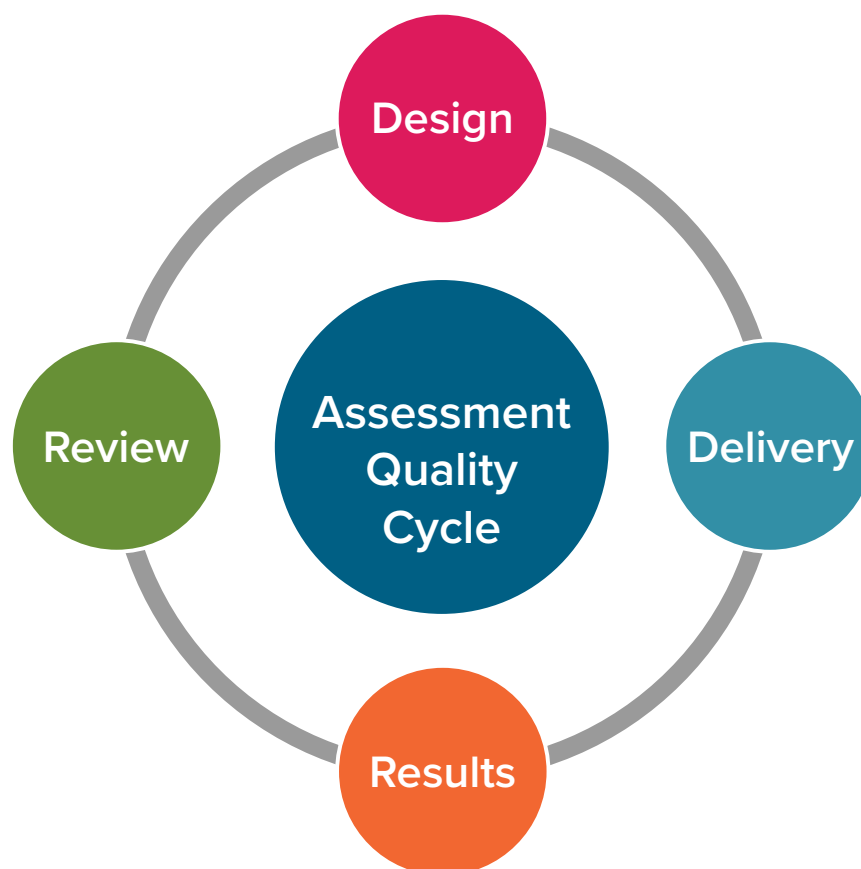

Figure 2. Assessment quality cycle.

Questions to guide your feedback

▶ Does the unit outline provide key information on the assessment task/s to assist students to complete the work?

▶ Is the assessment task clearly designed for what is being learned? What is the word limit? What is the percentage given to each assessment?

▶ Are assessment tasks progressively developed to scaffold students' learning?

▶ Do the assessment tasks appear too difficult for the students? If that is the case, consider the performance being requested and the scaffolds such as resources and guidance that are provided. The latter can make complex tasks feasible. If either or both conditions are not met, the assessment may be overly-ambitious in its scope. Discuss a more realistic framework for the assessment task.

▶ Are the assessment tasks appropriately weighted? Are they appropriately timed?

▶ Are the assessment tasks authentically designed? Does the assessment integrate key personal, interpersonal and cognitive capabilities in the discipline along with the appropriate use of relevant competencies?

Sources

Scott, G. (2016). *FLIPCurric.* Retrieved from http://flipcurric.edu.au

TEQSA (2017, October 11). *Guidance note: Course design (including learning outcomes and assessment).* Retrieved from https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-course-design-including-learning-outcomes-and-assessment

University of Technology, Sydney. *Assessment futures website. Designing and redesigning assessments.* Retrieved from https://www.uts.edu.au/research-and-teaching/learning-and-teaching/assessment-futures/designing-and-redesigning

Attachment E

Guidance Sheet, Question 4. Is the description of the performance standards (marking guide/marking criteria/assessment rubric/annotated work samples) appropriate for specified Unit Learning Outcomes and Course Learning Outcomes?

This question relates to HESF Domain No. 3 – Teaching

Context

When designing assessment rubrics and marking criteria, it is important to make the performance standards as explicit as possible so that students can align their assessment work to their learning in the unit or course.

Assessment rubrics/marking criteria have several important functions:

▶ They make the marking process explicit.

▶ They present the criteria and performance standards by which a student's work is being judged.

▶ They provide overall feedback in a clear succinct way.

▶ They provide a focus for conversations about achievement standards between teaching teams and between teachers and students.

When designing and implementing assessment rubrics/marking criteria, there needs to be clear links and accountability with national discipline standards and professional standards.

The design of standard descriptors within assessment rubrics/marking criteria works best when colleagues are involved in:

▶ setting standards with the discipline

▶ identifying an appropriate threshold level of performance for the task

▶ selecting the appropriate number of levels to discriminate performance in the task

▶ describing the performance standards in clear, positive language

▶ benchmarking standards against comparable disciplinary and/or professional standards.

Questions to guide your feedback

▶ Does the assessment task align to the assessment rubric?

▶ How detailed is the assessment rubric/marking criteria?

▶ Are the grade descriptors in the rubric clearly outlined for students?

▶ Are there the appropriate number of performance standard levels in the rubric?

▶ Does the rubric/marking criteria include clear, positive language?

▶ Are there links to national discipline standards and professional standards?

Sources

Sadler, R. (2005). Interpretations of criteria-based assessment and grading in higher education. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 30*(2), 175–194. https://doi.org/10.1080/0260293042000264262

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University of Tasmania, Teaching and Learning (2019). *Assessment*. Retrieved from https://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/assessment

Attachment F

Guidance Sheet, Question 5. Is the method of assessment capable of confirming that all relevant Course Learning Outcomes and Unit Learning Outcomes are achieved?

This question relates to HESF Domain No. 3 – Teaching

See also HESF Domain No. 1 – Student Participation and Attainment

Context

This question is about confirming that the methods of assessment (also known as assessment types) are aligned to the overall achievement of Course Learning Outcomes and the selected Unit Learning Outcomes.

A coordinated approach to course level curriculum mapping ensures that the assessment tasks demonstrate students' achievement of learning outcomes. As a reviewer you should focus on how the assessment task has been mapped at the course level as well as the unit level. Assessment should be scaffolded within a unit and across a course, ensuring students build on skills they already have, learn new skills and apply those skills to different learning situations throughout their study.

You should also consider the choice of assessment method and whether it adequately supports students to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes.

The disciplinary and/or professional context influences the choice of assessment task. Students should also be exposed to more than one type of assessment experience during their study in a unit.

Rubrics associated with assessment tasks should make explicit the alignment of the task with learning outcomes at the unit and course level.

Questions to guide your feedback

▶ Do the assessment methods validly assess the achievement of the Unit Learning Outcomes?

▶ Do the assessment tasks communicate clear expectations of students?

▶ Are the assessment methods effective for the discipline and/or professional context?

▶ Are all the learning outcomes assessed by a range of assessment tasks? Is there over-assessment of some of the learning outcomes?

▶ Do the assessment tasks ask students to apply knowledge rather than simply find and present answers?

▶ Is there an opportunity for students to act on feedback from a task early in the unit before they undertake the next task?

▶ Do the assessment tasks combine different assessment methods such as a submitted task combined with a presentation, in class or online?

▶ Are the assessment tasks challenging, authentic, engaging and holistic?

Sources

Scott, G. (2016). Right assessment. *FlipCurric*. Retrieved from http://flipcurric.edu.au/about-143/overview-of-the-six-keys/right-assessment

TEQSA (2017, October 11). *Guidance note: Course design (including learning outcomes and assessment)*. Retrieved from https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-course-design-including-learning-outcomes-and-assessment

University of Reading, Centre for the Development of Teaching and Learning (2019). *An A to Z of assessment methods*. Retrieved from https://www.reading.ac.uk/engageinassessment/different-ways-to-assess/eia-different-assessment-methods.aspx

Attachment G

Guidance Sheet, Question 6. Do the grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment?

This question relates to HESF Domain No. 3 – Teaching

See also HESF Domain No 1 - Student Participation and Attainment

Context

A criteria and standards-based assessment approach includes the explicit and transparent articulation of performance standards which provides clarity for students and panels reviewing results and grade distribution.

When reviewing grades and grade descriptors, it is important to acknowledge both grade integrity and grade inflation.

Grade integrity is the extent to which each grade awarded, either at the conclusion of a course or module of study or for an extended response to an assessment task, is strictly commensurate with the quality, breadth and depth of a student's performance (Sadler, 2009).

Grade inflation occurs when grades are not taken at face value and when allegations are made of grade inflation.

Grade integrity is the main consideration. Many assessment practices that are routinely employed in higher education institutions compromise grade integrity.

Figure 3 below shows an example of grades and grade descriptors from Griffith University.

Grade	Grade descriptors
7	High Distinction—Student demonstrated an exceptionally high quality of performance or standard of learning achievement.
6	Distinction—Student demonstrated a high quality of performance or standard of learning achievement.
5	Credit—Student demonstrated a good quality of performance or standard of learning achievement.
4	Pass—Student demonstrated a satisfactory quality of performance or standard of learning achievement.
3	Fail—Student demonstrated an unsatisfactory quality of performance or standard of learning achievement. There was evidence of achievement of desired learning outcomes close to the passing standard but insufficient to pass.
2	Fail—Student demonstrated an unsatisfactory quality of performance or standard of learning achievement. There was evidence of achievement of desired learning outcomes below the passing standard.
1	Fail—Student demonstrated an unsatisfactory quality of performance or standard of learning achievement. There was evidence of achievement of desired learning outcomes significantly below the passing standard.

Figure 3. Grading schema. Reproduced from Griffith University, 2019.

Questions to guide your feedback

▶ Does the assessment show a mark/grade?

▶ Do you agree with the grades/marks given?

▶ Is there consistency in the marking decisions?

▶ Do the student work samples identify gaps in assessment design?

▶ Do the student work samples reflect the appropriate mark/grade?

▶ Are the grade descriptors aligned to the Course Learning Outcomes and Unit Learning Outcomes?

▶ Are the grade descriptors aligned to the institution's grade descriptors?

▶ What are the cut-off scores for assessment grades?

▶ Do the assessor/s allocate points when they make judgements?

▶ How do they use the assessment rubric?

▶ As well as the grade/mark, what qualitative feedback is given to students?

▶ Do the grades awarded the students reflect the quality, breadth and depth of the students' performance?

▶ Are there any cases of grade inflation?

Sources

Griffith University (2019). *Grading schema*. Retrieved from https://www.griffith.edu.au/students/assessment-exams-grades/grades

Sadler, D. (2009). Grade integrity and the representation of academic achievement. *Studies in Higher Education, 34*(7), 807–826. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070802706553

TEQSA (2017, October 11). *Guidance note: Course design (including learning outcomes and assessment)*. Retrieved from https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-course-design-including-learning-outcomes-and-assessment

TEQSA (2019, 16 April). *Guidance note: External Referencing*. Retrieved from https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-external-referencing-including-benchmarking

Attachment H
WORK SAMPLE ❶

Women and Work

Course:	Migrant Studies BA
Accreditation body:	Australian Migrant Council [AMC]
Unit:	Women and Work MSWW371 (300 Level Unit)
Assessment:	Task 1
Weight:	10%
Assessment type:	Mini-essay
Course learning outcomes:	Identify and evaluate key methods and concepts in the academic disciplines of Politics, Cultural Studies and Economics. Demonstrate knowledge of the relationships between the disciplines of Politics, Cultural Studies and Economics and the points at which their key methods and concepts diverge. Apply the theories of each discipline to analysis of practical questions and problems. Communicate ideas and arguments related to Politics, Cultural Studies and Economics with diverse audiences and communities. Understand, interpret and apply qualitative and quantitative social science research methods in the investigation of political, cultural and economic issues.
Unit learning outcomes:	On successful completion of this unit, students will be able to: 1. Demonstrate advanced skills in accessing a range of research resources including library reference, academic journals, books and the internet. 2. Demonstrate a capacity to understand cultural and social issues in migrant cultural history. 3. Demonstrate advanced skills in reading academic sources. 4. Demonstrate the ability to put forward their own point of view in verbal and written form on a range of issues in migrant cultural history.
Task description:	Write a "mini essay" – no more than 500 words on the following question: "Throughout 2006 and into 2007 Australian values have been at the forefront of government agendas and media discussions. Clearly identify a selection of these values and critically discuss in relation to immigration." Evidence of referencing and development of ideas is essential.
Assessment criteria:	Rubric
Assessment topics:	Social values, government and immigration.

Work sample continued

Rubric:	Attached
Peer reviewer:	Please provide your feedback
Student work:	Three samples attached [HD, Pass and Fail]

Questions for Review:
1. Are the unit learning outcomes aligned to the course learning outcomes?
2. Are the unit learning outcomes appropriate for the level of the unit at this AQF qualification level?
3. Does the assessment task enable all student to demonstrate attainment of the unit learning outcomes and the course learning outcomes?
4. Is the course description of the performance standards [criteria and /or rubric] appropriate to the specified unit learning outcomes and course learning outcomes?
5. Is the method of assessment capable of confirming that all relevant specified course learning outcomes and unit learning outcomes are achieved?
6. Do the grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment? (see student samples).

Marking Criteria	High Distinction	Distinction	Credit	Pass	Fail
Knowledge and Understanding Total Marks available – 30	The student demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the assessment requirements. Ideas are well developed. Excellent integration of course material. (28–30 marks)	The student shows extensive evidence of their awareness of the assessment requirement. Begins to offer support for ideas. Extensive use of course material. (24–27 marks)	The student has a clearly articulated understanding of the assessment requirements. Ideas vague. Adequate use of course material. (20–23 marks)	The student shows minimal evidence of awareness of the assessment requirements. Ideas are unclear. Limited use of course material. (15–19 marks)	The student shows little awareness of the assessment requirements. Ideas are poorly developed. Little use of supporting course material. (0–14 marks)
Application of Skills, Techniques and Methods Total marks available – 30	Comprehensive evidence of the application of appropriate skills, techniques and methods with superior levels of precision and accuracy. (28–30 marks)	Extensive evidence of application of appropriate skills, techniques and methods with superior levels of precision and accuracy. (24–27 marks)	Clear evidence of the application of appropriate skills, techniques and methods with superior levels of precision and accuracy. (20–23 marks)	Some evidence of the application of appropriate skills, techniques and methods with high levels of precision and accuracy. (15–19 marks)	No evidence that the student can apply appropriate skills, techniques and methods with satisfactory levels of precision and accuracy. (0–14 marks)
Organisation Total marks available – 20	Work is logically organised and topic focus is clear. Uses appropriate transitions from idea to idea. Presents ideas that are unique and fulfils the assignment goals. (17–20 marks)	Good organisation. Focus is clear but some mild errors in translating ideas. Transitions are somewhat clear. (15–16 marks)	Attempts made to focus but coherence is lacking. More attention needed to drawing conclusions. Transitions are not always evident. (13–14 marks)	Random focus, weak organisation. Does not respond appropriately to assignment. Very few transitions. (10–12 marks)	Disorganized, thought patterns difficult to follow. Does not complete goals of the assignment. No transitions are used when going from one idea to the next. (0–9 marks)
Quality of work submitted Total marks available – 20	An excellent piece of work submitted. Evidence of extensive and sophisticated thought and effort shown. (17–20 marks)	A high quality of work submitted. Evidence of considerable thought and effort shown. (15–16 marks)	Reasonable quality work submitted. Evidence of some thought and effort shown. (13–14 marks)	Adequate quality work submitted. Little evidence of much thought but some effort shown. (10–12 marks)	Inferior quality work submitted. No evidence of any thought or effort. (0–9 marks)

Women and Work MSWW371 - HD Sample 410 words

A Government web site (2007) that provides information to migrants about becoming an Australian citizen outlines those values that define national identity. These values include "equality of men and women", "equality of opportunity", "tolerance and mutual respect". Future citizens are also told that these values are central to the security and ongoing prosperity of the nation. This mini essay examines these values in relation to the experiences of migrant women from non-English speaking backgrounds. Many of these women are subjected to exploitation in the workplace. They often remain invisible to unions and other organisations interested in workplace equity. Often, they will also experience social isolation. Their difficulties in finding a way to live in 'this place' are reinforced by gender and the language barrier. It will be argued that the experiences of many migrant women from non-English speaking backgrounds fall short of the ideals of equality, tolerance and mutual respect.

Migrant women are frequently unaware of their rights in the workplace. They are commonly put in negative situations involving illegal pay rates; excessive working hours; sub-standard workplace conditions; racism and harassment (Singerman 1992). Gender, language and cultural factors can all play a part in keeping them from knowledge about their rights. For example, migrant women make up the majority of outworkers in the fashion industry and are often subjected to sub-standard working and pay conditions (Keane 1996). As Dyson has argued, these workers are "deprived of the most basic rights enjoyed by Australian factory workers" (2003, p137). These women can be expected to work twelve and eighteen-hour days, seven days a week and be paid as little as a third of the award rate (Fares 1994; Keane 1996; Pender 2005).

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Women and Work MSWW371 - PASS Sample 387 words

This essay will talk about inequality and migrant women. A government report in 2007 explained the difficulties faced by migrant women and mentioned lack of equality between men and women pack of equality of opportunity, a lack of tolerance and mutual respect and talked about how many of these women are subject to exploitation in the workplace. Many authors including Singer, Keane, Dyson and Chalker mention similar problems. This essay will look at those problems and will also consider writers like Fares and Pender. Reports continue to talk about the difficulties that women experience with gender language and cultural problems highlighted. Many of these women work in the fashion industry where they are located and don't have the protection of trade unions. Many of these women work long hours up to 18 hours a day 7 days a week and get paid at the third of the award wage according to some of these authors. Migrant workers are some of the worst paid in Australia and the worst trade of the lot of women.

The government regularly talks about Australian values and suggested those of fairness and say they support a fair go for all but what they don't say is that it's hard for these migrant workers and particularly migrant females. So, it is accepted that we are a country of migrants we are here not to treat new migrants well. Historically the snowy river scheme and other major engineering projects have been a

source of poor treatment of migrants. Other values discussed by the government include things like an Aussie sense of humour and being a battler. However, because of language difficulty migrants do not seem to get the joke therefore they are not seen as being part of a community that they are often seen as un-Australian because they have languages and religion that is not understood in the wider community. Despite the government talking about these values one of which is a fair go for all, they have introduced recent immigration policies that require people to know Don Bradman's batting average for example.

In conclusion it is important to note that although the government talks about values it also seems increasingly likely that they are going to put greater restrictions on immigration and waive the national flag and talk about Australia for Australians.

Women and Work MSWW371 - FAIL Sample 168 words

Women are treated bad moreso foreiners. Migrant woman ain't give nothin some say that unions help them. Singerman says they arned paid a fair go or give voice for saying how they feel in work. That is not right!! They work in bad places and get paid peanuts. In class we talked about them and the tutor told us how unfair it all is. Lots off book is written about it by people like Keen and Dison and the Government has a website where it says how wrong it all is. Just because they is different to us don't mean they should be shouted at of paid in a not fair way. I don't agree with disgriminati and nor do any of my mates. At uni we read about these things and now I now how wrong it is I'll be telling everyone I know. I like foreign people I have some mates who are migrants and women and I think they should get the same as us.

Attachment I
WORK SAMPLE ❷

Applying the conversational approach to review question 3

Question ❸ Does the assessment task enable students to demonstrate attainment of the Unit Learning Outcomes and the relevant Course Learning Outcomes?

The first example below is an evaluative commentary.

The second example is commentary focused on providing feedback using the elements of a conversational approach explained on pages 11–13. Each of these elements are highlighted and explained.

Evaluative commentary

If the Unit Learning Outcomes linked the students more explicitly to the discipline, then the assessment task could focus at a higher level, more on social, cultural and economic issues behind the 'government agendas'. This should lead to more on interpreting the consequences of low wages for migrant communities and their efforts to gain acceptance–social development instead of simply a negative outcome. This may be the intention of the task, however it's not clear that this came through to the students. The mini-essay format limits what the students can do with this topic. They may get more benefit out of considering how migrant women have forged their identity and helped to shape modern Australia in the face of economic disadvantage.

Conversational commentary incorporating:

💬 **Establishing a relationship of respect and challenge**

💬 **Adopting an inquiry habit of mind**

💬 Using data and evidence

What makes this conversational?
(and is it any better to read from the perspective of the person receiving the feedback?)

At a high level, there is alignment between the assessment and the ULOs. There is an opportunity to more explicitly link the Unit Learning Outcomes to the discipline by insert example.

> Beginning with a positive – intention to establish respectful communication.

> Providing a concrete example of what is meant.

If you want the task to enable students to demonstrate a higher order of thinking and focus more on social, cultural and economic issues behind the 'government agendas', I would suggest including verbs such as 'interpret', 'explain causes' and 'relate' into the task description. This will give students clear direction about what the task is asking of them.

> Using 'if you want' is intended to frame as an inquiry, as is 'I would suggest'. Very practical examples of what is intended.

Another thing to consider is opening up the genre of the response to options more authentic than a mini-essay.

> 'Another thing to consider' treats the reviewee respectfully and collegially – this advice is one way to improve the assessment, not the only way.

For example, students may see how their skill set is applied in a work context and therefore may get more benefit out of interpreting the data and primary documents to show how migrant women have forged their identity and helped to shape modern Australia in the face of economic disadvantage and presenting that knowledge as, for example, a blog post, newspaper feature or a report to a government department.

> Using an example helps the reviewee to see how it might be different and why that would be beneficial.

IDEAS

RE

PEER