



Assessment Policy & Procedures ELICOS Programs

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2 Purpose

- (1) This policy and procedures document outlines the principles and expectations associated with the design, development, delivery, and review of assessment for ELICOS programs at RMIT University Pathways (RMIT UP).

3 Scope

- (2) This assessment policy and procedures document applies to all assessment activities conducted within RMIT UP English ELICOS Programs, including English Pathways (General English and Academic English), English for Academic Purposes (EAP)), and IELTS Preparation courses.

4 Policy

4.1 Principles of Assessment

- (3) The following principles of assessment underpin RMIT UP ELICOS assessment policies, procedures and practices: Assessments will be valid, reliable, fair, and authentic.
- (4) Assessments are valid when
- tasks are aligned to learning outcomes and comply with relevant standards
 - inputs and outcomes are benchmarked to validated language proficiency frameworks to demonstrate equivalence
 - the format and content of any task allow for explicit performance criteria to be set at the intended English language proficiency level.
- (5) Assessments are reliable when
- teaching staff have a shared understanding of the performance criteria used to measure outcomes
 - assessors engage in moderation processes to ensure comparable and consistent application of performance criteria over time, across class groups, and across different delivery locations.
- (6) Assessments are fair when

- a. reasonable and equitable adjustments to the conditions and format of tasks may be made to allow the engagement of learners with specific learning needs
 - b. the task considers the differing age, social and cultural backgrounds of all students
 - c. students can apply for special consideration when unexpected circumstances prevent them from completing assessments
 - d. students receive timely and constructive feedback and performance is effectively monitored. This allows students to access relevant academic and student support, as and when required
 - e. the design minimises opportunities for academic misconduct and breaches of academic integrity are investigated in accordance with the RMIT Academic Integrity Policy
 - f. students can seek clarification on their academic performance and assessment results and have access to appeals where relevant.
- (7) Assessments are authentic when the tasks include real world knowledge and skill application.

4.2 Types of Assessment

- (8) RMIT UP ELICOS programs use three types of assessment. These are:
- a. Diagnostic Assessment – allows assessors to evaluate the English Language Proficiency of students prior to instruction and to identify each individual student’s strengths and weaknesses in each macro skill. The use of diagnostic assessment recognises that for many students there is a gap in study between the completion of an English Language Proficiency test and the continuous use of English in formal learning settings.
 - b. Formative assessments are low-stakes assessment tasks which are developmental in nature and provide teachers with information about knowledge and skill strengths and weaknesses for each cohort of students, and with timely feedback, allow students to access adequate support and practice in readiness for summative assessment.
 - c. Summative assessments: both Ongoing Assessments and Final Assessments are high-stakes assessment activities which are used as a measurement of learning and contribute to a student’s final grade.

4.3 Quality Assurance Processes

- (9) Assessment design, development, processes, and review is continuously monitored for quality assurance and improvement.
- (10) Assessment design and development is a critical component of the program and course review and approval processes.

5 Procedures

5.1 Program structure

- (11) The RMIT UP ELICOS programs - English Pathways (General English and Academic English) and IELTS Preparation programs are aligned to the ELICOS Standards 2018.
- (12) While common assessment governance and quality assurance processes apply across all ELICOS Programs, program structures, assessment cycles, and assessment formats may vary by program to reflect differing learning purposes and external benchmarks.
- (13) The RMIT UP ELICOS programs are split into different course levels. Assessment tasks are designed specifically for a particular course level.
- (14) The course levels for the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program are:
- a. Elementary (course level 2)

- b. Pre-intermediate (course level 3)
 - c. Intermediate (course level 4)
 - d. Upper-Intermediate (course level 5)
 - e. Advanced (course level 6)
 - f. Advanced Plus (course level 7)
- (15) The course levels for the English Pathways program:
- a. General English (GE) stream
 - i. Beginner (course level 1)
 - ii. Elementary (course level 2)
 - iii. Pre-intermediate (course level 3)
 - iv. Intermediate (course level 4)
 - v. Upper-intermediate (course level 5)
 - vi. Pre-Advanced (course level 6)
 - vii. Advanced (course level 7)
 - b. Academic English (AE) stream:
 - i. Upper-Intermediate (course level 5)
 - ii. Pre-Advanced (course level 6)
 - iii. Advanced (course level 7)
- (16) The course levels for the IELTS Preparation Program are:
- a. IELTS Preparation 1A & 1B (exit Band 6.0)
 - b. IELTS Preparation 2A & 2B (exit Band 6.5)
- (17) Each course level is scheduled across a ten-week study period. Within each ten-week period there are two five-week modules (Module A and Module B). The only exception to this is the Beginner course level in the General English stream, which is only five weeks in duration.
- (18) Each course level assesses four macro skills; these are reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- (19) There are ten intakes per year. A version of any Final Assessment is not used more than once within consecutive intakes.

5.2 Student entry requirements

- (20) Entry requirements may vary by ELICOS program and are determined in accordance with the intended learning purpose of the program, including whether the program is a direct-entry pathway.
- (21) Students can only enter an RMIT UP ELICOS course level if
- a. the results of a valid IELTS Academic, TOEFL iBT or PTE Academic test indicate readiness for a particular course level; or
 - b. an RMIT UP approved placement test indicates readiness for a particular course level; or
 - c. they have successfully completed a preceding RMIT UP ELICOS course level within the past 6 months.

5.3 Completion requirements

- (22) Completion requirements are defined at the program level and may vary across ELICOS Programs, depending on the purpose and assessment design of the program.
- (23) Students can successfully achieve an ELICOS course level by obtaining an assessed score of 50% or above in each of the four macro skills.
- (24) Students are considered eligible to proceed to the next stage on their letter of offer upon successful completion of the following course levels in the EAP program or the Academic English stream of the English Pathways program
 - a. Upper Intermediate (course level 5) – Foundation, Certificate and Diploma programs
 - b. EAP Advanced or AE Pre-Advanced (course level 6) – Associate Degree programs
 - c. EAP Advanced Plus or AE Advanced (course level 7) – Undergraduate and Post Graduate programs requiring an IELTS entry score of 6.5 or equivalent.

5.4 Placement testing

- (25) The RMIT UP English Placement Test is an instrument used to determine the English proficiency of applicants and newly enrolled students in cases where they have not provided valid external English language proficiency test results.
- (26) The result of the RMIT UP English Placement Test is valid for twelve months for the purposes of issuing an offer. If the result is more than six months old when a newly enrolled student arrives at RMIT UP they must be retested.
- (27) RMIT UP may conduct a placement test, including an assessment of writing and speaking, upon arrival to confirm a newly enrolled student's current English course level.
- (28) An overall assessment of a newly enrolled student or applicant's final placement course level, based on the result of an RMIT UP English Placement Test, is determined by an Academic Coordinator in accordance with the RMIT UP English Placement Test Guideline.
- (29) The RMIT UP English Placement Test cannot be used to make a full offer for RMIT Foundation Studies, Vocational Education or Higher Education programs.
- (30) If the RMIT UP English Placement Test result indicates that the newly enrolled student or applicant should be placed into a course level higher than is needed for entry to a Foundation Studies, Vocational Education or Higher Ed programs, the student or applicant may:
 - a. sit an IELTS Academic/PTE Academic/TOEFL iBT test (or equivalent) to demonstrate that they meet the University's entry requirements; or
 - b. For EAP or AE only, at the discretion of the Deputy Director, English enrol in 5 or 10 weeks of EAP/AE and be placed into the course level needing to be passed in order to gain direct entry with an RMIT UP EAP/AE Certificate of Completion.
- (31) Newly enrolled students will be placed into a Module A class of the course level indicated by the RMIT UP English Placement Test. Factors such as jagged test profiles, availability of classes and the nature of conditional offers (where applicable), may result in placement of newly enrolled students into Module B, subject to approval by the Deputy Director, English.
- (32) RMIT UP English Placement Test candidates can re-sit the test after a minimum of 4 weeks. Candidates may undertake the RMIT UP Placement Test a maximum of three times within a 12-month period.

5.5 Movement between course levels after placement testing

- (33) All students complete a diagnostic speaking and writing assessment task in the first week of a course level.

- (34) Where there is a clear discrepancy between course level placement and diagnostic assessment results, the teacher may make a recommendation to the Academic Coordinators that the student be placed in a different course level.
- (35) External English language proficiency test results achieved by a student who has commenced their RMIT UP ELICOS program are considered for movement to higher course levels in exceptional circumstances, if the result is equivalent to or greater than that required for entry to the next course level and such movement is supported by the Deputy Director, English and class teachers.
- (36) External English language proficiency test results achieved by a currently enrolled student repeating an ELICOS course level cannot be applied for movement between course levels.

5.6 Gaps in study

- (37) Students who have successfully completed an ELICOS course level and who do not continue into the next course level for more than 6 months may be required to undertake the RMIT UP English Placement Test.
- (38) In cases where a student is transferring from a Partner site to Australia, and is on a pathway to RMIT University, in special circumstances outside the student's control, RMIT UP will use its discretion to extend the stipulated period between course levels and such situations will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- (39) If a student has completed Module A only:
 - a. The student may have a gap in study for up to 10 weeks before commencing Module B.
 - b. If the gap in study is more than 10 weeks, the student will be required to repeat Module A.
 - c. If the gap in study is longer than 6 months, the student will be required to undertake the RMIT UP English Placement Test to determine their class placement.
- (40) If a student has completed Module A and B, but not achieved:
 - a. The student may have a gap in study for up to 5 weeks and be permitted to enter Module B.
 - b. In the event that the gap is longer than 5 weeks, but no more than 6 months, the student will be required to complete both Module A and B of the non-achieved level when they return to study.
 - c. In the case of gap longer than 6 months, the student will be required to undertake the RMIT UP English Placement Test to determine their class placement.

5.7 Design of Assessments

- (41) Assessment design across ELICOS Programs reflects the intended learning purpose of each program and may include, but is not limited to, pathway preparation, general communicative competence, or external test readiness.
- (42) Assessment tasks are designed to
 - a. allow all students equitable access to participate in learning
 - b. be socially and culturally responsive and inclusive
 - c. address the learning styles and abilities of all students
 - d. be appropriate to the intended learning purpose of the program, including general language development, further study, or external English language testing preparation
 - e. indicate student performance against stated program and course level outcomes
 - f. utilise a range of methods, types and modes
 - g. incorporate the practice of academic integrity and scholarship
 - h. facilitate appropriate feedback and enable monitoring of academic progress.

- (43) Students are provided clear instructions for each assessment. These are communicated through Canvas and include
- whether the assessment is formative or summative
 - the weighting of the assessment towards the attainment of the macro skill and the overall result
 - the criterion used for measurement in the form of a rubric or marking schedule
 - specifications of the task (word length, presentation format etc)
 - submission dates
 - the conditions relevant to the mode of the assessment delivery (online, paper based, supervised etc)
 - whether this task involves collaboration through group work.
- (44) Assessment involving group work may include some component of individual assessment or, where relevant, peer assessment.

5.8 Assessment security and storage

- (45) Assessments conducted by RMIT UP are retained in accordance with RMIT's Information Governance policy.
- (46) All assessments which carry a weighting, and that are delivered within Canvas, must be configured to operate using Respondus LockDown Browser.
- (47) Assessments delivered in Canvas are configured to be accessible from the published commencement time and concluding at a time beyond the normal assessment duration allowing provision for delivery of instructions.
- (48) All students undertaking their assessment tasks, both online and onsite, must arrive in class (or log-in to their online class) at the assigned time to receive instructions and their access code.
- (49) Any printed test materials and notetaking paper used by onsite assessment candidates must be collected by assessment invigilators before candidates leave the room and returned to Academic Coordinators.
- (50) Students' written assessment papers are scanned and then disposed of in a secure destruction bin. Reading and Listening papers are retained until results are finalised, after which these papers are also disposed of in a secure destruction bin.

5.9 Completion of Assessments

- (51) At the commencement of each course level, students must complete tasks that familiarise them with assessment at RMIT UP, academic integrity and special consideration.
- (52) Students are required to complete all course level assessment tasks on or by the dates and times specified.
- (53) At the commencement of each course level students are provided with the assessment criteria used for each assessment, together with information on the way in which these are to be assessed, including the marking system to be used.
- (54) Grading of all Ongoing Assessments (OA) and Final Assessments are managed through Canvas.
- (55) RMIT UP may use Turnitin or other plagiarism detection tools to identify academic integrity issues associated with written assessment items.
- (56) The rotation of assessment versions is managed by a member of the Assessment team and/or the Pathways Assessment Administration Officer.
- (57) Any observed incidents that occur during testing must be recorded in the Assessment Incident Log by the assessment invigilator. Incidents are any situations that may affect students' test performance and may include:
- lateness or absence
 - sickness occurring during the assessment

- c. suspected cheating
- d. power disruptions
- e. faulty technology
- f. disruptive behaviour.

(58) A student who has completed an invigilated assessment task is not permitted to re-sit the assessment.

5.10 Lateness or absence from timetabled assessment tasks

(59) Students are required to be at the appointed test room (virtual or physical) at the published commencement time of the assessments.

(60) Students who are unable to complete the assessment task on the scheduled day may apply for special consideration in accordance with section 5.19 of this policy and procedure.

(61) Absence from an assessment, without an approved special consideration, results in a recorded score of zero for that assessment task. The student is not eligible to undertake the assessment on a different date.

5.11 Reconvening an assessment

(62) Under exceptional circumstances, which must be approved by the Deputy Director, English (or delegate) and a member of the Assessment team, the assessment may be reconvened. Examples of exceptional circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- a. breach of the security of the assessment task
- b. building evacuation or lockdown
- c. health regulation order.

5.12 Equitable learning plans and equitable assessment

(63) A student who has an ongoing condition or disability which may impact on their performance in assessment may apply for equitable assessment arrangements as part of an equitable learning plan.

(64) An individual equitable learning plan provides eligible students with reasonable adjustments to ensure they can participate in their studies and complete all assessments.

(65) Reasonable adjustments to all assessments may be made in accordance with a student's individual equitable learning plan by a member of the Assessment team, in consultation with the student.

(66) Equitable learning plans can take up to six weeks to process and evaluate. Whilst this process takes place, teachers liaise with the relevant Academic Coordinator ahead of scheduled assessments. The relevant Academic Coordinator liaises between the teachers, Assessment Manager and Equitable Learning Advisors to determine suitable adjustments and whether they can/should be implemented.

5.13 Marking and Moderation

5.13.1 Assessment Marker rating

(67) Writer and speaker rating sessions are designed to ensure marker reliability. These sessions are organised and conducted by the Academic Coordinators or a member of the Assessment team for teachers who:

- a. are new to a specific RMIT UP ELICOS course level; or
- b. have not taught the course level in the past two intakes; or
- c. have not attended a rating workshop (typically delivered in non-teaching weeks).

(68) Rating sessions are held before and as close to the OA / Final assessments as possible.

- (69) Writer rating sessions are conducted in groups according to the course level that is being assessed and are based on anonymised student writing samples representative of the assessment genre. Samples are selected, pre-scored (benchmarked) and curated by the Assessment Team. Teachers blind mark the samples in accordance with the published rubric prior to the rating session.
- (70) Speaker rating sessions are conducted in groups according to the course level that is being assessed and are based on anonymised student speaking samples that have been video or audio recorded. Samples are selected, pre-scored (benchmarked) and curated by the Assessment Team. Teachers blind mark the samples in accordance with the published rubric prior to the rating session.
- (71) An Academic Coordinator or a member of the Assessment team conducts the writer and speaker rating sessions, fostering discussion and consensus about the ratings based on the published benchmarked scores for the samples.
- (72) For teachers who score samples inconsistently or score significantly above or below the benchmark scores during consecutive rating sessions (i.e. 6 marks either side of the benchmark), the Academic Coordinators monitor subsequent OA and Final assessments scored by this teacher in the area where the inconsistency occurred.

5.13.2 Writing assessment marking and moderation

- (73) For ongoing written assessments (OA), where students receive a score and feedback through Canvas, marking is shared between the two class teachers. All marking is conducted within Canvas and released to students on an agreed publish date. Where a first marked score falls below the course pass level of 50%, the co-teacher is asked to moderate the submission. In the event that the two teachers' evaluations of a student's writing do not fall within 5 marks of each other an Academic Coordinator provides further moderation and a final score.
- (74) For Final written assessments, all scripts from a class are assigned to a non-class teacher for 1st marking. Academic Coordinators then select a subset of scripts for blind 2nd marking by another non-class teacher. Nominally, a minimum of 6 scripts is selected for this activity. Where a class has fewer than 6 students, all scripts are 2nd marked. Criteria for selecting 2nd marked scripts includes;
- a. a script judged by the first marker to have failed
 - b. a script which returns a jagged profile across descriptors
 - c. a script that records a perfect score or near perfect score in a class that exhibits an unusual number of high scores.
- (75) The final score for the Final written assessment is determined as follows:
- a. Where a script has been marked once, that score is the final score;
 - b. Where a script has been 2nd marked and the difference between the scores is 5 or less, the final score is the average of the two scores;
 - c. Where a script has been 2nd marked and the difference between the scores is greater than 5, the script shall be further blind moderated by a third marker, and an Academic Co-ordinator will assign a final score for the task.

5.13.3 Speaking assessment marking and moderation

- (76) For ongoing assessments (OA), including weekly tutorials at course levels 5, 6 and 7 students receive a score and feedback through Canvas, from the class teachers.
- (77) For Final speaking assessments, all tasks are assessed by a non-class teacher.
- (78) All Final speaking activities are audio or video recorded to facilitate moderation by a second marker under the following circumstances:
- a. The assigned teacher is unable to definitively assess one or more aspects of the task
 - b. As a result of the assigned score, and with due consideration to any other weighted tasks that contribute to the final score, the student will fail the skill overall.

- (79) Where moderation is undertaken, a non-class teacher second marks from the recording. If further moderation is necessary, it is undertaken by an Academic Coordinator, who assigns the final score for the task.

5.13.4 Listening assessment marking

- (80) The final grade for the skill of listening comprises the Final Listening assessment result and, in some levels, results from ongoing listening assessment tasks.
- (81) Scores are automatically calculated using answer banks embedded in Canvas, however all short answer questions require further moderation to identify answers which are acceptable but have not been detected due to minor typographical errors or for acceptable synonym use. This moderation is completed by a member of the Assessment team and the students' final raw scores adjusted accordingly.
- (82) Raw score result sets for cohorts five or larger are then subject to standardising using a linear transformation tool and final scores are adjusted in Canvas.

5.13.5 Reading assessment marking

- (83) The final grade for the skill of reading comprises the Final Reading assessment result and, in some levels, results from ongoing reading assessment tasks.
- (84) Scores are automatically calculated using answer banks embedded in Canvas, however all short answer questions require further moderation to identify answers which are acceptable but have not been detected due to minor typographical errors. This moderation is completed by a member of the Assessment team and the students' final raw scores are adjusted accordingly.
- (85) Raw score result sets for cohorts five or larger are then subject to standardising using a linear transformation tool and final scores are adjusted in Canvas.

5.14 Finalisation of results

5.14.1 Processing and acceptance of final scores

- (86) The class teachers are responsible for ensuring that all scores have been successfully entered into Canvas and appear in Gradebook.
- (87) Final scores are electronically transferred to Student Results Management System (SRMS) and reviewed by an Academic Coordinator and class teacher to confirm accuracy.
- (88) All final scores require approval from an Academic Coordinator in consultation with the class teacher(s) where necessary.

5.14.2 Discretionary Passes (DP) and Application of Previous Results (APR)

- (89) During final grade review, prior to the finalisation of results, Academic Coordinators may recommend providing a discretionary pass, or the application of previous results to the Deputy Director, English for review.
- (90) Discretionary passes and the application of previous results are granted on a case-by-case basis, based on supporting evidence as presented by the Academic Coordinator and can only be granted at the discretion of the Deputy Director, English.
- (91) Discretionary passes and the application of previous results are only able to be recommended by Academic Coordinators and are not granted after results have been released.
- (92) .

5.14.3 Grade set

- (93) Final grades are assigned as follows:
- a. High Distinction (HD) – 80-100%
 - b. Distinction (DI) – 70-79%
 - c. Credit (CR) – 60-69%

- d. Pass (PA) – 50-59%
- e. Fail (NN) – 0-49%

5.15 Disclosure of results to students

- (94) For ongoing assessments (OA), class teachers provide students with their results and feedback through Canvas and, where appropriate, verbally.
- (95) Students receive their final grades online during Week 10 of the course level.
- (96) After the release of final grades, the end of week class teacher is responsible for completing the Academic Monitoring Report for all students who have not achieved the course level, as per section 5.18.3.
- (97) Final grades are calculated from a set of discrete numerical scores. Only the final grades for each assessment item and each macro-skill are given to students. Numerical scores that constitute a final grade are not disclosed to students.
- (98) Students will not be given access to their Final assessment submissions during counselling by class teachers or Academic Coordinators.

5.16 Certification

- (99) RMIT UP issues the following documents to students, as applicable:
 - a. Final grades for a course level – provided to all students upon completion of an ELICOS course level
 - b. Certificate of Completion – provided to all students who are exiting RMIT UP and have successfully achieved an ELICOS course level. This certification is only issued once.
 - c. Statement of Participation – provided to all students who have undertaken an ELICOS program with RMIT UP but have not achieved or not completed a course level. This document is also provided to students in lieu of a duplicate of the Certificate of Completion.
- (100) All documents will be issued free of charge in the first instance. If further copies are requested, an administrative fee will apply.

5.17 Review and Appeal of assessment outcomes

- (101) If a student has any concerns regarding their ongoing assessment results, they may seek an informal review with their class teacher, or a formal review by an Academic Coordinator, in accordance with the RMIT UP Assessment – Review and Appeal Instruction.
- (102) All assessment results that result in a failure for a final course grade are marked by another teacher and are therefore considered to have been reviewed. Students may seek a further formal review by an Academic Coordinator in accordance with the RMIT UP Assessment – Review and Appeal Instruction.
- (103) Formal reviews of ongoing assessment results and final grades are undertaken by Academic Coordinators, in consultation with the Assessment team.
- (104) Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of a formal review for a final course grade may submit an appeal to the Deputy Director, English in accordance with the RMIT UP Assessment – Review and Appeal Instruction.
- (105) Students should continue attending their assigned class during any appeal process.

5.18 Monitoring Academic Progress

5.18.1 Identifying 'at risk' students

- (106) In week 1 of each 10-week course level, all students complete 'confirmation of level' writing and speaking tasks. On the basis of these, and class performance in week 1, the class teacher informs an Academic Coordinator if the student's English language proficiency doesn't appear to be sufficient to succeed in the course level.

- (107) A student enrolled in an ELICOS course may be considered “at risk” of not achieving satisfactory academic progress if:
- a. the student is not exhibiting academic behaviours conducive to success, including:
 - i. active participation in class activities
 - ii. satisfactory completion and submission of homework assignments
 - iii. attending classes regularly and punctually
 - iv. arriving to class with the necessary equipment and supplies
 - v. self-directed learning
 - vi. timely submission of assessment tasks; and/or
 - b. the student achieves unsatisfactory results in any summative and/or formative assessment.

5.18.2 Records and intervention for ‘at risk’ students

- (108) Over each 10-week course level, class teachers regularly update the Class Communication Record to form a picture of each student’s progress and approach to study, giving consideration to any indications that a student is at risk of not making satisfactory academic progress.
- (109) When class teachers notice that a student’s performance is below expectations for that course level at any point during the 10 weeks, the teacher counsels the student, identifies areas of need and suggests strategies for improvement in consultation with the student.
- (110) Suggested strategies for improving academic performance may include:
- a. referral to the Academic Support team
 - b. access to self-study resources for specific skills
 - c. referral to relevant personal support services, such as the student Wellbeing team
 - d. recommendation to engage with Equitable Learning Services
 - e. recommendation to repeat Module A of a course level
 - f. recommendation for enrolment in a lower course level.
- (111) Class teachers record a summary of any academic counselling for students considered ‘at risk’ of not achieving satisfactory academic progress in the Class Communication Record.

5.18.3 Non-achievement of a course level

- (112) Class teachers write an Academic Monitoring Report for each student who fails to achieve the course level, which includes strategies for academic improvement and is informed by the Class Communication Record and the Final assessment performance and issued to the student in the first week of the next intake.
- (113) Where possible, students who have not achieved a course level are placed in a dedicated repeat class which focuses on appropriate skills.
- (114) Continuing students who do not meet the assessment requirements for a level repeat a minimum of one Module (Module A or B depending on teacher recommendation or site constraints) within 5 weeks, before attempting an alternative version of the Final assessments.
- (115) If a student does not pass the Final assessments for a course level after three attempts, they must enrol in Module A of the course level they are attempting and complete 10 weeks of study before being permitted to sit the Final assessments again.
- (116) Academic Coordinators, together with the student wherever possible, develop an Academic Improvement Strategy (AIS) for each student who fails the Final assessments for a course level twice. If a student fails the Final assessments a third time, the AIS is revised to ensure it is appropriate for and relevant to the student’s situation.

- (117) All Academic Monitoring Reports and Academic Improvement Strategies are recorded on the student's file in the student records system.
- (118) When a student transfers from an offshore site to RMIT UP Melbourne, the prior number of repeated Final assessments will not be counted. However, in this instance, the student will be required to begin the course level in Module A and complete both modules of the course level being repeated.

5.18.4 Unsatisfactory academic progress

- (119) If a student does not pass the Final assessments for a course level on the fourth attempt, they are considered to have unsatisfactory academic progress and are issued with a Notice of Intention to Report (NITR) via their RMIT student email address by the Student Services Advisor – Compliance (or delegate). If they have concluded their studies and no longer have access to their RMIT email account, the NITR will be issued via their personal email address as listed on RMIT systems. This letter notifies the student in writing of RMIT UP's intention to report the student to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) through PRISMS for unsatisfactory academic progress.
- (120) RMIT UP reserves the right not to make any further offer of study to ELICOS students who have had unsatisfactory academic progress, at the discretion of the Deputy Director, English.

5.19.5 Appeals for unsatisfactory academic progress

- (121) Students are entitled to appeal a decision to report them to DHA for unsatisfactory academic progress, where they can provide evidence that:
- a. significant relevant circumstances have not been considered in the decision, and/or
 - b. there was an error in process or breach of policy that had a significant impact on the decision, and/or
 - c. there is new, relevant evidence that was not available at the time of the decision, which would have had a significant impact on the decision.
- (122) Internal and/or external appeal handling processes can be accessed at no cost to the student.
- (123) The student is expected to continue to attend classes as scheduled during the internal and external appeal processes, during which time attendance will continue to be monitored.
- (124) The student must submit the appeal in writing within 20 working days of the date the NITR email was sent advising them of the intention to report them to the DHA.
- (125) Students submit appeals to the Deputy Director, English via the online form.
- (126) A successful appeal may be granted based on a student's engagement with academic support, teacher and/or Academic Coordinator recommendations and evidence of improvement in the student's academic performance.
- (127) The Deputy Director, English, or delegate, will commence assessment of the appeal within 10 business days, and the student will be notified as soon as practicable of the outcome of the internal appeal via their RMIT student email account. Written advice of the appeal outcome will be held on the student's administration file.
- (128) If the appeal submission is deemed to have adequately addressed the appeal grounds in cl.121, the student will be notified in writing that the appeal will be upheld.
- (129) If the appeal is dismissed, the written notification will include the reason for the dismissal of the appeal and advice to the student that they may seek an external review with the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). If the student appeals to the Commonwealth Ombudsman, they must notify RMIT UP Student Services by emailing their lodgement reference number to pathways.compliance@rmit.edu.au to avoid being reported to the Department of Home Affairs.
- (130) If the ELICOS student's program finishes during the appeal time, RMIT UP reserves the right not to make a further offer of ELICOS (i.e. the student may not be permitted to extend their program until the appeal process is finalised and the result is in favour of the student).
- (131) Students will not be reported to the Department of Home Affairs until the internal and external appeals processes have been finalised and the decision to report the student stands.
- (132) If the student

- a. chooses not to access the internal appeal process within the 20 working-day period, or
- b. chooses not to access the external appeal process within the 10 working-day period, or
- c. withdraws from the appeal process by notifying RMIT UP in writing, or
- d. if the internal and external appeals processes have been completed and the decision supports the registered provider,

RMIT UP will, as soon as practicable, notify the Department of Home Affairs that the student has unsatisfactory academic progress via PRISMS. The student's CoE is cancelled as a result.

- (133) The Senior Student Services Advisor – Compliance, RMIT UP, will undertake any notifications for unsatisfactory academic progress via PRISMS for ELICOS students.
- (134) A reported student whose program is not finished will be provided with a new CoE for the remaining duration of the original enrolment.

5.19 Special Consideration

5.19.1 What is special consideration

- (135) Special consideration is defined as unexpected circumstances beyond a student's control which affects the student's ability to complete an assessment.
- (136) Special consideration requires
- a. meeting set eligibility criteria; and
 - b. a formal written application by the student, and
 - c. evaluation of the application by an authorised staff member.
- (137) Special consideration is made available by RMIT UP on the understanding that students will use it sparingly and only in cases of proven genuine need.

5.19.2 Eligibility for special consideration

- (138) If unexpected circumstances outside a student's control have affected their ability to complete an assessment, then they may be eligible to apply for special consideration.
- (139) The eligibility criteria include but are not limited to:
- a. an unexpected short-term physical or mental health condition
 - b. difficult personal circumstances or significant emotional disturbance
 - c. unexpected carer responsibility for an immediate family member
 - d. death of an immediate family member or someone else close to the student
 - e. having been the victim of a serious crime
 - f. major or sustained technical disruption, failure or connection problems during an online assessment
 - g. other unexpected circumstances outside the student's control
 - i. an unavoidable employment, family, cultural, religious, or elite sporting commitment
 - ii. severe disruption of living arrangements
 - iii. major public transport disruption
 - iv. financial hardship, such as sudden loss of employment or income
- (140) If a student is feeling unwell during an invigilated assessment the student must inform the invigilator immediately.

- (141) If the student does not complete the invigilated assessment and seeks permission to leave due to ill health, the student must follow the application process described in this instruction and provide evidence of their ill health.
- (142) Students with an approved equitable learning plan can also apply for special consideration if the eligibility criteria apply.

5.19.3 Technological disruptions

- (143) Students are required to engage in assessments using their own equipment (for example, laptop/tablet, headphones) including any specific requirements needed to undertake an assessment (for example, installation of a secure browser).
- (144) RMIT UP will ensure information about all technological and assessment requirements is made available to students at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled assessment task.
- (145) Students must ensure that equipment is sufficiently charged to undertake the assessment.
- (146) Examples of technological issues that are not grounds for special consideration include but are not limited to:
- a. the transition from face-to-face to an online teaching, learning and assessment environment
 - b. an electronic file of a student's work becomes corrupt, or the student's hard drive is damaged or affected by viruses, and the student hasn't kept a back-up of their work (e.g. on an external hard drive, Cloud, USB)
 - c. any technological problems that could have been prevented, avoided or the effects minimised by reasonable diligence, e.g. uploading an incorrect file, not uploading a file successfully or not bringing fully charged devices to invigilated assessments.
 - d. minor technological issues such as a brief interruption to the internet or power.

5.19.4 Technological disruptions during Assessments delivered on Canvas

- (147) Should technological disruptions occur after the commencement of an invigilated assessment, prior to submission, the student must follow the instructions provided prior to the commencement of the task.
- (148) In these circumstances the student may be given the opportunity to do the test at another time if all of the following criteria are met:
- a. the student has arrived in class on-time, online or face to face, on the day of the assessment,
 - b. the student has received an access code from their teacher, and
 - c. the reported issue could not be satisfactorily resolved within the time assigned for the assessment.
 - d. for offsite online assessments - the student has notified their teacher and provided appropriate evidence of the technological issue no later than 15 minutes after receiving the assessment access code, as per the instructions provided to all students at the commencement of the assessment. Appropriate evidence includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. a screenshot that captures the issue, time and date
 - ii. a photograph of the problem, captured and sent via mobile phone
 - iii. a clear, written explanation of the problem.
 - e. for onsite invigilated assessments - the student has informed the teacher, and the teacher has observed evidence of the technological issue.
- (149) If a student experiences technical issues during an assessment and has provided appropriate evidence, a member of the Assessment team will endeavour to resolve the issue and assist the student to re-enter the assessment. If the issue persists a member of the Assessment team will approve submission of answers on a paper Answer Sheet or will approve a re-sit.
- (150) Teachers will forward the student's evidence of technological issues to the Assessment team.

5.19.5 Applying for special consideration

- (151) The submission of a special consideration application leads to an evaluation by a member of the Assessment team of the unexpected circumstances and the documentation provided as evidence.
- (152) Applications for special consideration should be lodged
- a. by the student, and
 - b. no later than seven calendar days after the date the assessment task was conducted or was due, or before Final results are released, whichever is sooner, and
 - c. with documented evidence of the condition, situation, or event that has prevented the student from completing the assessment task.
- (153) If there are compassionate or compelling reasons why the application was submitted by someone other than the student, and/or the application was submitted after seven calendar days, then a detailed personal statement must be submitted to explain these circumstances.
- (154) All students applying for special consideration must:
- a. complete the [RMIT UP Application for Special Consideration online form](#), and
 - b. include documented evidence of the condition/event to support the application (see Appendix A).
 - i. Failure to provide supporting documentation may result in the application for special consideration being denied.
- (155) Applications for special consideration will not typically be accepted if the student has already completed the assessment item, unless there are exceptional circumstances as determined by a member of the Assessment team.
- (156) If the student is unable to provide supporting documentation at the time of application, the student must do so within three calendar days of the date of application to rmitup.special.consideration@rmit.edu.au.
- (157) Any personal information provided by the student in the application for special consideration will be treated in accordance with the RMIT Privacy policy.

5.19.6 Acceptable documented evidence for special consideration applications

- (158) Supporting documentation must be on official letterhead (where applicable), signed and dated.
- (159) Where documentation is in a language other than English, the student may be asked to provide an English translation by a NAATI accredited translator.
- (160) The provision of documentation does not automatically mean that a student's application for special consideration will be successful. The documentation must support the student's claim that they were incapable of sitting an invigilated assessment or completing an assessment task (Appendix A).

5.19.7 Evaluation of special consideration applications

- (161) A member of the Assessment team evaluates applications for special consideration within two business days of the date the completed application was made, including any supporting documentation.
- (162) A member of the Assessment team determines if the student is eligible for the provision of special consideration, as described in this instruction, and determines the outcome.

5.19.8 Outcome of special consideration applications

- (163) The possible outcomes for a special consideration application are:
- a. special consideration is denied, or
 - b. special consideration is approved and either;
 - i. a deferred assessment will be scheduled and arranged, or
 - ii. a new submission date determined by a member of the Assessment team will be arranged for the assessment task, or

iii. an alternative assessment task will be provided for the student.

(164) The Pathways Assessment Administration Officer (or delegate) informs the student of the outcome via an email to their RMIT student email account, within 2 business days of the date the completed application was made, including any supporting documentation.

(165) If the application for special consideration is approved, the notification will include, as appropriate:

- a. date, time and place for a deferred assessment
- b. new submission dates for assessment tasks
- c. details and submission dates of alternative assessment tasks.

(166) If the application for special consideration is denied, the notification will include:

- a. the reason for the denial, and
- b. information about the opportunity and process for submitting an appeal.

5.19.9 Appeals against special consideration outcomes

(167) Students are entitled to appeal a decision denying special consideration, where the student provides evidence that:

- a. there has been an error in the process that has been a significant factor in the decision, and/or
- b. the decision was made without appropriate consideration of the facts, supporting documentation or circumstances, and/or
- c. the evaluation was unfair or was prejudiced or biased.

(168) Students who wish to appeal the decision to deny special consideration must complete the RMIT UP Special Consideration Appeal form and submit it to rmitup.special.consideration@rmit.edu.au within 2 business days of receiving the outcome.

(169) If the appeal submission meets the requirements in clause 167, the Deputy Director, English (or delegate) reviews the decision to deny special consideration and determines the outcome of the appeal within 2 business days of appeal submission.

(170) The Pathways Assessment Administration Officer (or delegate) informs the student of the outcome of the appeal via an email to their RMIT UP student email account, within 2 business days of the appeal submission.

- a. If the appeal is denied, the email will include:
 - i. the reason for the denial, and
 - ii. information about the opportunity and process for submitting an external appeal.

6 Glossary of terms and abbreviations

Term	Definition
Academic Co-ordinator	A position of responsibility within the teaching group reporting directly to the Deputy Director, RMIT UP Melbourne
Application of previous results	A situation where a student who is repeating a course level and fails one or more macro skills that they had passed in the immediately preceding intake is granted a Pass grade for the failed macro skill(s), allowing the student to pass the course level.
Discretionary pass	A situation where a student fails a course level by only failing one macro skill by a very narrow margin and is granted a Pass grade for the macro skill, allowing the student to pass the course level.
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students
EAP	English for Academic Purposes

AE	Academic English
GE	General English
FS	Foundation Studies
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
Canvas	The Learning Management System deployed throughout RMIT
OA	Ongoing Assessment (does not include final assessments)
PTE	Pearson Test of English
TOEFL iBT	Test of English as a Foreign Language (Internet Based Test)
RMIT UP	RMIT University Pathways
Senior Teacher	A member of the teaching staff with demonstrated experience in the delivery of all RMIT UP ELICOS course levels
SRMS	Student Results Management System
Course level	A 10-week course of study specific to a particular English language proficiency level. At RMIT UP, the course levels for the ELICOS programs are as follows: English for Academic Purposes - Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate, Advanced, Advanced Plus English Pathways – Beginner, Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate, Pre-Advanced, Advanced IELTS Preparation -: IELTS Preparation 1A & 1B (exit Band 6.0), IELTS Preparation 2A & 2B (exit Band 6.5)
Program	The curriculum of study in which a student is enrolled.
Score	A number
Grade	A letter that indicates a range of scores

7 Associated Documents

RMIT UP Placement Test Instruction

[RMIT UP Assessment – Review and Appeal Instruction \(ELICOS\)](#)

[RMIT UP Appeal Against a Final Grade form](#)

[RMIT UP Application for Special Consideration online form](#)

[RMIT UP Special Consideration: Medical Impact Statement](#)

[RMIT UP Special Consideration Appeal form](#)

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Documented evidence for special consideration applications

Examples of documented evidence for compassionate and compelling circumstances to accompany special consideration applications include, but are not limited to:

Examples of acceptable reasons	Examples of evidence required
An unexpected short-term physical or mental health condition	An RMIT UP Special Consideration: Medical Impact Statement completed by the student's treating health practitioner. A medical certificate may also be considered if it states the dates and severity of the impact of the student's condition.

	<p>Any formal medical documentation provided in support of a special consideration application must be completed by the registered medical/health practitioner who treated the student.</p> <p>Supporting documentation from a health practitioner who is also a member of the student's family will not be considered.</p>
<p>Difficult personal circumstances/significant emotional disturbance such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • domestic or family violence • abuse, e.g. an abusive incident, flight from an abusive situation traumatic experience, e.g. witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime such as sexual harm or assault, or witnessing or being involved in a serious accident • severe disruption to domestic arrangements, e.g. homelessness, eviction • family or relationship breakdown, e.g. divorce, separation. 	<p>Depending on the reason for applying for special consideration, the following may be submitted:</p> <p>An RMIT UP Special Consideration: Medical Impact Statement completed by the health practitioner who supported the student with their difficult circumstance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a letter from a counsellor, psychologist, social worker, doctor, police officer or lawyer • a statement from an RMIT student support service, e.g. a Counselling Service, Safer Community staff member/case worker, or a Student Support Advisor at Student Connect • a police or incident report • court orders or other relevant court documentation • a statement from a relevant government agency or external support service.
<p>Carer responsibility for an immediate family member</p>	<p>A formal carer's certificate or RMIT UP Special Consideration: Medical Impact Statement completed by the patient's treating health practitioner, naming the student as their carer.</p> <p>Supporting documentation from a health practitioner who is also a member of the student's family will not be considered.</p>
<p>Bereavement</p>	<p>One or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a published death or funeral notice • a letter from a funeral home • an order of funeral service • a death certificate.
<p>An unavoidable employment, family, cultural, religious or elite sporting commitment known in advance</p>	<p>A formal letter from a relevant person or organisation, e.g. a religious or community leader, employer or sporting body. The letter must be from someone who is qualified to comment on the student's circumstances.</p>
<p>Other unexpected circumstances outside your control</p>	<p>A formal letter and/or official documents to support the special consideration application. Depending on the circumstances, these might be from government agencies, employers, the police and courts or real estate agent.</p>
<p>Major unexpected public transport disruptions</p>	<p>A screenshot of a disruption notification from the PTV website or app or travel alert email or letter from PTV.</p>
<p>Major/sustained technical or connection problem during an offsite online assessment</p>	<p>Screenshots or photographs (which include the date and time of the incident/issue/communication) of the following, as relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • error messages • screen not loading • failed devices • time-stamped speed tests • power outage maps <p>Messages or information from the electricity or internet service provider regarding the issue/outage experienced.</p>

	Where relevant, documentation from the electricity or internet service provider, or IT Connect confirming the sudden and unexpected prolonged internet or system outage/problem. This may include phone logs, chat transcripts or emails.
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9 Status and Details

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Policy Owner	RMIT UP Chief Executive Officer
Policy Author	Deputy Director, English
Document Author	Assessment Manager
Enquiries Contact	rmit.up.policy@rmit.edu.au
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Version	Last updated	Changes
1.0	September 2025	Complete review of 2019 version
1.1	October 2025	Clause 32 changed from a maximum of 4 to 3
1.2	February 2026	Name change EAP to ELICOS Inclusion of and adapted for new programs Responsibilities change from Assessment Manager to Assessment Team Role title changes Change to wording for Discretionary Pass and Application of Previous Results Removal of clause 105 due to contradiction with new Assessment Review and Appeal Instruction Addition of section on reporting and appealing unsatisfactory academic progress