As a UNSW student, you can expect to undertake various types of assessment during your academic career. These may be either formative or summative.

- **Formative assessment** aims to help students enhance their learning - for example, by identifying weaknesses in their understanding and/or performance.
- **Summative assessment** passes judgement on the quality of a student's learning, generally by assigning marks and grades.

By critically reflecting on the outcomes of both formative and summative assessment, students and staff can assess the effectiveness of teaching and academic programs.

**Types of assessment**

UNSW recognises the importance of using a range of assessment techniques appropriate to these purposes. We encourage teachers to develop innovative and contextually relevant assessment tasks that help achieve course and program goals and develop students’ graduate capabilities.

Assessment types can include:

- Written or oral **examinations**
- Other types of written assessment (essays, reports etc.)
- Group-based assessment
- Viva voce assessment (oral assessment tasks)
- Performance-based assessment
- Clinical assessment
- Studio projects (e.g. in art, design, architecture)
- Professional experience
- Class participation.

You'll find all the assessment requirements and due dates in your course outline. Course outlines are published before classes commence at the beginning of each teaching period.

**The learning and assessment experience at UNSW**

Students undertake *formative* assessment activities during the semester, and teachers provide feedback on those activities. These are important steps in a cycle that helps students develop knowledge and prepare for future learning at UNSW and beyond.

At the end of each semester, teachers use *summative* assessment to quantify a student’s progress and determine their academic standing, which indicates whether the student is ready for future learning activities.

**UNSW Assessment Policy**

The UNSW Assessment Policy outlines the University’s commitment to designing and delivering assessment that helps students achieve the specified learning outcomes of courses and programs. It enables faculties and schools to develop rules and procedures to manage student assessment and related activities.

**Group-based assessment**

If your teacher sets a group-based assessment for you to participate in, they will tell you how they intend to award marks - that is, whether they will give individual marks or a group-based mark.

It's also a good idea for students to evaluate their own and other group members' contributions to the final product.

Your course outline will tell you whether these and other requirements apply for your group-based assessment.
The **Guide to Group Work** gives you more information about all aspects of group work.

**Viva voce (oral assessment) tasks**

For **viva voce or oral assessment tasks**, at least 2 examiners must be present. Each examiner must independently record their comments and recommended mark.

Additionally, for a **performance-based assessment** (e.g. dance, theatre, music recital) a video or audio recording must be made of the performance under assessment.

**Clinical assessments** are excluded from these requirements.

**Assessment of class participation**

Assessment criteria for class participation should be communicated to you in the course outline at the beginning of each teaching period.

You should be informed of your class participation result before the end of the teaching period, and given the opportunity to discuss your result with the lecturer involved, if you wish to do so.

Assigning results for class participation should not unfairly disadvantage any group of students, and should take the following issues into account:

- Method of delivery of the course (a course taught in concentrated mode would be expected to have a different class participation format from a course taught across 13 weeks)
- Contribution required from the students.

**See also**

Find exam dates, timetable, rules and location maps

Examinations

Student Conduct

Academic integrity and your rights and responsibilities

Group work
Tips to work effectively on your group tasks and assignments