

# COURSE POLICIES FOR ALL ACIS COURSES

## I. Course Outlines

Specific course outlines are provided for each course. Generally, the outlines will contain the following information:

- Course Supervisor/Lecturers
- Objectives of the course
- Teaching arrangements: Lecture and Tutorial Times
- Textbooks & Recommended Reading
- Assessments: assignments, projects, tests, exams
- Consultation times
- Lecture timetable

It is strongly recommended that students read their course outlines. **It is the student's responsibility to retain all course outlines for any future assessment by professional bodies.**

## II. Student Workload Expectations

Lectures and tutorials are expected to provide about four hours of contact with the material in most ACIS courses per week. The College of Business and Economics policy is that *including lectures, tutorials and self-study assignments* you should spend 12-20 hours per week on the material for this course.

Lectures are intended to guide your understanding of the material. It is intended that they give a framework and a guide for your individual and group study. Learning must be done by the student. The learning activities will differ from course to course. They will be described in the course outline, and delivered to you during the course.

However, students should read material in advance, think through the material in the lectures and tutorials and spend time processing the concepts addressed in the lectures and tutorials. For courses that are computational, the problems and skills must be practised. Many courses include case analyses. Students should expect to spend time individually or in small groups working and discussing these.

For a 100 level course, you should spend 8 hours per week outside of lectures and tutorials preparing and reflecting for this course. For a 200 level course, you should spend 15.5 hours per week and for a 300 level course, you should spend 20 hours per week outside of lectures and tutorials on the material for the course.

Students who interact with the material on a regular, consistent basis will both learn more and perform better on assessments than their peers who do not consistently plan and spend time in learning activities outside of lectures.

## II. All about Assessments, Marking, and Aegrotats

### a. Weights for assessments and how results are reported

A typical semester course might have three or four assessments.

You will normally submit your work in the course's hand-In box on Level 1. Attach to it a signed Cover Sheet—available outside the ACIS administrators' 6<sup>th</sup> floor office.

Each assessment might be marked 'out of 100%'. Normally they will contribute toward the final grade with different weights. Here is an example (for a made-up course):

Assessment	Maximum mark	Weight	Student Z got mark of	Times the weight =
Test1 *	100%	x 0.10	32%	3.20%
Test2 *	100%	x 0.10	30%	3.00%
Essay	100%	x 0.40	96%	38.40%
Final *	100%	x 0.40	51%	20.40%
	100%	1.00	<b>Weighted total</b> □	65.00%

If you fail an assessment do not think you have failed the whole course (and despair or discontinue). You can work out from this table what marks you will need from the remaining assessments in order to pass the whole course (and whether passing is still possible). (Of course, you must first construct a table like this that uses the real data for your courses.) [See also section h, below]

Also, refer to Section IV: The 45% rule.

**b. Converting percentage marks to letter grades (A, C+ etc)**

The final, overall result for the course for the semester, which is published by the university and appears on your record, will show only a letter grade (for example B+), not a raw percentage.

In general the department uses 50% as a cut-off point between pass and fail. The following conversion table is used as a starting point for letter grades:

A+	=	85-100%	B-	=	60-64
A	=	80-84	C+	=	55-59
A-	=	75-79	C	=	50-54
B+	=	70-74	Fail D	=	40-49
B	=	65-69	Fail E	=	0-39

The department does NOT use scaling systems to force all results to a pre-determined pass-rate. But it does reserve the right to make alterations to this table to compensate for anomalies in the teaching or marking and to ensure fairness.

**c. Late submissions and extensions of time**

Assignments and projects etc. should be submitted to the correct person and place—usually a hand-in box on Level 1—by the due date and time. Apart from applications for aegrotat consideration (see section d below) it is unfair to other students if work submitted late incurs no penalty.

Therefore an extension of due date will normally carry a penalty, expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark. The mark you receive would be your earned marks less this proportion deducted for lateness.

There will normally be a 25% penalty for lateness up to 24 hours (or part thereof); 50% for 24 hours to 48 hours (or part thereof) and a 100% penalty thereafter.

Examples: an assignment that earned 80% would, if it were handed in...

- up to 24 hours late, ..... receive a mark of 80% x (75)% = 60%.
- up to 48 hours late, ..... receive a mark of 80% x (50)% = 40%.
- more than 48 hours late, receive a mark of 80% x (0)% = 0%.

If you can foresee an unavoidable lateness you may seek from the course supervisor a formal extension of the time or due date. But extensions are allowed only for assessed work worth 10% or above.

**Make back-ups and allow enough time!** All students are urged to plan and manage their own work in order to meet the required submission dates. This is a wicked world in which allowance must be made for the unexpected, especially with computers. Disks become unreadable. Systems go down. Files get overwritten. Cars get flat tyres.

**d. Aegrotat considerations for assessments by an individual**

To ‘apply for an aegrotat consideration’ is to ask the department to take into account that your performance in an assessment of a course may have been impaired by something outside your control. Indeed, you may not have even been able to submit the assessment or attend the examination. Grounds for an aegrotat application include your illness, the death of a close person or “other critical circumstances”.

An aegrotat application may be made only for a piece of work which contributes at least 10% to the final grade for a course. In general, the application must be made no later than seven days from the date the work should have been presented.

You apply on a form that you obtain from the University’s Registry. Fill it out and return it to the Registry. The application must be supported by satisfactory evidence, such as a medical certificate for illness or injury or a newspaper notice for a death.

If the university considers that the circumstances justify proceeding, then in the case of tests and examinations, then the application is passed on to the department to assess. (In the case of assessed work other than tests or examinations, the department may offer an extension of time without penalty.)

The department records your application but it does not give you a new grade for the assessment and cannot tell you the result until the end of the course. It must wait until the end of the semester (or the year) when all assessments for the course have been completed and marked. Only then can the department satisfy itself that on the evidence there is reasonable assurance that, if you had not been impaired, you would have passed (or gained a higher grade).

Because the department must look at all the other assessments for the course, an aegrotat grade or pass can be awarded only if, by the end of the course, you have completed a substantial part of the course’s assessment and did so at a satisfactory level. In ACIS, “substantial” is normally taken to mean at least 60%, and “satisfactory level” normally means at least 55%. Therefore, you will appreciate that if a particular course has no other substantial assessments (or if it has, say, two assessments and you apply for aegrotat passes in both of them) then there will be not enough evidence to grant an aegrotat pass.

If an aegrotat application changes your grade then your student record will show “AEG” after the grade (for example “B+ AEG”)

If the assessment is a joint assessment submitted by several students (e.g. a team project) then the rules are similar but become a bit more complicated, as described in the next section.

For a fuller explanation, please refer to the *Calendar* and the *Enrolment Handbook*. (Look up ‘Special Pass’ as well.)

**e. Management and marks for group projects**

When several students work on an assessment as a team then it is their joint responsibility to manage the project. Management includes sharing tasks among the team members and following-up any team-work problems (such as poor communications and poor or late contributions). This management is part of your learning experience.

It is expected that all team-members will receive the same grade.

However, to ensure that this is fair, all members of the team are required to sign the green *Group Assignment Cover Sheet* (available near the administrators' office on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor) and to note, after their signature, the percentage of the work that they contributed (For example, “*Henry Zheng (33%)*”).

Do not submit the form without meeting to agree on these percentages. If the percentages are seriously unequal and also if they are disputed then (before the form is submitted) call a team meeting: skill, fairness and courtesy may be needed to reach agreement.

The department is entitled to give a lower grade to a team-member whose agreed contribution was much lower than the others'.

#### **f. Aegrotat considerations for group assessments**

What happens if the agreed contribution of one team-member was low because of his or her illness (or other impairment)? Such a student should read sections d and e above and make an aegrotat application in respect of that assessment. The possible results include:

1. No change, or
2. An increase in that student's raw mark and grade (though not above the grade of the other team-members), or
3. An increase in that student's raw mark *and* an increase in the raw mark or grade of all members (unlikely but possible).

This last result is unlikely if the team was expected to be working on the project over a long period: if the illness was brief it should have a small effect; if the illness was long then the team's self-management should have re-assigned the task.

### **III. Academic Dishonesty**

#### **Cheating (such as copying) is not acceptable and may lead to no credit**

The department and the university require that the work you hand in for assessment for credit towards your course must be your own work (or, for a group assessment, the work of the team alone).

What is cheating? If you submit material that is wholly or partly someone else's work as your own work then you are cheating. In our eyes cheating includes the following, which are all very similar:

1. **Taking concealed notes into an exam:** You may take into an exam only those objects and papers that are permitted by the Course Supervisor (you will be advised what they are). Taking in anything else, especially concealed notes, is cheating.
2. **Collusion:** this is secretly arranging with another person to work jointly on an assessment then submitting it as though it were your own work.

NOTE: This definition of 'collusion' does not stop you discussing with each other, in general, your understanding of the task, how to approach it, and incorporating the ideas coming out of such discussions into your own individual submissions. Talk—but then write it up using your own thoughts and your own words.

3. **Copying from other students:** this is submitting material (in any medium, including computer files) that has been created by another person or persons, whether or not they gave their permission. This includes copying from another person's examination script.

4. **Plagiarism:** this is making use of any material without clear and academically proper acknowledgment of its author or source.

NOTES:

- You may feel that you are showing respect for wise authors by using their words. But you show respect only when you acknowledge the quotations as quotations, and name the real authors.
- When you name the authors of quotations you cannot be accused of *cheating*.

But using too many quotations or excessively long quotations without explaining, in your own words, why they are relevant to your argument, will be considered to be *poor scholarship* and earn a lowered grade.

5. **Ghost writing:** this is having another party (whether paid or not) write work for you to submit.

The regulations call all these “dishonest or improper practices”. We watch for them and use computer systems to detect them. If dishonest practices are detected an examiner may refuse to mark the assessment, may refer it to the Proctor (the University’s disciplinary officer) and the Proctor may refer it to the Discipline Committee.

Penalties for cheating can range from zero credit for the work, zero credit for the whole course or exclusion from the course or from the University.

So prepare for an assessment with your own study, research and thinking. Then take personal pride from writing your submission in your own words.

#### IV. The ‘45% rule’. Read this carefully

In section II a above you saw how the individual assessment’s marks are weighted to calculate the overall mark and thus pass or fail.

An ‘invigilated’ assessment means one that is ‘supervised, sat under formal exam conditions’. All others are ‘uninvigilated’— unsupervised; you can work on them at home or in a computer lab.

If the course you are doing has no uninvigilated assessments then this section cannot apply. Move to the next section.

There is an ACIS departmental rule that in order to pass a course students are also required to average (weighted average) not less than 45% in the *invigilated* component of its assessments.

So if you did not get a weighted average of 45% in the invigilated assessment this rule means that you can get more than 50% overall but still fail the course.

In the table in section II a the invigilated assessments were marked with \* . The student earned 65% for the course but did so by getting a very high mark in the uninvigilated work and very low marks in the invigilated work. He passed only because of the essay. If we work out the weighted average mark for the invigilated work by itself we get 44.3%, which is less than 45%. Therefore this student failed the entire course ( $44.3\% = (3.2\% + 3.0\% + 20.4\%) / (0.10 + 0.10 + 0.40)$ ). He will get a D grade.

## V. Miscellaneous Information and Policies

### a. Coping with the course if English is your second language

If English is your second language and you have difficulty understanding the lecturers or writing good sentences, contact the University of Canterbury English Language Centre by phoning 364-2905, or emailing [elc@cont.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:elc@cont.canterbury.ac.nz).

### b. Computer Facilities

The department has a modern computer facility consisting of Windows XP professional workstations and Windows 2000 servers. We teach and use Microsoft Office XP (Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint). An object-oriented development environment (JADE) is used in the Level two information systems course, ACIS 213. The department also has a dedicated lab for teaching e-Commerce and Network Security courses. Email is used extensively within the department.

#### Location of Computer Labs:

- **For all ACIS Undergraduate and Dip. ACIS Students:**
  - COMMERCE - 5 basement labs, 23 workstations each
  - LOFT - Level 5 Central Library Building, James Hight - 96 PC Workstations
  - CAVE - Engineering, ground floor near Eng. Library -54 PC Workstations
  - CRYPT (MATH/COSC) -70 PC Workstations
- **For ACIS 213 and ACIS 323 Students only:**
  - ACIS e-Commerce Lab Level 1 -20 workstations, ACIS213, ACIS323 use only.
- **For B.Com.(Hons) and M.Com. Students:**
  - Shared XP Professional workstations are available on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Commerce Building.
  - NB:** Quality laser printing facilities are supplied, but paper consumption is charged to students

### c. Student Complaints

If a student has a complaint about the conduct of any member of the staff of the Department, they should discuss the matter, in the first instance, with the staff member concerned. If the student remains unsatisfied, they should contact the Head of Department.

### d. Class Representatives

Class Representatives will be selected at the beginning of each course. These people will provide a valuable link between the course supervisor and the students. The representatives are expected to facilitate dialogue between the students and the course supervisor on a regular basis. This process should help to isolate and resolve potential concerns. The communications can also be used to provide positive feedback on elements of the course which are going well.

### e. Taping of Lectures

The department has a policy that students may record the lectures themselves, but because of the extensive PowerPoint slide notes being available, lectures would not be tape-recorded.

### f. PowerPoint Presentations

Many staff in the department use Microsoft PowerPoint in lectures. Some make this material available before classes, others do not. All staff require students to be familiar with material other than the PowerPoint presentations such as set texts, recommended reading, materials books, lecture notes, laboratory and tutorial material and other supplementary material.