The Chinese University of Hong Kong
English Language Teaching Unit
ELTU Policy on Assessment and Feedback Practices

1. Purpose of the Policy

This internal policy on assessment and feedback aims to provide a framework to guide and inform ELTU staff on the purpose, procedure and practices of assessment and its outcomes.

The policy aims to ensure that:

- Assessments are carried out with integrity and fairness and that they are valid, reliable and in line with best practice.
- Assessment feedback mechanisms and processes to promote learning are adopted across ELTU courses.
- Assessment administration is systematic and pedagogically sound; and
- Assessments within the ELTU align with the *CUHK Policy on Assessment of Student Learning in Taught Programmes*.[1]

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all taught courses delivered by the ELTU. Course Coordinators and course teachers are responsible for conducting assessments by adhering to this policy alongside its supporting documents, the *ELTU Internal Guide on Assessment Practices for Course Coordinators* (*Appendix 3*) and *the ELTU Internal Guide on Assessment Practices for Course Teachers* (*Appendix 4*).

3. Assessment Principles

Assessments should be designed with reference to the following principles.

3.1 Assessments should be valid. That is, they should be designed to measure intended learning outcomes at an appropriate level, and results should allow for meaningful inferences to be made about these outcomes for individual test-takers.

3.1.1 Grade descriptors comprising clear specification of criteria by which standards are defined for each grade should be developed for assessments in all courses at the time each course is introduced and approved. The standards defined in terms of levels of

[1] The *CUHK Policy on Assessment of Student Learning in Taught Programmes* can be found here: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/qm/A5-1.pdf. Additional Examples and Guidelines for Reference can be found here: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/assessment/.

student performance should be integrated in grade descriptors with reference to the intended learning outcomes of the course.

3.2 Assessments should be fair.

3.2.1 In the setting of assessments, Course Coordinators will consider the complexity of the task and ensure that, through the course design, students will have had sufficient exposure (in-class or out-of-class opportunities) to the items or skills measured prior to the assessment. Assessment scheme weightings will roughly reflect the time spent in class focusing on the individual outcomes, with the understanding that some prerequisite skills, including language proficiency, may also be assessed.

3.2.2 Assessments will be designed and implemented with consideration to diversity within the student body.

3.2.3 Assessment schemes will keep both workload and cognitive demand at an appropriate and reasonable level for students. When creating or revising assessment schemes, Course Coordinators are advised to consider the demands of similar courses, and attempt to ensure that workloads are roughly comparable, taking into consideration the specific pedagogical factors of the situation.

3.2.4 Course Coordinators may consider anonymizing grading where practical and beneficial, such as by having teachers grade students other than their own.

3.2.5 Teachers will strive for transparency by

3.2.5.1 providing students with access to assessment information at the start of each course; this information, including assessment description, marking criteria, weighting, submission requirements, and feedback channels and timelines will be included in course outlines and on the class learning management system site; assessment schemes will not change within a teaching semester, except under extraordinary circumstances, on a team basis, as approved by the Director;

3.2.5.2 providing students with rubrics and descriptors prior to the assessment, which will enable them to understand quality expectations at different grade levels;

3.2.5.3 familiarizing students with assessment procedures prior to the assessment;

3.2.5.4 explaining the relationship between assessments and learning outcomes; and,

3.2.5.5 providing example responses to assessment tasks, when possible.

3.2.6 The delivery of assessments will be standardized across different class sections of a single course.

3.2.7 Assessment prompts will be developed and reviewed by multiple teachers (or entire course teams) as a “check and balance,” to identify and remove prompts which are unclear, biased, or are at an inappropriate level in relation to the targeted cognitive load.

3.3 Assessments should be practical.

3.3.1 When assessments are designed, the demands of creating, administering, and marking these assessments on teaching staff, nonteaching staff, rooms and equipment will be considered.

3.3.2 Rubrics and their descriptors should be clear. They should help teachers distinguish different levels of performance and help promote consistency in grading across different class sections. They should be designed to expedite the grading process for teachers. Rubrics should make the task of grading easier, not harder.

3.4 Assessments should be reliable. The reliability of an assessment and the grading thereof is achieved through the use of assessment tools and adherence to assessment procedures.

3.4.1 Assessment criteria: Assessment criteria will be developed for each assessment and discussed within teams before the start of term to ensure all teachers have a clear understanding of the relationship between the assessment, the criteria and the course content.

3.4.2 Criterion referencing: All assessments will be criterion-referenced with scales and descriptors developed to ensure a common understanding of what constitutes students' performance levels. These descriptors should be developed for all new assessments.

3.4.3 Standardization: There is a need to ensure uniformity in grading. For courses offered in multiple sections and/or where student work is marked by more than one individual, the same marking standards should be applied by all teachers or markers.

Standardization is carried out prior to marking to align teachers to performance levels and familiarize teachers with the use of scales and descriptors. Teachers will be asked to grade several sample scripts (or other forms of student work) prior to the standardization meeting. Course Coordinators are responsible for setting and clearly presenting grading standards to the course teams while teachers are responsible for learning about and aligning their grading to these set standards.

Due to the importance of standardization, completion of sample grading and attendance at standardization meetings is mandatory for both full-time and part-time teachers.

3.4.4 Double marking: Course Coordinators are encouraged to verify interrater reliability by double-marking a sample of assessments. Teachers are encouraged to check their own reliability by double marking the same script on different days/at different times of the day. In cases where grade distributions are unusual, double marking should be implemented more aggressively.

3.4.5 Moderation of marks: Course Coordinators are responsible for checking and moderating all course marks submitted by course teachers. This may include asking teachers to submit samples of their graded student work for checking or double-marking a small sample of assessments, chosen randomly or from class sections which lie at the extremities of the overall course grade distribution. Should teachers' grading be observed to deviate from the team standard, they may be required to modify scores or adjust their grading as a result of grade moderation in order to maintain overall fairness and consistency. It should be noted that A-grades should be reserved for truly excellent work that exceeds the level expected for the majority of students.

3.4.5.1 If a high percentage of extreme grades (i.e. a large number of students are lumped together in "A- to A" range grades or "C to F" range grades) or a narrow spread of scores and grades in any evaluation component or assessment task is observed in a teacher's grading, the Course Coordinator should check samples of the teacher's

graded student work to verify their evaluation, and guide the teacher to adjust their grades if appropriate.

3.4.6 Review of assessment practices: The effectiveness of assessments in measuring attainment of course learning outcomes should be reviewed and revised at the end of each teaching and learning cycle. When assessments are leading to skewed grade distributions or when narrow spread of scores in any assessment components is observed, Course Coordinators should review the expected outcomes of the assessment tasks, appropriateness of descriptors, cognitive load and overall workload, and levels of challenges and attainments, and then revise the assessment scheme as appropriate to avoid grade inflation, deflation or concentrated grades.

3.4.6.1 If a high percentage of extreme grades (i.e. a large number of students are lumped together in "A- to A" range grades or "C to F" range grades) is observed across multiple classes, it may be possible that the assessment tasks tend to be too easy or too difficult, or the grade descriptors that guide the marking are not appropriately defined to reflect different levels of attainment of learning outcomes.

3.4.6.2 The spread of scores and sub-grades for each assessment component should also be taken into consideration. A narrow spread of scores or grades is observed in any assessment components or tasks across multiple classes should also prompt the Course Coordinator to reconsider expected learning outcomes and assessment design to accommodate a broader range of levels of challenges and attainments.

3.5 Assessments should be authentic. For skills-based outcomes, where applicable, assessment design will strive to contextualize tasks to replicate the real-world experience for which the learner is being prepared, as far as is practical.

4. Types of Assessment

4.1 The outcomes-based approach (OBA) is adopted when designing course assessments and should be guided by internal consistency at the programme level.

4.2 Course Coordinators and teaching teams have the discretion to decide on the types and number of assessments included in a course and to evaluate how combinations of assessment can both promote student learning and achieve assessment purposes of measuring proficiency and skill development as intended. In general, courses should embrace a good mix of assessment types which can effectively reflect the concerted efforts of group work as well as performance of individual students.

4.3 For courses assessing students on group work, assessment schemes should employ a variety of assessment types, such that marks for group work are balanced by marks for individual work.

4.4 Assessments can be summative or formative, standalone or inter-related.

5. Feedback Practices

5.1 In general, students should receive feedback on all assessments, whether formative or summative.

5.1.1 General turnaround time across the Unit should be within 4 weeks, as noted in the *CUHK Policy on Assessment of Student Learning in Taught Programmes*, p.9, Paragraph 39.

5.1.2 Teachers should return the marked assessment rubrics with scores and grades to students for each assessment task. Students should be informed that scores and grades released by teachers are provisional and subject to further adjustment in course-based moderation exercises.

5.2 Purpose and quality of feedback: Feedback aims to support student learning by encouraging reflection and self-directed learning and by initiating discussion between teachers and students. Feedback should thus clearly highlight gaps in a student's knowledge or performance and be worded to support ongoing learning. Feedback should also refer back to assessment domains and scales and performance levels.

5.3 Types of feedback: Feedback can be written (on a written assignment, a feedback sheet or via LMS feedback) or verbal (face-to-face or recorded using a feedback tool such as Camtasia).

5.4 Timeliness of feedback: Students should receive feedback soon after an assessment so that they have sufficient time to make improvement. Course Coordinators should ensure the timeliness of the feedback loop by planning sufficient feedback time or consultation sessions when preparing course schedules.

6. Assignment Submission, Collection, and Return[2]

6.1 Assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based (e.g. essays, presentation outlines, etc.) should be submitted via VeriGuide.

6.2 By completing any assignment submission (whether via VeriGuide or other channels) or in-class assessment tasks, students are assumed to have declared originality of their submitted/completed coursework and pledged to have upheld academic honesty.

6.3 Assignment submission, collection, and return should be conducted in a secure manner. At the teacher's instruction, students may submit their assignments electronically (to VeriGuide and/or LMS), place them in the teacher's mailbox at LSK 436 (during office hours) or the ELTU assignment drop box (outside office hours). Teachers may also specify particular office hours when students can submit assignments in person.

6.4 Individual teachers are responsible for returning graded assignments to students either in class, through the LMS, or through arrangements made directly with students. In special circumstances when students need to collect their assignments outside class time, teachers are advised to do so by making special arrangement with the General Office staff.

7. Late Submission of Assignments

[2] Regulations concerning assignment submission in the *CUHK Guide for Students and Teachers on Honesty in Academic Work* can be accessed at: https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p10.htm

Late submission without prior approval from the teacher will lead to a deduction of 3 marks (out of 100) per day of lateness for the assignment concerned. The teacher reserves the right not to accept any assignments submitted 10 calendar days beyond the given deadline.

8. Absence from Assessments

Students who have been absent from in-class assessments without prior approval from the teacher and are unable to present an appropriate medical certificate in support of physician-recommended sick leave will be given a zero mark to the assessment concerned and not be allowed to sit for a make-up test. Students absent from an assessment must send any supporting evidence to the teachers within five working days for the teacher's consideration. The teacher reserves the right not to grant any make-up assessments after that.

9. Academic Dishonesty[3]

9.1 The CUHK adopts a policy of zero tolerance on academic dishonesty including plagiarism, cheating and unauthorized use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in assessments. When a teacher detects suspected acts of academic dishonesty, they should launch an investigation to verify the type and extent of the violation and report the case to the Faculty Student Disciplinary Committee.

9.2 In all cases, teachers should inform students concerned in writing and document related exchanges. Teachers are advised to speak directly with students about the issue to ensure a clear understanding of why their work is considered to violate university regulations on academic dishonesty and ways to avoid such problems in future work.

9.3 When a teacher detects academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, in a student assignment, the teacher will consider the type and extent of the violation, as well as the nature of the assessment.

9.4 Teachers will consult their Course Coordinators prior to referring any case to the Faculty Student Disciplinary Committee. Course Coordinators can also be consulted if teachers feel uncertain how to handle a specific case. Course Coordinators may in turn consult the Assessment Committee and the Director if they are unsure how to proceed.

9.5 Students will be informed if their cases are being referred to the Faculty Student Disciplinary Committee.

10. Attendance and Class Participation

10.1 Given the interactive nature of ELTU courses, regular attendance and active participation in class activities are essential for effective student learning. Accordingly, these elements form an integral part of the course assessment.

[3] *CUHK Guide for Students and Teachers on Honesty in Academic Work* can be accessed at: https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/index.htm

10.2 Students must meet the minimum attendance requirements in order to pass any ELTU course. (Refer to the *ELTU Policy on Student Matters* for details.)

10.3 The assessment scheme of all ELTU courses includes a class participation and engagement component, which accounts for a standardized 5% of the overall course grade. Teachers should assign the score for this assessment component using the ELTU Assessment Rubric for Class Participation and Engagement. (See *Appendix 1 ELTU Grading Guide* for more information.)

11. Grade Calculation

11.1 The ELTU Mark Grade Conversion Table will be used to calculate final assessment grades and final course grades. (See *Appendix 1* for more information.)

12. Release of Grades

Students should be informed that all provisional grades and marks received during the course are subject to revision until the ELTU Assessment Panel has endorsed the final grades. The Registry is solely responsible for the release of grades.

13. Grade Appeal Guidelines[4]

13.1 The University categorises student complaints as *formal* and *informal*. Informal complaints are handled at the department/unit level. If an informal complaint is not resolved, a formal complaint can be lodged, but these would be handled by the Chairman of the student's Major Department, rather than the ELTU. The procedures in this document are designed to address informal complaints which are received by the ELTU. These procedures have been visualized in a flow chart for ease of reference (See *Appendix 2* for more information).

13.2 The University distinguishes between appeals based on procedural errors (such as incorrect calculations) and errors that question the academic judgement of the marker. While formal complaints can only be lodged based on procedural issues, the ELTU will consider other grade-related issues in informal complaints as a non-obligatory service to students. Students should be aware that the informal grade appeal may result in an increase in grade level, an unchanged grade, or a drop in grade level.

13.3 Students who wish to appeal their grade on an individual assignment may do so by following these steps:

13.3.1 Step 1: The student should approach the teacher who assigned the grade. The teacher should verify that no error was made, and explain any feedback as the student requires to help the student understand the factors contributing to the grade.

13.3.1.1 Unless the complaint concerns a procedural issue, this step must be done within one week of the date on which the graded assignment was

[4] These procedures reference University policies which can be found in *Procedures for dealing with Student Complaints*, available at https://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/download/ComplaintProcedures.pdf

made available to the student. Procedural issues can be appealed until two weeks after final course grades are released.

13.3.1.2 If the student is unable to contact their teacher because of extraordinary circumstances, he/she may approach the Course Coordinator regarding the appeal.

13.3.2 Step 2: If the complaint remains unresolved after the meeting with the teacher, the student may approach the Course Coordinator.

13.3.2.1 The student should provide justification for a grade change which refers to the rubric and is specific.

13.3.2.2 In cases where the Course Coordinator was the original marker, the student should approach the Director instead.

13.3.3 Upon receiving a grade appeal, the Course Coordinator should take the following steps:

13.3.3.1 The Course Coordinator should verify that the student has already approached the teacher, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and should inform the teacher concerned of the appeal.

13.3.3.2 Students should be reminded that the appeal may result in an increase in grade level, an unchanged grade, or a drop in grade level.

13.3.3.3 If the grade appeal is based on a procedural issue, the Course Coordinator should consult the Director and/or the Assessment Committee to advise on a fair solution.

13.3.3.4 In cases where the issue is not procedural, the Course Coordinator should re-mark the assessment or ask an experienced team member to re-mark the assessment.

13.3.3.5 Group projects can be appealed by a single member if all members of the group agree. The Course Coordinator should inform all group members of the appeal to allow for objections prior to re-marking; any dissenting members would lead to the appeal being denied. In cases where assessment marks are a combination of individual and group components, all components should be re-marked for all group members.

13.3.4 When the assessment has been re-marked, the following procedures should be implemented:

13.3.4.1 If the re-marked grade is within one letter sub-grade of the original mark, the appeal is denied and the original grade stands.

13.3.4.2 If the remark is not within one letter sub-grade of the original mark, the student is awarded the re-marked grade. The new, re-marked numeric grade should be used for the calculation of the final course grade.

13.3.4.3 For group assessments which include both an individual and group component, each of these components will be considered separately when applying these standards. That is, if either component is assigned

a grade more than one sub-grade different than the original, the re-marked numeric score will be used for that component when calculating the final course grade.

13.3.4.4 The Course Coordinator should inform the student(s) of the outcome, keeping a written record of the case, and informing the Director. This should normally be done within two weeks of the Course Coordinator having received the complaint.

13.3.4.5 For grade adjustment of a final course grade that has already been submitted, the course teacher would need to prepare a letter addressed to the Head of Registration and Examinations Section (RES) for his/her follow-up actions. This needs to be endorsed by the Director of ELTU before onward submission to RES.

14. Student Confidentiality and Data Protection

Students' personal data should be respected in all aspects related to assessment.

14.1 Teachers will not leave any graded or ungraded assignments unattended.

14.2 Teachers will remove students' names and SIDs from all written or speaking samples used for standardization or moderation purposes.

14.3 Teachers are responsible for seeking consent to use coursework completed on the course for course materials development, assessment, and research-related purposes from all students enrolled in their respective classes.

14.4 Students should collect any graded assignments within one month upon their availability, unless otherwise agreed between the teachers and the students.

14.5 Teachers will upload representative samples of student work and signed student consent forms for their classes to the designated ELTU OneDrive folders, which are to be stored by the ELTU for 4 years.

14.6 To facilitate course development and assessment related work, Course Coordinators will be given access to all student samples submitted by teachers on the course team and may use them for enhancing course materials, conducting standardization exercises, and other related purposes.

© Assessment Committee, ELTU, CUHK (last updated in March 2026)

ELTU Grading Guide for Teachers

1. ELTU Mark-Grade Conversion Table

ELTU Mark-Grade Conversion		**100** marks	Grade Descriptors
Excellent	**A**	**95 – 100**	**Outstanding performance on ALL learning outcomes.** Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would surpass the normal expectations at this level and typical of standards that may be common at higher levels of study. The 'A' grade should be reserved for truly excellent work that exceeds the level expected for the majority of students and is expected to be achieved only by a small minority.
Very Good	**A-**	**90 – 94.99**	**Generally outstanding performance on all or almost all learning outcomes.** Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would fully fulfill the normal expectations at this level and occasionally reaches standards that may be common at higher levels of study.
Good	**B+**	**85 – 89.99**	**Substantial performance on all learning outcomes,** OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a comprehensive manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.
	B	**80 – 84.99**	
	B-	**75 – 79.99**	
Fair	**C+**	**70 – 74.99**	**Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes.** Demonstrates the ability to partially apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.
	C	**65 – 69.99**	
	C-	**60 – 64.99**	
Pass	**D+**	**55 – 59.99**	**Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.** Addresses the task inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in some areas while responding minimally with possibly tangential content in others.
	D	**50 – 54.99**	
Failure	**F**	**0 – 49.99**	**Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.** Fails to address the task and likely does not understand what the task requires. In other words, the work completely misses the point.

Note: The lower bound of the score range for each grade is the minimum threshold to obtain that grade. E.g. For a student to get an A- grade, their final course score will need to be 95 marks or above. A final course score of 94.998 will convert to a B+ grade.

2. ELTU Grade Descriptors

A-range Grades

Excellent **Grade A** (95 – 100)	**Outstanding performance on ALL learning outcomes.** Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would surpass the normal expectations at this level and typical of standards that may be common at higher levels of study. The 'A' grade should be reserved for truly excellent work that exceeds the level expected for the majority of students and is expected to be achieved only by a small minority (Senate paper, p.5; p.15).
Very Good **Grade A-** (90 – 94.99)	**Generally outstanding performance on all or almost all learning outcomes.** Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would fully fulfill the normal expectations at this level and occasionally reaches standards that may be common at higher levels of study.

Essay/Writing	***Content***	The A essay fully addresses all parts of the writing task. It includes a clear and well-elaborated thesis; offers rich content by demonstrating remarkable research efforts through judicious selection of quality materials and wide reading from various academic sources; and shows a strong ability to synthesize ideas, analyze issues and express original or critical thinking in a sophisticated and cogent manner. The content is 'meaty' and 'packed' such that the reader feels significantly taught by the author, sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph.
	Language	The A essay reaches a high level of eloquence and sophistication. It is marked by stylistic finesse, showcasing an excellent command of language use through employing an extensive range of syntactic structures and vocabulary with full flexibility and high precision as well as appropriate tone that best fulfills the intended writing purpose.
	Coherence	The A essay is well-structured and carefully organized. The title and introduction are engaging; paragraphing is aided by effective topic sentences; the transitions are skillfully and seamlessly done without necessarily employing explicit cohesive markers but rather through accurate exposition of material and logical development of argument characterized by depth and complexity. The essay imparts a feeling of wholeness and unusual clarity.
Presentation/Speaking		The A presentation encompasses similar features to the A essay in that it is well-structured and clearly developed; delivered in accurate and sophisticated language; supported by remarkable research efforts; and presented in a professional layout. The A-grade verbal delivery is articulate, eloquent and highly fluent. Phrasing and chunking are used skillfully to achieve fluency while the use of stress and intonation fully supports the expression of meaning. Speech is very fluid and spontaneous.

B-range Grades

Good **Grade B+** (85 – 89.99) **Grade B** (80 – 84.99) **Grade B-** (75 – 79.99)	**Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.** Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a comprehensive manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Essay/Writing	***Content***	The B essay is generally effective in addressing all parts of the writing task. It includes a clear thesis; offers substantial content by demonstrating considerable research efforts through appropriate use of a good range of academic sources; shows a good ability to discuss ideas in a clear manner. On the whole, a B essay renders the reading experience a pleasurable one for it offers relevant information in both quantity and interest-value with few distractions.
	Language	The B essay is marked by generally good mastery of grammar and lexis. Sentence structure and range of vocabulary are pleasingly varied. Sentences produced are frequently grammatically or lexically error-free. While occasional errors may occur, they do not seriously affect readers' understanding of meaning.
	Coherence	The B essay is generally well organized. The opening serves to draw the reader in; the specific points are logically ordered, well-developed and unified around a clearly organization principle that is apparent throughout the text. The transitions between paragraphs are mostly smooth with good control over a range of cohesive devices. The closing paragraph is conclusive and thematically related to the opening.
Presentation/Speaking		The B presentation encompasses similar features to the B essay in that it is generally well-structured and clearly developed; showcases generally a good mastery of grammar and lexis; supported by considerable research efforts; and presented in a clear and consistent layout. The B-grade verbal delivery is mostly done fluently and skillfully while hesitations are infrequent. Minor lapses such as pronunciation errors or awkward chunking are detectable but such inaccuracies are rare and do not impede comprehension of the listener.

C-range Grades

Fair **Grade C+** (70 – 74.99) **Grade C** (65 – 69.99) **Grade C-** (60 – 64.99)	**Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes.** Demonstrates the ability to partially apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Essay/Writing	***Content***	The C essay fulfills the basic requirement by addressing all parts of the writing task, although some parts may be more adequately covered than others. Its research efforts are evident and sources selected are appropriate but the reader finds the information delivered to be thin and commonplace. One reason for such impression is that the ideas are typically cast in the form of vague generalities that prompt the confused readers to ask: "In every case?" "Exactly how large?" "Why?" "But how many?" Overall speaking, the C essay, though gets the job done, lacks both imagination and intellectual rigor.
	Language	The C essay shows a fairly acceptable command of language use: it relies rather heavily on simple syntactic structures and operates within a limited range of vocabulary. Besides being a bit choppy, a C essay tends to follow a predictable (hence monotonous) subject-verb-object pattern. Grammatical errors occur when attempting more complex structures, which often results in vagueness or confusion and causes the reader to shift focus from the intended meaning. The choice of words is occasionally marred by unconscious repetitions, redundancy and imprecision.
	Coherence	Overall speaking, the C essay is reasonably well-organized. However, it is evident that despite its ability to express separate pieces of information in an unambiguous manner, there is often weak or unclear linkage among materials. The use of cohesive devices is limited, resulting in unclear or confusing relationships. The transitions between paragraphs are often bumpy; the final paragraph offers only a perfunctory wrap-up.
Presentation/Speaking		The C presentation encompasses similar features to the C essay in that it gives an acceptably clear exposition of material but weak development of ideas; operates within limited grammatical and lexical range; and is presented in a fairly consistent layout. The C-grade verbal delivery is generally comprehensible but unnatural at times. Hesitation appears to be frequent and inaccuracies are noticeable. Errors may cause some difficulty for the listener.

D-range Grades

Pass **Grade D+** (55 – 59.99) **Grade D** (50 – 54.99)	**Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.** Addresses the task inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in some areas while responding minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

Essay/Writing	***Content***	The D essay is marked with insufficient or inappropriate content. It lacks a developed introduction; has an unclear thesis; and addresses only some parts of the writing task with little support from literature. Its treatment and development of the subject are as yet only rudimentary. The whole piece, in fact, often gives the impression of having been conceived and written in haste.
	Language	The D essay shows a weak control of language: it relies entirely on simple syntactic structures; operates within a very limited range of vocabulary; and states ideas or makes arguments in simple terms. Sentences are frequently awkward and ambiguous while errors are very noticeable and repetitive, often rendering ideas incomprehensible and causing tremendous difficulty for the reader. Evidence of careful proofreading is scanty, if not nonexistent.
	Coherence	The D essay has a poor essay structure where the same ideas may be restated in different ways at different places and coherence is poorly managed. It lacks topic sentences and supporting details. While organization may be present, it is neither clear nor effective.
Presentation/Speaking		The D presentation encompasses similar features to the D essay in that it has an unclear structure with inaccurate exposition of material and weak development of ideas; it is delivered in very simple language characterized by grammatical and lexical errors; and its layout lacks consistency and clarity. The D-grade verbal delivery is often incomprehensible and unnatural with frequent hesitations and errors that cause difficulty for the listener. The lack of a rehearsal is evident.

F-grade

Failure **Grade F** (0 – 49.99)	**Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.** Fails to address the task and likely does not understand what the task requires. In other words, the work completely misses the point.

Essay/Writing	***Content***	The F essay demonstrates an inability to grasp the essence of the topic and its treatment of the subject is superficial. It shows a poor structure and offers irrelevant or illogical details, possibly a result of minimal research efforts. In short, the essay falls short of normal expectations of acceptable university writing.
	Language	The F essay demonstrates extremely limited control of the language. Its prose is garbled or stylistically primitive. Mechanical errors are frequent and systematic, leading to communication breakdown.
	Coherence	Its theme lacks discernible organization and it has little sense of making a meaningful connection between ideas and paragraphs.
Presentation/Speaking		Similar to the F essay, the F presentation shows an illogical structure and inaccurate exposition of material. There is no development of a clear argument. In general, research efforts are minimal if not absent; the layout lacks coherence and clarity; and control of the language is extremely limited. The F-grade verbal delivery is incomprehensible and unnatural with frequent errors, leading to communication breakdown.

- The ELTU Grade Descriptors are intended to serve as a general guide to assist teachers in interpreting the expected student performance in writing and speaking tasks corresponding to each grade, namely, Excellent (A), Very good (A-), Good (B-range), Fair (C-range), Pass (D-range) and Failure (F) as stipulated by the University's undergraduate course assessment guide. For each performance level, a score range is provided for each grade, alongside general descriptive statements summarizing the overarching characteristics of performance at that grade-range, followed by four more detailed descriptions, for writing and speaking performances typical for the said range.
- The descriptors are meant to help teachers of ELTU courses gain a general understanding of typical performance characteristics in essay writing and presentation tasks. For assessment exercises to be conducted effectively, teachers should always refer to assessment rubrics for individual assignments provided by their course coordinators and results of standardization meetings in each course, which would provide more concrete information on the specific assessment criteria based on the targeted learning outcomes and samples of student work of the said course.
- The descriptors are prepared with reference to "*Assessment of Student Learning in Taught Programmes*" (approved by the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning in June 2010, p. 5; p. 15); "*Sample Grade Descriptors*" by Carmel McNaught and Keith Thomas (published by CLEAR in April 2011); "*Course Assessment Guidelines for Undergraduate Programmes*" (updated on CUSIS in Feb 2014); "*Guide to Grading System for Undergraduate Programmes*" (updated on CUSIS in Nov 2013); and Gong, G., & Dragga, S. (1995). *A writer's repertoire.* New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- For an updated version of CUHK's Assessment Policy, please visit http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/assessment/ and https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/qm/

3. ELTU Class Participation & Engagement Score (5% of course grade of all courses)

Mark	*Criteria*
5	**Highly active & significant involvement** • Enthusiastically responds to questions with well-developed answers that showcase a firm grasp of course content • Completes all classwork with high-quality, detailed responses, makes excellent digital/written contributions to hands-on tasks • Leads discussions and facilitates group activities to ensure productive outcomes, actively assists peers and reports group findings • Contributes in an impactful way to whole-class discussions every lesson • Is always visibly engaged and responsive throughout lessons; listens attentively and follows instructions promptly
4	**Consistently active & strong involvement** • Voluntarily responds to questions with answers that showcase a good grasp of course content • Completes all classwork with satisfactory responses, makes good digital/written contributions to hands-on tasks • Always participates actively in group activities, effectively collaborates and shares ideas with peers and stays on task • Contributes constructively to whole-class discussions in most lessons • Is consistently focused and responsive in lessons; listens closely and follows instructions well in general
3	**Acceptably active & adequate involvement** • Responds to questions when "warm-called" with answers that showcase sufficient grasp of course content • Completes most classwork with adequate responses, makes digital/written contributions that meet basic requirement • Willingly participates in most group activities, interacts with peers and generally remains on task • Contributes in a moderate way to whole-class discussions from time to time, usually when prompted or invited • Is usually attentive and cooperative in class; is able to stay focused or follow instructions requiring only occasional reminders
2	**Irregular engagement & infrequent involvement** • Only responds to questions when directly called upon with answers that may lack elaboration • Completes some classwork though responses may be minimal or incomplete, digital/written input may be brief and simple • Participates in group activities in a relatively passive manner, lets others do the work, only interacts with peers sporadically • Contributes infrequently to whole-class discussions, typically with brief or simple input only when directly prompted or invited • Shows inconsistent attention and responsiveness; often requires reminders to stay on task or follow instructions
1	**Minimal engagement & limited involvement** • Rarely responds to questions; answers, if given, are often off-topic, showing limited understanding of course content • Frequently leaves classwork incomplete; digital/written input, even when submitted, shows little effort • Participates in group activities only nominally, may sit with the group but appear distracted or disengaged, giving little input • Seldom contributes meaningfully to whole-class discussions, even when invited to do so • Is visibly unfocused in class, often appears uninterested or off-task, is slow in following instructions even when reminded
0	**No meaningful engagement or visible involvement** • Refuses to respond or is unable to answer questions due to inattention; always avoids eye contact to evade interaction • Fails to complete classwork and does not submit any digital/written contributions • Refuses to join group activities despite instructions or appears disruptive to group dynamics • Fails to participate in whole-class discussion at any point during the semester • Displays a disengaged attitude such as sleeping/slouching/chatting with others/using personal devices for non-class activities

- Performance may be moved down the scoring scale if the student:

  (1) displays behaviour that may cause disruption to lessons or impede class progress
  (2) uses languages other than English (e.g. Cantonese, Mandarin or others) during group activities or other interactions
  (3) refuses to comply with teacher instructions (e.g. classroom seating or grouping) that facilitate smooth classroom operations

- For performances that marginally match criteria between two score ranges, teachers may exercise discretion to assign scores with half-points (e.g. 3.5 out of 5.0).

4. CUHK Guide to Grading System (Undergraduate Programmes)

Grade and Standard		Sub-divisions	Converted Points (GPA)
A	Excellent	A	4.0
A-	Very good	A-	3.7
B	Good	B+	3.3
		B	3.0
		B-	2.7
C	Fair	C+	2.3
		C	2.0
		C-	1.7
D	Pass	D+	1.3
		D	1.0
F	Failure	F	0.0
P	Pass	Not counted in the calculation of grade point average	
U	Failure		

Retrieved from: http://www.res.cuhk.edu.hk/en-gb/general-information/guide-to-grading-system

© Assessment Committee, ELTU (last updated in March 2026)

ELTU Guidelines for Dealing with Informal Student Grade Appeals (Summary)

