Interview on Assessment Items Procedure

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) This procedure outlines the process for conducting an Interview on an Assessment Item (Interview).

(2) An Interview may be held for the purpose of:

a. verifying the author of material submitted in response to an assessment task in accordance with the Student Conduct Rule; or
b. providing a quality assurance measure for assessment tasks and related academic issues in accordance with the Course Assessment and Grading Manual and the Education Quality Assurance Policy.

Section 2 - Audience

(3) This procedure should be read and understood by staff involved with and administering Interviews, and students who may be selected to participate in an Interview.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This procedure applies to undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students.

Section 4 - Principles

(5) An Interview is a way to confirm authenticity of a student's assessment task and to reflect on assessment processes.

(6) An Interview provides students with an opportunity to further explain their response to a related assessment item, provide evidence of authorship, and to confirm their competency and knowledge of the materials which have been assessed.

(7) A student's performance in an Interview should confirm they understand the material at an equivalent level to that demonstrated in the related assessment task.

(8) An Interview may be conducted for one or more of the following reasons:

a. to verify the accuracy and integrity of a specific assessment item (e.g. an online, non-invigilated exam);
b. to investigate potential academic misconduct by a specific student under the Student Conduct Rule; or
c. in any other circumstances where it is deemed appropriate to support the implementation of a relevant University policy or procedure.

(9) The decision to conduct an Interview is made by the Course Co-ordinator. In making that decision, the Course Co-ordinator may consult with other appropriate staff, including:

a. the Head of School, or equivalent;
b. the Deputy Head of School (Teaching and Learning), or equivalent; or
c. a Student Academic Conduct Officer.

(10) An Interview may be conducted on any assessment item, and will be conducted:

a. by the Course Co-ordinator, a Student Academic Conduct Officer, or a nominee appointed by the Head of School; and
b. where practicable, before the fully graded date for the course.

(11) The Course Outline must state whether an Interview may be conducted as per this procedure. Standard text has been developed for inclusion in the Course Outline and in assessment task instructions.

(12) In conducting the Interview, the Course Co-ordinator will give consideration to the student's individual differences, cultural backgrounds, and specific needs.

(13) Students may seek support from the Office of Student Advocacy in preparing for an Interview. Students with disabilities may seek support from AccessAbility, if necessary, to arrange reasonable adjustments.

Section 5 - Process

Part A - Select Students

(14) The Course Co-ordinator will use one of the selection methods outlined below, or a combination of these methods, to select students to take part in an Interview.

(15) The selection method must be appropriate to achieve the purpose for which the Interview is being conducted, and should maintain a balance between achieving that purpose and minimising the potential impact of the Interview process on students.

(16) The Course Co-ordinator must consult with their Head of School prior to conducting an Interview to confirm:

a. confirm the selection method to be used is appropriate; and
b. where relevant, to confirm the appropriate number of students to be selected.

(17) The Course Co-ordinator is responsible for storing a list of the selected students as an attachment in the Course Assessment Return, and in accordance with the University's Records Governance Policy.

Selection Method

Method A: Selection Based on Features of the Work Submitted

(18) This selection method may be appropriate where an Interview is being conducted for the purpose of investigating potential academic misconduct under the Student Conduct Rule.

(19) A specific student may be selected for an Interview where the Course Co-ordinator considers that features of their submitted work for the assessment item are indicative of potential academic misconduct under the Student Conduct Rule.

(20) Potential indicators of academic misconduct are listed below. This is not an exhaustive list, and further details of indicators of academic misconduct are available from the relevant Student Academic Conduct Officer:

Possible Indicator	Example
The material is not consistent with the language, level, or structure expected from this student.	A student who has previously struggled with expression now submit works in perfect prose.
The material contains indications that it may have been purchased, worked on with other students, or otherwise acquired.	The work has the name of other students/people in the headers or footers. Unexpected layouts, variable names, or structures shared across multiple works.
The material contains indications that it may have been plagiarised or otherwise derived from unacknowledged sources.	The student has selected strange or inaccurate examples. The student has addressed the question in an unusual way, inconsistent with the course content or material, or has answered a different question than the one which was asked. The student has used a non-standard referencing system and/or obscure, difficult to obtain, or unusual reference items. Turnitin or other software has detected a high percentage of content from sources which are not appropriately attributed. Turnitin or other software has detected a high chance that the material has been created with an inappropriate use of Generative AI (eg ChatGPT) for that assessment.

Method B: Selection Based on a Change in Quality of Submission

(21) This selection method may be appropriate where an Interview is being conducted for the purpose of:

a. verifying the accuracy and integrity of a specific assessment item; or
b. investigating potential academic misconduct under the Student Conduct Rule.

(22) Students may be selected where the quality of their submitted work for the assessment item is a significant improvement on the work they have previously submitted.

(23) Depending on the purpose for which the Interview is being conducted, this selection method may be used to select:

a. specific students who submit work of a significantly improved quality; or
b. all students whose results in the assessment item improve by more than a defined percentage (determined by the Course Co-ordinator) from their previous results in the course.

Example
1. A student who has previously received grades close to the pass mark now presents work at a high distinction level may be selected. 2. All students whose grades for submitted work improves more than 20% from their grade for a previous assessment item may be selected.

Method C: Random Selection

(24) This selection method may be appropriate where an Interview is being conducted for the purpose of verifying the accuracy and integrity of a specific assessment item.

(25) Students may be selected at random from the course.

(26) This method is usually paired with a percentage system to determine the number of students that will be selected.

Example
5% of enrolled students are selected at random. The Course Co-ordinator may review the number of assessment tasks that a student is required to complete during the course and calculate the percentage of the enrolled students to be selected for each task.

Further Guidance on Selection

(27) Individual students identified under selection method A or B due to potential academic misconduct may be referred directly to the Student Academic Conduct Officer without conducting an Interview. Course Co-ordinators should consult with the relevant Student Academic Conduct Officer for further information.

(28) Where selection method C is used, students should not be selected for an Interview until after they have submitted the related assessment item, and the same student should not be selected more than once per course.

Part B - Communication and Arrangements

(29) It is the responsibility of the Course Co-ordinator to arrange the date, time, and venue for the Interview and to inform the selected students of the arrangements in writing via email to their University email account.

(30) The Interview may be conducted via video conference (e.g. Zoom) or face to face. When deciding how the Interview will be conducted, the Course Co-ordinator should consider whether the course is offered online or face-to-face, and any potential barriers which may prevent the student from attending face-to-face.

(31) Where the Interview is to be conducted face-to-face, the venue must be an appropriate space for this type of interaction with students. The Course Co-ordinator must ensure their safety and that of the student when selecting the location of the meeting space.

(32) Reasonable Adjustment Plans may specify adjustments to the standard arrangements for an Interview as appropriate to the needs of a student. This will include where a student's Reasonable Adjustment Plan provides adjustments for oral assessment items and/or communication generally, even if it does not detail adjustment specific for the conduct of an Interview.

(33) Selected students must be emailed and provided with information on the student selection method and arrangements to conduct the Interview. A recommended email template has been developed for Course Co-ordinators.

(34) If considered appropriate by the student, Course Co-ordinator, or Head of School, a third party may be present for the Interview. Appropriate third parties may include Student Advocates, support workers, or an emotional support person, but will not include a solicitor or legal representative. The third party may not participate in the Interview on the student's behalf, other than providing support for their wellbeing.

Part C - Conducting the Interview

Before the Interview

(35) Course Co-ordinators must prepare questions for the Interview in advance. Recommended sample questions have been prepared for reference. The questions should address the content and learning outcomes of the related assessment item, details of the student's submission, and reviewing previous versions of the student's assessment (if appropriate), and should not test students on previously unassessed content.

(36) The Course Co-ordinator should have a copy of the student's submitted task and a copy of their official University photograph (if available) to verify the student's identity.

During the Interview

(37) The student is required to present their current University Student Card or other photo identification (such as proof of age card, driver's licence, or passport) to the Course Co-ordinator at the commencement of the Interview. The Course Co-ordinator should create a record to confirm that the student's identification document was sighted, but a copy of the identification must not be retained.

(38) If the student's identity cannot be confirmed, the Interview must not be conducted.

(39) If considered appropriate, the student may be requested to bring assessment material (including draft versions) to the Interview.

(40) Subject to consent by the student, the Course Co-ordinator may record the Interview, via video conference software (eg Zoom) or by alternative means if the Interview is conducted face-to-face. The Course Co-ordinator must seek consent for this recording at the start of the Interview. A recommended script for the Course Co-ordinator has been prepared.

(41) If the student does not consent to the Interview being recorded, the Course Co-ordinators must take detailed notes to act as a record of the Interview. The student must be given a chance to review these notes at the end of the Interview, and sign them to verify their accuracy.

(42) A copy of any recordings, documents, and/or notes made during the Interview must be retained as per the University's Records Governance Policy.

(43) The conduct of the Interview should be positive and not adversarial. The Course Co-ordinator must give the student the chance to explain and demonstrate competence and authenticity of their work as part of a quality assurance process.

(44) The Interview is not a general re-examination of the course in its entirety and may only cover materials and learning outcomes tested in the original assessment task.

(45) Students may be asked to rephrase responses they provided in an original assessment task, answer similar questions, or apply the same concept to different cases to demonstrate that they have an understanding of the material.

(46) Students may be asked about the choices they made in the assessment task and why they selected particular ways to address questions.

(47) The Course Co-ordinator should note any issues that relate to the quality of the assessment task that emerge during the Interview, including ambiguities around task components, issues with task timing or difficulty, or curriculum alignment matters. Any issues identified should be addressed during the course evaluation process.

Part D - Outcome of the Interview

(48) Within three (3) working days of the Interview the student will be informed of the outcome by the Course Co-ordinator in writing to their University email address. Recommended email templates have been developed for Course Co-ordinators.

(49) The following table outlines the possible outcomes and actions to be taken:

Outcome Number	Outcome Description	Actions to be Taken
1	The Course Co-ordinator is satisfied that the student's oral responses are commensurate with the work originally submitted.	i. The student's mark will not be changed as a result or the Interview. ii. If the original work has not been marked, it should be marked as per the usual process. iii. The Course Co-ordinator will inform the student in writing that they are satisfied that their Interview responses are commensurate with their work originally submitted. iv. The Course Co-ordinator should store any recordings, documentation and/or notes from the Interview for 6 months after the relevant fully graded date as per the Records Governance Policy.
2	The Course Co-ordinator is not satisfied that the student's oral responses are commensurate with the work originally submitted.	i. The Course Co-ordinator will inform the student in writing that they are not satisfied that the student's Interview responses are commensurate with the work originally submitted and that the matter will be referred to the Student Academic Conduct Officer. ii. The Course Co-ordinator will refer the suspected breach of academic integrity to the relevant Student Academic Conduct Officer and provide all relevant records, documentation and/or notes from the Interview. iii. The Student Academic Conduct Officer will be responsible for reviewing the matter and initiating any appropriate action per the Student Conduct Rule. iv. The Student Academic Conduct Officer will be responsible for managing the retention of records per the Records Governance Policy.
3	The student fails to respond to the Course Co-ordinator to arrange the Interview within three (3) working days, or otherwise fails to attend or participate in the Interview (except due to allowable Adverse Circumstances as per the Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy).	i. The Course Co-ordinator will inform the student in writing via their University email that they have not carried out their responsibilities in respect of the Interview process, and that the matter will be referred to the Student Academic Conduct Officer. ii. The Course Co-ordinator will refer the matter to the relevant Student Academic Conduct Officer and provide any relevant records, documentation and/or notes. iii. The Student Academic Conduct Officer will be responsible for reviewing the matter and initiating any appropriate action per the student Conduct Rule. iv. The Student Academic Conduct Officer will be responsible for managing the retention of records per the Records Governance Policy.

(50) Students may not appeal the outcome of the Interview where the matter has been referred to a Student Academic Conduct Officer.

Section 6 - Roles and Responsibilities

(51) The student is responsible for:

a. responding to emails from the Course Co-ordinator to arrange the Interview within three (3) working days;
b. attending the Interview;
c. presenting their current University Student Card or other photo identification (such as proof of age card, driver's licence, or passport) to the Course Co-ordinator at the commencement of the Interview;
d. bringing any course materials as requested by the Course Co-ordinator; and
e. participating in the Interview process.

(52) The Course Co-ordinator (or their nominee) is responsible for:

a. ensuring the Course Outline includes information on the Interview process;
b. confirming the agreed selection process, appropriate number of students, and School resources with the relevant Deputy Head of School;
c. selecting students for the Interview;
d. communicating arrangements for the Interview with the selected students;
e. conducting the Interview;
f. determining the outcome of the Interview;
g. advising the student in writing of the outcome of the Interview within three (3) University working days;
h. referring cases to the Student Academic Conduct Officer where appropriate; and
i. storing any recordings, documentation and/or notes from the Interview per the Records Governance Policy.

(53) The Student Academic Conduct Officer is responsible for:

a. responding to requests from Course Co-ordinators to assist with an Interview;
b. providing additional documentation and resources on contract cheating (if required);
c. applying the provisions of the Student Conduct Rule for all cases referred;
d. managing the retention of records for storage for all referred cases, in accordance with the Records Governance Policy; and
e. providing guidance for staff in managing students who fail to attend an Interview.

Section 7 - Supporting Documents

(54) Statements for Course Outlines

(55) Sample Questions for Interviews

(56) Email Template – Schedule an Interview

(57) Email Template – Interview Outcome

(58) Script for Consent to Record Interview

Status and Details

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Effective Date	4th November 2024
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Responsible Executive	Belinda Yourn Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global)
Enquiries Contact	Nathan Scott Student Academic Conduct Officer (SACO) Coordinator Academic Division

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Working day" - Any day other than Saturday, Sunday, or a public holiday in Newcastle, on which business may be conducted.

"Reasonable Adjustment Plan" - A document developed by a student with disability and the University's AccessAbility Team which records reasonable adjustments.

"Academic misconduct" - Means conduct by a student that is defined as academic misconduct in the Student Conduct Rule.

"Assessment item" - Any form of work used to measure student learning outcomes and to determine the final result for a student in a course.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Learning outcome" - In accordance with the AQF definitions, the expression of a set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

"Postgraduate" - Any qualification being at the level of Graduate Certificate or above.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Undergraduate" - Refers to any qualification up to and including the level of a Bachelor Honours degree.

"**fully graded date**" - The approved date for the term at which official course results are released and published.