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INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

SESSION OVERVIEW

- **Goal:** consider approaches to assessment and grading, particularly in first year computing courses, with a view to supporting students to succeed and stay in computing

- **Structure:**
 - 20 minutes
 - Problem – attrition and failure rates in computing
 - Primer – inclusive assessment and grading
 - 30 minutes
 - Activity – discussion in groups
 - 10 minutes
 - Wrap – report back

PROBLEM

- Computing courses historically have high withdrawal and failure rates
- Introductory courses can see rates as high as 50% dropout and failure
- Computing students experience feelings of low self-efficacy
- There are many potential contributing factors and solutions
- Assessment and grading approaches and practices are one aspect to consider

INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT & GRADING

	Inclusive assessment	Inclusive grading
Meaning	Designing how students demonstrate learning so all students can participate fairly.	Recording performance in a way that is fair and bias-aware .
Focus	Tasks, formats, timing, supports, feedback	Rubrics, policies, grading scales
Goal	Reduce barriers to showing mastery.	Ensure grades reflect learning, not privilege or penalties.

WHY IT MATTERS

There can be fair grading on an unfair task.

OR

A well-designed task can have unfair grading.

INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT

- Tenets of Universal Design for Learning should be considered when creating assessments. Multiple means of **engagement**, **representation**, and **action & expression**.
- Assessment variants should be offered to all students, not just students with an adjustment plan (Bain, 2023).
- Assessments should be accessible (e.g., digital accessibility).

INCLUSIVE GRADING – CORE ASPECTS

Move away from points-based grading towards recognising that learning outcomes have been met.

- **Reduce fine-grained grading scales.** Grading scales that reflect an approximation of pass/fail grading. This could include between 2-4 grade zones/standards.
- **Direct link between grading scale and learning outcomes.** "Passing" means demonstrating the learning outcomes.
- **No zero scores for missing work.** More encouragement to submit/resubmit work that may not be at passing standard – until pass level is achieved.
- **Avoid using grades to reward or punish "behaviour"**. Separate concerns for time management and perceived effort from the grading scale.

(Edwards et al., 2024)

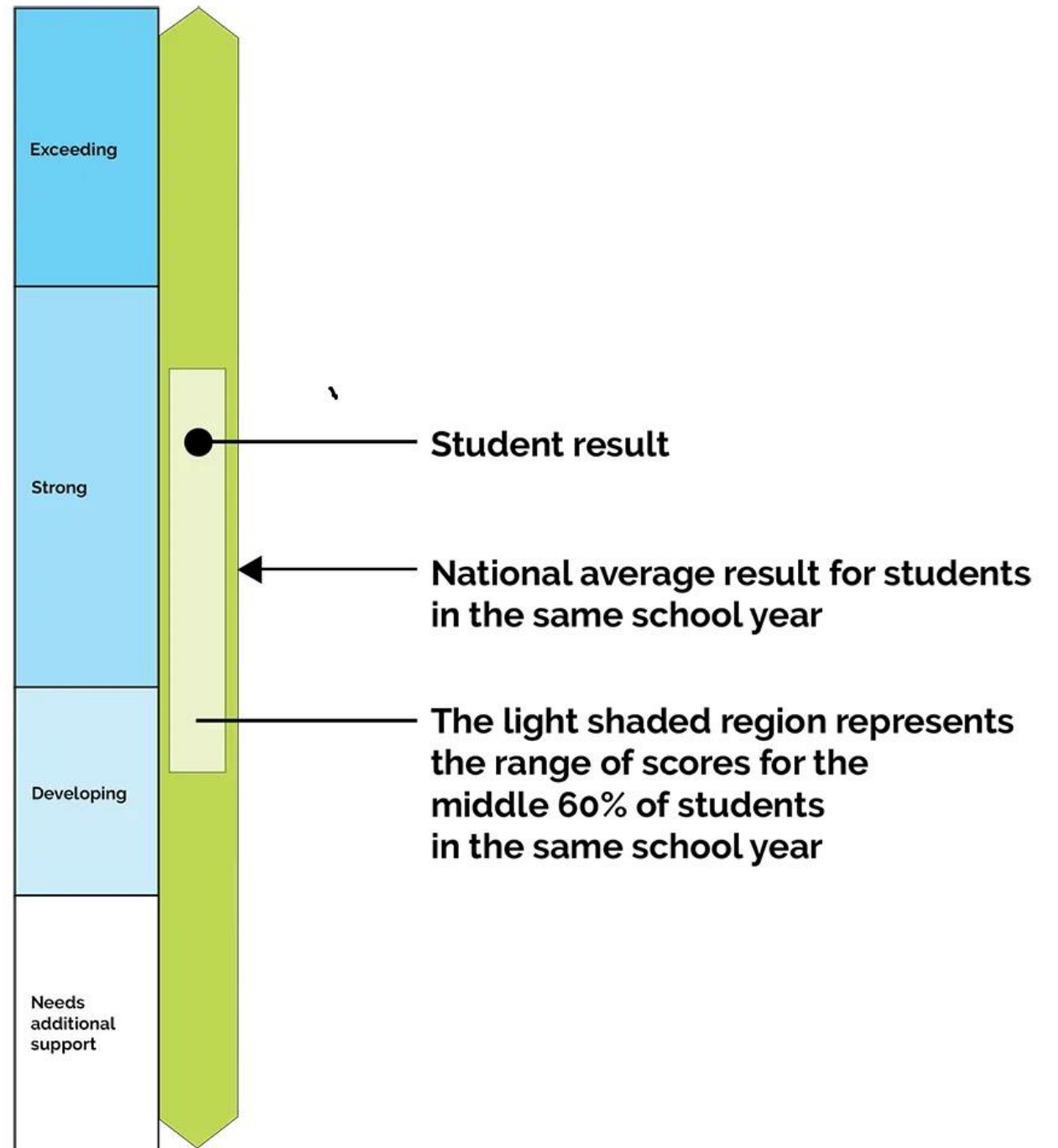
EQUITABLE GRADING PRACTICES HANDBOOK

1. Continuous rubric (like NAPLAN results).
2. Adaptive peer grading during formative assessment.
3. Credit for completion, not quality.
4. Grading group work both as a group and individually after the project.
5. Team-based learning exercises for hands-on courses.
6. Move away from fine-grained grading.
7. Weighting of formative vs. summative activities – allow for a student Pass based on formative results.
8. Lower-stakes assessments with the ability to revise/resubmit/retake an exam.
9. Slide rubrics – grade students based on growth over time.

(Edwards et al., 2024) <https://cs-equitable-grading-practices.github.io/playbook/index.html>

CONTINUOUS RUBRIC

NAPLAN



CONTINUOUS RUBRIC

Grainger & Weir (2016)

Grainger, P., Weir, K. (2016). An alternative grading tool for enhancing assessment practice and quality assurance in higher education. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 53(1), 73–83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2015.1022200>

Knowledge and understanding	Ways of working/Skills	
Knowledge and understanding of curriculum development	Academic literacies referring to referencing English expression, use of literature, spelling, grammar, punctuation	
<p>Justifies a variety of aspects of the curriculum in detail.</p>	<p>Makes links between paragraphs to ensure continuity. Uses sources to enhance arguments.</p>	High
<p>Discusses a variety of different aspects of the curriculum in detail</p>	<p>Writes consistently accurate references. Writes with isolated technical errors. Critically analyses sources by comparing and contrasting the views of many different authors to support arguments.</p>	Distinction Standard
<p>Identifies the key or fundamental aspects of the curriculum</p>	<p>Writes with minor technical errors. Writes an accurate and formal introduction and conclusion explaining the discussion framework. Logical sequence of content. Cites a variety of different sources to justify statements including the most recognised experts.</p>	Distinction Standard
<p>Writes brief, fragmented, superficial facts about the curriculum</p>	<p>Writes using recognizable APA style, following the key conventions consistently. Makes a frequent variety of technical errors that don't impede understanding. Recognisable formal introduction and conclusion. Cites key sources .</p>	Credit Standard
	<p>Writes with many different types of key technical errors that distort meaning. Cites unrecognised sources. Consistently makes statements that are not supported by sources.</p>	Pass Standard
		Fail Standard

MEASURING ACHIEVEMENT

1. 0-100 scales are too fine-grained.

It is nearly impossible to meaningfully distinguish between work that earns 69/100 and work that earns 70/100.

2. Establish a minimum grade e.g., 50. This allows students to recover from the occasional lower grade.
3. Use a different indicator for missing work. A score of 0 should only be used when the student completed an assessment but did not answer any items correctly. Incomplete or missing assessments should attract a different marker to signify non submission. (Feldman, 2023)

ACTIVITY

- **Discussion in groups**

Use the paper and pens, 1 sheet per question, label with question number.

- **Questions**

10 minutes each

1. **Assessment** – what approaches have you tried and how successful were they?

- What issues/barriers have you noticed with different approaches?
- How have you supported students to succeed and stay through assessment?

2. **Grading** – what approaches have you tried and how successful were they?

- Have you tried alternatives to standard grading? What were they and how well did they work?

3. **Future** – how can we improve our approaches and practices moving forwards?

- How could you modify your approaches to assessment to be more inclusive?
- Would you consider ungrading or other alternatives to standard grading?
- How can we support students to succeed and stay in computing through assessment and grading?

W R A P

- What does the future look like?
Key learnings or take aways to share from each group