

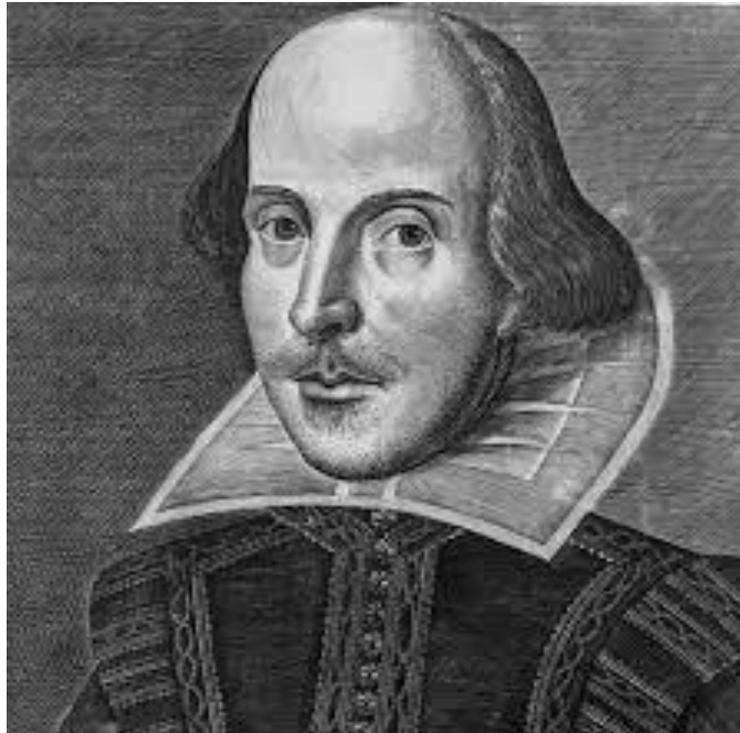
To examine or not to examine? Is that the question?



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Disability Advisers

Pathways 12 Conference
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Non-Exam Based Assessment (NEBA) at the University of Tasmania



*“To examine or not to examine?
Is that the question?”*

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Purpose of NEBA

The University of Tasmania Teaching & Learning Policy Review 2.1, Alternative Assessment Eligibility Procedure for Students with Disability states:

Non-examination based alternative assessment will be made available to ensure equitable assessment practices and processes for student with disability, who are eligible due to extenuating circumstances.

Previous history

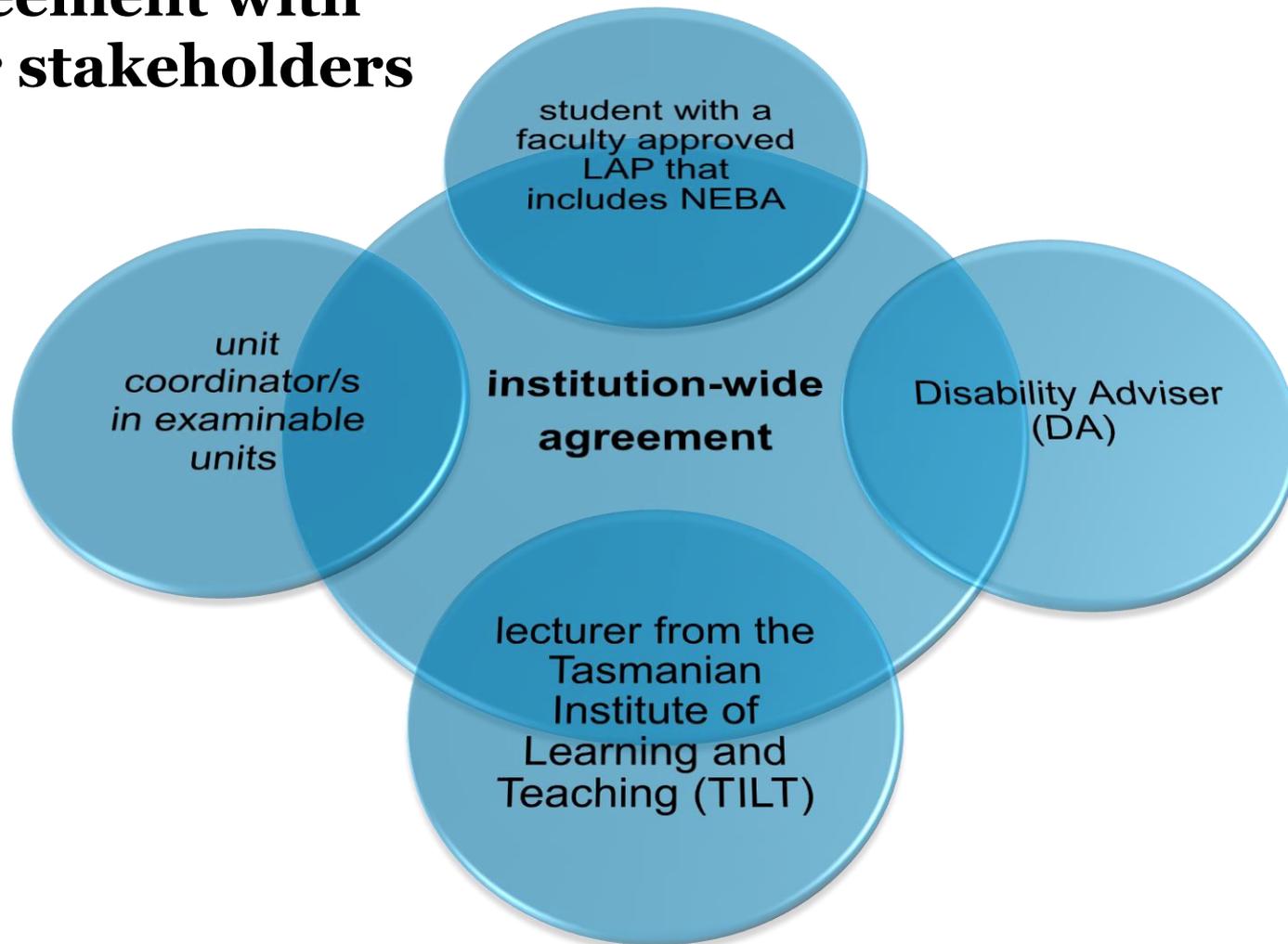
DAs have had varying degrees of success organising with individual unit coordinators
never been a faculty-based decision/long-term agreement
any number of academics may have offered alternative assessment
concerns about equity and consistency
limited student progress (no consistency for assessment process)

Why have NEBA?

NEBA is the catalyst, and the only strategy, for some students to reach their academic potential!

It **ensures** consistency of process/assessment, academic rigour and accountability. It **provides** positive steps towards a more equitable assessment process (still not quite a level playing field) and collegial support between different areas of the university.

Agreement with four stakeholders



Eligibility Criteria

1	student has previously received alternative examination arrangements, identified via the Learning Access Plan
2	student's current Medical Assessment Report clearly indicates the need for non-examination based alternative assessment
3	student has a demonstrable history of disability-related extenuating circumstances that has negatively impacted upon their health and academic performance within a timed, supervised examination environment that included alternative adjustments
4	student's unit does not require timed, supervised examinations as an inherent requirement of the course, the student is notified that alternative assessment method is not available and is advised to select another course pathway
5	student is considered to have engaged with the unit (ie they have previously met all unit requirements in relation to attendance and participation – either face-to-face or online, together with submission and successful completion of internal assessment tasks as appropriate; taking into account any adjustments made in their LAP
6	student's enrolment load is no greater than 50% in examinable units

Birth of NEBA

Historical Issues, Pressure Points

STUDENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• adverse physical and/or mental health consequences• impacting on unit choice, time frames to completion, career aspirations, HECS debt, family and financial situation
DISABILITY TEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• students not meeting academic potential because of examination• need for formal exams triggering adverse mental health => need for complex case management
FACULTIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• where alternatives had been tried they were unsuccessful• robust assessment of learning outcomes• issues pertaining to inherent requirements
TASMANIAN INSTITUTE OF LEARNING & TEACHING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• need to promote contemporary assessment practice – develop more flexible assessment practices / emphasis on criterion based assessment• inclusive teaching practices/pedagogy

Why can't these students jump through hoops?

Everyone else does!



There are some students who are unable to sit formal, invigilated exams.

- physical barriers
- chronic pain
- complex medical conditions
- complex mental health conditions

Some students with disabilities may have a combination of conditions.

Some situations/health conditions aggregate the student's inability to complete work in a timed, supervised situation.

Barriers

- rate of information transfer (communication)
- adverse impact on health outcome
- Inability to perform within a designated time-frame

Key drivers

Collaboration by representatives of 3 distinct areas of the university

- Dr Natalie Brown, Director of Centre for the Advancement of Learning & Teaching, now TILT)
- Associate Professor Rob White, Associate Dean Teaching & Learning, Faculty of Science, Engineering & Technology
- Mike Spurr, Disability Adviser

Process

- Disability Adviser (M Spurr) drafted the document;
- submitted to University Learning & Teaching Committee (ULTC);
- tabled at Academic Senate for their endorsement; and
- final approval/signed off by Pro-vice-Chancellor, Prof Gail Hart, Students & Education (owner of the procedure)

Developing the process

In 2007, a process was trialled within the Faculty of Science, Engineering & Technology in conjunction with TILT & Disability Services

2 students with complex mental health had requested an alternative to formal examinations

- could not get anywhere near their internal assessment marks
- current assessment process was detrimental to their health
- inhibiting academic progress
- but had made in-roads into their degrees but at great difficulty (expense to their health)

Answering the sceptics

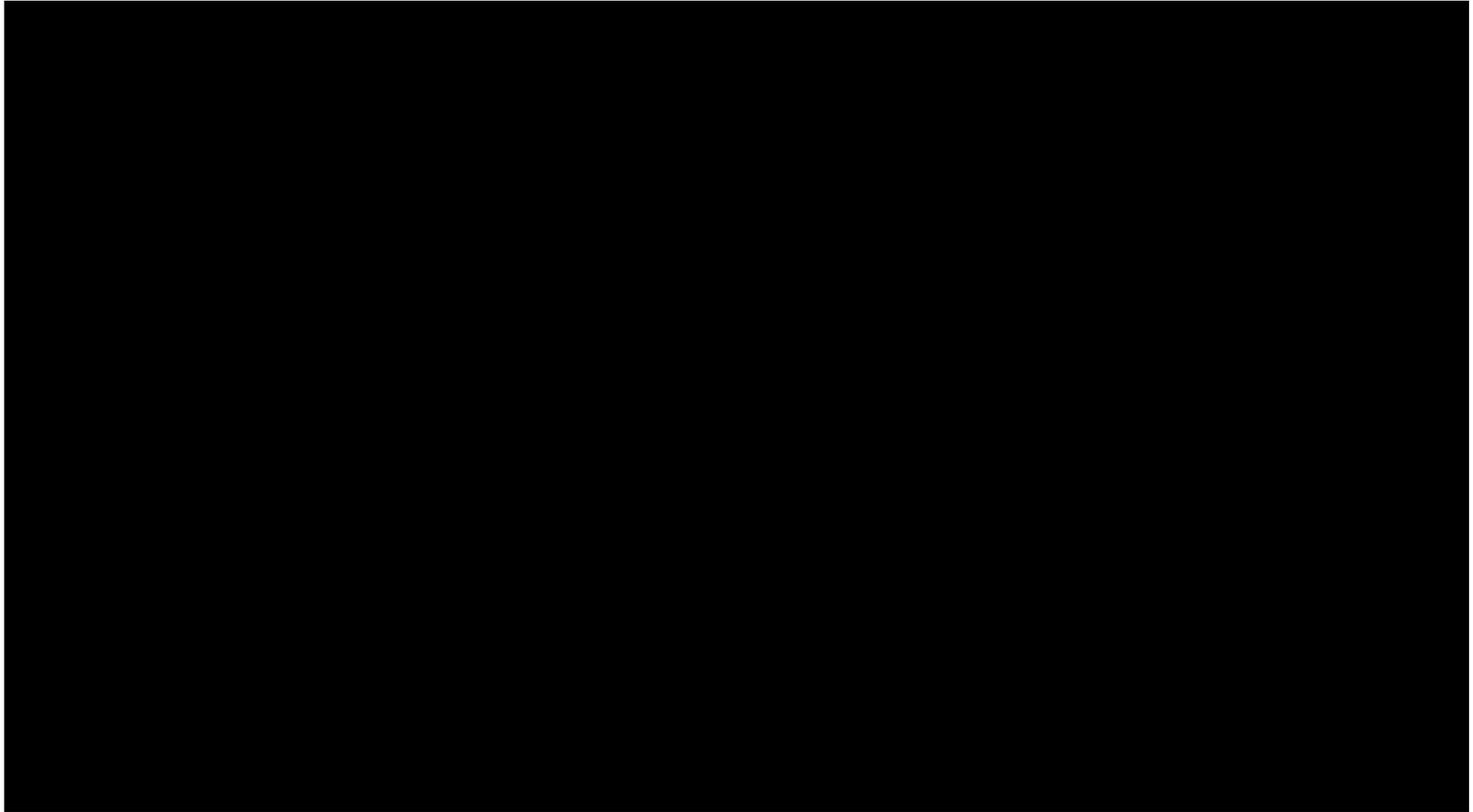
to show we have not opened the ‘flood-gates’

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA STUDENTS WITH DISCLOSED DISABILITIES

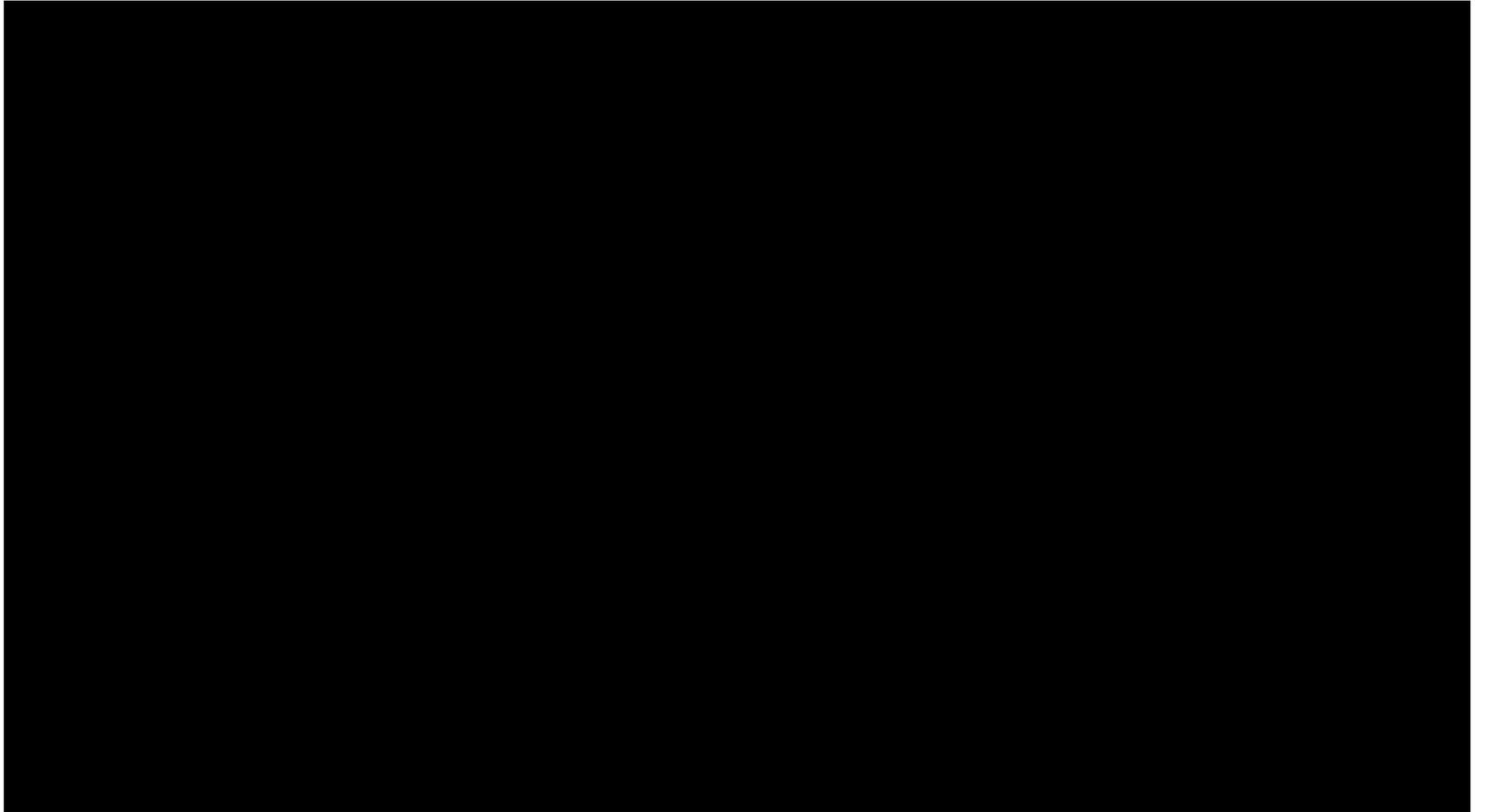
year	disclosed disabilities	LAPs	LAPs with exam accommodations	non-exam based assessment
2014	1189	640	551 (86%)	3
2013	1165	663	557 (84%)	3
2012	1087	576	489 (85%)	4
2011	1050	555	480 (87%)	5
2010	977	510	443 (87%)	5

*number of students at the University of Tasmania 30,000

Heath



Holly



Student Profile – Jarrod, chronic mental health

My name is Jarrod Wilson and I graduated from the University of Tasmania in 2011 with a Bachelor of Business. Completing this degree was no easy task; I have a very severe mental illness.

In 2005, I was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I enrolled at the University of Tasmania in 2007 to further my education. During this time, I underwent extensive treatment for my condition, ranging from anti-depressants all the way through to ECT.

Whilst studying under the effects of treatments and the condition itself, proved to be incredibly challenging. In fact, it caused an enormous amount of stress; stress that would be exacerbated whenever examinations came around.

My memory was also severely impacted, and this combined with an extreme level of stress meant that examinations were near impossible. I did attempt a few exams during the course of my studies but the end result was hospitalisation.

I contacted the Disability Unit to discuss the possibilities of alternative forms of assessment. Time-based assessments were impossible, as I was not able to process and recall information in the allocated time.

Once non-exam based assessment had been implemented, I was able to continue with my degree and graduate in 2011, without this accommodation I would not have graduated.

Student Profile – **John, physical/non-verbal**

John is a student who is non-verbal and has cerebral palsy.

- only able to type very slowly with one hand
- uses a text to speech communication device
- typing speed (only form of communication)
- very slow – approx 2 or 3 words per minute
- extremely tiring for John
- is not that interested in predictive software to increase efficiency of typing

Alternative exam arrangements

- 2 hour exam split over 40 min sessions on Monday, Wednesday and Friday
- triple writing time with additional resting time

OH&S and academic issues

- John developed an overuse injury to his shoulder
- unable to produce appropriate amount of work during exam

Solution

- formal exams were considered to be inappropriate
- NEBA provided

Documentation of procedure



MEDICAL REPORT Form

Dear Health Practitioner

Ned Kelly (ID no 123456) is a current client of the Disability Service whose disability related implications have been previously assessed, with matching support and adjustments relevant to their chosen course provided by the University via the Learning Access Plan process. These adjustments have included alternative examination arrangements, as documented in *Ned's* Learning Access Plan (see attached).

Ned is applying for non-examination based alternative assessment and one of the University's eligibility criteria necessitates submission of a current Medical Assessment Report which clearly indicates the need for non-examination based alternative assessment. Could you please complete the details in Sections B and C below?

Disability Service Personal Information Statement

Your personal information is being collected by Student Centre on behalf of the University of Tasmania for the primary purpose/s of providing disability related services and course adjustments. Failure to provide this information may result in you not receiving course adjustments or services to alleviate the implications of your disability. Your personal information will only be used for the primary purpose stated and will be disclosed only to the following persons or organisations:

- employees of the University who require the information to provide services to you, which includes Safe to Practice requirements for Professionals and
- Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Technology and Education as part of the regular statistics collection of records

The University will ensure that your personal information is not disclosed to third parties without your consent unless such a disclosure is permitted by law.

Personal Information will be managed in accordance with the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*, and the University of Tasmania's Personal Information Privacy Policy. For information on how your personal information is being used or stored, or to access your personal information, visit the University's website at <http://www.utas.edu.au> or contact the University on 03 6226 2697. You also have the right to request access to your personal information held by the University in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* (Tas).

Section A – TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT (please print legibly)

I ID

(Student's Name)

(Student ID Number)

hereby give authority for
(Practitioner's Name)

to release information relating to the impact of my disability on my capacity to undertake timed, supervised examinations, to the Disability Service at the University of Tasmania.

Signed: Date:

(Student's Signature)

See overleaf

Page 2 of Medical Report Form

Section B – TO BE COMPLETED BY HEALTH PRACTITIONER (please print legibly)

Name:

Profession:

Phone: Date of Report:

Address:

Signature:

Email:

Section C – TO BE COMPLETED BY HEALTH PRACTITIONER (please print legibly)

Please describe the impact of the student's disability on their capacity to undertake timed, supervised examinations, which include the alternative arrangements listed in

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

In your professional opinion, due to the implications of their disability - does the student require non-examination based assessment? (please tick box)

Yes

No

Please provide further information if required:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Student must return this form to the Disability Adviser after completion.

Documentation of procedure

MEDICAL REPORT FORM

Section C – TO BE COMPLETED BY HEALTH PRACTITIONER *(please print legibly)*

Please describe the impact of the student's disability on their capacity to undertake timed, supervised examinations, which include the alternative arrangements listed in their attached Learning Access Plan:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

In your professional opinion, due to the implications of their disability - does the student require non-examination based assessment? *(please tick box)*

Yes

No

Please provide further information if required:

.....

Section A – TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT *(please print legibly)*

I ID.....
(Student's Name) *(Student ID Number)*

hereby give authority for
(Practitioner's Name)

to release information relating to the impact of my disability on my capacity to undertake timed, supervised examinations, to the Disability Service at the University of Tasmania.

Signed: Date:
(Student's Signature)

Documentation of procedure

Alternative Assessment Agreement



This agreement documents the alternative assessment process developed by the Unit Coordinator, in collaboration with a Tasmanian Institute of Learning and Teaching (TILT) Lecturer and Disability Adviser, to meet both the inherent requirements of the unit of study and the disability related needs of (*Ned Kelly*) (ID no 123456).

1. UNIT COORDINATOR

1.1 Academic Requirements

The Unit Coordinator has identified and considered the inherent requirements of this unit in determining the alternative assessment tasks and criteria required to ensure that the process meets academic standards.

1.2 Alternative Assessment Process

Method of assignment and assessment criteria:

METHOD

The assessment task involves responding to THREE (3) critical thinking to evaluate and analyse the sociology completing this task, you are welcome to draw upon material the course of this unit.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

This task will assess your competence in Learning Outcomes according to the following criteria:

1. Define and explain key concepts and theories in the social outcome 1)
2. Explain the connection between sociological theory and the body in 'everyday life' (link to learning outcome 3)
3. Interpretation and analysis of a bodily experience within a sociological framework (link to learning outcome 4)

The marks for this assignment represent 30% of the overall grade for the Unit.

COLLECTION AND SUBMISSION

Date for collection of the assignment from the Unit Coordinator on: Monday 3rd November, 10am

Date for submission of the assignment, with an assignment cover sheet – Place in Submission box in the Faculty of Arts Office (Level 2) by: 7th November, 10am

2. HEAD OF SCHOOL

2.1 The Alternative Assessment Process documented within this agreement is approved by:

Head, School of Social Sciences

Signature: Date:.....

New Slide – Page 2 of Alternative Assessment Agreement

3. AGREEMENT

3.1 Student

- 3.1.1 I agree to abide by the requirements identified in Section 1.2 Alternative Assessment Process and will not have any other person contribute to or proof-read my work.
- 3.1.2 I will request clarification of the specific assignment content (questions/topics/case studies) with the Unit Coordinator at the time of collection.
- 3.1.3 I agree to review this process in relation to my disability upon completion and provide written feedback to the Disability Adviser.

Name: Date:

Signature:

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT AGREEMENT

- 3.2.5 I will provide a copy of this completed agreement to the Disability Adviser.

Unit Coordinator, (*Dr Andrew*)

Name: Date:

Signature:

Please contact the Disability Adviser if further information is required.

Documentation of procedure

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT AGREEMENT

1. UNIT COORDINATOR

1.1 Academic Requirements

The Unit Coordinator has identified and considered the inherent requirements of this unit in determining the alternative assessment tasks and criteria required to ensure that the process meets academic standards.

1.2 Alternative Assessment Process

Method of assignment and assessment criteria:

METHOD

The assessment task involves responding to THREE (3) questions. It requires you to apply critical thinking to evaluate and analyse the sociological importance of the body. In completing this task, you are welcome to draw upon materials supplied and discussed during the course of this unit.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

This task will assess your competence in Learning Outcomes 1, 3 and 4. You will be assessed according to the following criteria:

1. Define and explain key concepts and theories in the sociology of the body (link to learning outcome 1)
2. Explain the connection between sociological theory and the body in 'everyday life' (link to learning outcome 3)
3. Interpretation and analysis of a bodily experience within a sociological framework (link to learning outcome 4)

Sharon



Dr Peta S Cook – Unit Coordinator

The NEBA process is important for inclusivity and equity. It is highly integral that we look for ways to support as many students as possible within the disciplinary constraints and requirements.

Students who are eligible for the NEBA process have been very appreciative of my time and effort - and they tend to come back to my units for more!

The problem with the NEBA process is that it does add to an academic's workload, and the alternative assessment process moves across many hands before 'approved'. I can imagine that some academics could be resistant to this process, given the significant workloads and pressures they already face. Consequently, there is a need to account for academic workloads (designing a new assessment task for one student), and trust their expertise on assessment design. Support from TILT should be recommended, but not a requirement.



NEBA

“to infinity and beyond”



Disability Services and TILT maintain a shared responsibility for NEBA

- sharing documents
- undertake annual reviews
- regular meetings

NEBA – improvements and the future Where to from here?

- process continues for a small number of students
- persuasion to UTAS to advertise this process more openly – targeting marketing to specific prospective applicants
- Current process still requires limited failures within ‘usual’ assessment processes

