BACHELOR OF MEDICINE,
BACHELOR OF SURGERY (MBBS)
PROGRAM ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES
Intent and Scope
These guidelines follow the broad principles of the University’s Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy document and are designed to support the development of specific assessment procedures for the Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) program in the College of Medicine and Dentistry (CMD).

The guidelines provide a framework for the quality assurance processes utilised in the JCU MBBS program to assure the integrity of the assessment and reporting of student achievement against performance standards. They can be used to guide the decision-making processes of those with responsibility for the MBBS program and subject assessments. They also provide guidance to staff and students about the management of assessment procedures and the progression rules for students enrolled in the MBBS program. It is expected that development of specific assessment procedures for each subject within the MBBS program will be in accordance with these guidelines.

It is recommended that this guide be used in conjunction with the University’s Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Policy and Procedure.

Introduction
Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. It has the potential to have the most influence in directing students’ energies and in determining their approach to learning. Therefore, it is pertinent that assessment instruction provided to students is of high quality. To achieve this goal, it is important to establish quality-assured processes that ensure the reliability and validity of assessment measures. Reliability refers to the extent to which an assessment instrument produces consistent results. Validity is the extent to which an assessment instrument measures what it was designed to measure. Quality assurance of assessment in medical education involves the development of assessment processes and practices that support learning, emphasise what needs to be assessed and how to judge the performance of students. Major areas for consideration are blueprinting to ensure content validity; selection of best test formats; applying strategies to achieve adequate levels of reliability and instituting appropriate standard setting and decision-making procedures.

1. Principles of Assessment
These key principles form the basis of assessment processes and practices at all levels of learning and teaching endeavours in the MBBS program.

- Assessment tasks should comprise an authentic representation of the course and subject learning outcomes
- Assessment processes and practices must be transparent and fair
- Assessment at all levels must be based on clearly articulated criteria
- Grades awarded to students for pieces of assessment must be based on the attainment of stated performance standards and set criteria

2. Assessment Procedures
The following procedures aid adherence to the guiding principles of assessment

- Demonstrate links between the curriculum, its staged delivery through teaching and learning opportunities, the learning outcomes and the appropriate scheduling, weighting, method and type, and content of assessments.
- Demonstrate the content validity and reliability of assessments, including explicit and consistent use of blueprinting and agreed grading/ results schemes.
• Enable appropriate monitoring of assessments by statistical analysis and appropriate evaluation of outcomes to demonstrate the fairness of the process.

• Map learning outcomes to assessment by using a range of assessment methods that best match the course outcomes, including both formative and summative assessments.

• Ensure that the analysis of assessment is fed back to assessment item writers to assist in the review process.

• Establish assessment item banks that electronically store items including data analysis and information on item use and modifications.

• Provide training on assessment procedures and processes for all staff.

• Provide appropriate and timely feedback to students in the form of oral and/or written feedback.

3. Assessment Types

3.1 Formative Assessment
Formative Assessment is designed to help students recognise and develop strengths in areas of knowledge and skills that require improvement. Likewise, it assists staff in understanding how students are progressing and allows (if necessary) revision of certain content to be made in a timely manner. In formative assessment, items and tasks are not compulsory and marks do not count towards the final subject result.

Formative items or tasks may take the form of:

• Years 1-3 online weekly quizzes, which are non-compulsory self-study tests comprising 10-15 questions per module each week;

• Short interactive quizzes, which academic staff may run during lectures, guided learning sessions or synthesising sessions; and

• Assessment items or tasks that model assessment methods that will be used in the end of semester exams.

3.2 Summative Assessment
Summative assessment is used to determine the degree to which a student has met the learning outcomes and progression requirements in the course of study. Student performance on summative assessment components support the pass/fail decisions by indicating that students know enough to proceed to the next stage of education. It includes both hurdles and graded assessments.

• Hurdles are assessment components that all students must complete to a pre-determined level as per the task requirement, in order to progress to the following year but which do not contribute to the final result that is converted to a grade. Students must remediate the hurdle assessment until competency is achieved. Remediation could entail re-doing the hurdle.

• Graded Assessments are those for which students receive a mark that contributes to the final result that is converted to a grade. Students might be required to pass one or more pieces of graded assessment as per the task requirement.

• Graded assessments include On-course assessments and Examinations. Student results in specified graded assessment items are used to determine recipients of JCU and MBBS Prizes, Bursaries and Scholarships.
• Professionalism Education and Leadership (PEAL) ePortfolio contributes to summative assessment in each year. It is used to provide feedback to students on their professional and ethical reflective development and to review the evidence of progress in these domains. The assessment process is spread over several assessment items, which differ from year to year.

3.2.1 On-Course Assessment
On-Course Assessment is the summative assessment that students have to do outside the examinations period. It can take the form of a hurdle or graded item. These assessment items are compulsory and require formal documentation. The tasks may include quizzes, PEAL ePortfolio, essays, assignments, posters, oral presentations, Supervisor report, log book, etc. On-course assessments align with the learning outcomes for each subject and are available via the relevant year level subject outline on LearnJCU.

• As required by the LTA Policy and Subject Outline Procedure, all on-course assessment items should demonstrate student proficiency of subject and course learning outcomes.

• English language and numeracy development should be an explicit focus in course assessment plan in accordance with the English Language and Numeracy Policy. In addition, students should receive adequate explanatory and diagnostic feedback so that they are able to improve their practice.

• Time should be set aside by lecturers to discuss the marking criteria with students before the assessment submission date.

• All on-course assessment items must be completed to a satisfactory standard in the current teaching period (1 or 2), in order to meet the subject progression requirements. Note that a ‘satisfactory standard’ may not require an item to receive a passing grade, but should reflect a demonstrable attempt to meet the requirements of the assessment items.

• Students who do not complete all on-course assessments to a satisfactory standard will have a Results Withheld (RW) result recorded on their academic record - see Student Results Policy.

Grading System for On-Course Assessment
• Grading is standardised across the MBBS program based on criterion-referenced system. Variations to this approach may be possible in exceptional circumstances but need to be approved prospectively by the relevant MBBS program Assessment Committee groups (Foundation Studies or the Clinical Studies Committee).

1. Either Traditional or Standards-based grading systems are used for written tasks and oral presentations:
   • JCU Standard Results System codes are: Fail, Pass, Credit, Distinction, High Distinction, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory (see Student Results Policy)
   • Standard-based scales are: Clear Fail, Borderline Fail, Borderline Pass, At expected standard, Above expected standard, Outstanding

2. For clinical skills, the following standards-based grading scales are used to assess student performance:
   • Fail: (Significant/critical omissions or technical errors)
   • Borderline Fail/Borderline Pass: (occasional or some omissions or errors)
   • At expected standard: (Good, isolated minor omissions or technical errors, clearly demonstrates standard expected)
   • Outstanding: (Very good, impeccable, highly proficient, no errors.)

• The pass mark for on-course assessment in the Foundation years (1-3) is 50%. The pass mark for hurdles can be higher and will be indicated in the Assessment Item description or Year level Assessment overview, in the Subject Outline.

• The pass mark for on-course assessment in the Clinical years (4-5) is 60%.
• Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory grading is used to indicate how students meet required competence levels.

• If a task is deemed to be unsatisfactory, the student may be required to resubmit and/or re-sit the assessment task until a satisfactory level is reached. The original grade will stand and will be included in the calculation of the final result if the item is graded.

• Marked assessment will be returned to students in a timely manner, accompanied by written feedback (See LTA Procedure CP3.5).

• Students may discuss individual assessments with the module/year coordinator and/or the Site Academic Advisor. Advice and remediation may be arranged as required.

Moderation of On-Course Assessment
• It is important that an organised and documented plan for moderation of major On-Course assessment items exists, focusing on grade bands, selected students or specific items of assessment (See LTA Procedure CP3.6).

• Appropriate assessment criteria should be prepared and shared with students.

• Major assessment tasks should be moderated through a process of consensus moderation pre- and post-assessment to ensure consistency of judgment. Where multiple markers contribute, subject coordinators should organise processes such as blind cross-marking of items across a range of student achievement levels, and develop strategies for reaching consensus.

• All major assessment items receiving a failing grade should be double-marked.

• A record of assessment moderation is required and should be documented in the relevant Assessment Folder.

• To comply with Assurance of Learning requirements, marked samples of student achievement across grade junctures should be archived.

3.2.2 Examinations
Examinations are graded assessments and they are conducted within formal examination period at the end of the JCU Study Periods. Examinations timetables are published on StudentsOnline and accessible via the JCU App five weeks before the exam period starts. Different methods will be employed to assess different aspects of performance (e.g. written and clinical tests).

• Examination formats used in the course include:
  - Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) and Extended Match Questions (EMQ)
  - Key Features Questions (KFP)
  - Short Answer Questions (SA)
  - Multi Station Assessment Tasks (MSAT) – Years 1-3
  - Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) – Years 4-5

• Details of these formats will be explained by the Year Academic Coordinators and are provided in the Medicine Programs Examinations overview, available on the Medicine Course Site.

• Students will be given prior exposure to all examination methods used to ensure familiarity with the examination techniques.

• Examination content will be based on the subject learning outcomes.
4. Special Consideration

Special Consideration is the name given to an equity measure that takes into account short-term and unforeseen circumstances (known as extenuating circumstances) that substantially affect a students’ ability to complete an assessment item.

4.1 Assessment during the study period

Request for Assessment Extension

- Requests for an extension for submission of work must be made using the Special Consideration Application form and be supported by independent documentary evidence as set out within the form.
- Requests for extensions after the due date will not be granted except in circumstances when it was impossible for the student to make the request.
- Extensions will only be granted where a serious and/or unforeseeable event has prevented the student from completing the work (illness or other serious and/or unforeseeable personal or family circumstances).
- A request for an extension must be accompanied by documentary support, such as a medical certificate, death notice, counsellor’s certificate, police notice, or notice of jury duty. The documentation must cover either the due date of the assessment or the required preparation period; and be submitted no later than 7 working days after the expiration of the certificate; and include an original plus one photocopy.
- The time required will be negotiated with the coordinator responsible for the activity, taking into account the circumstances leading to the request. This will normally not be more than one week.
- Unacceptable reasons for extensions include work commitments including clinical placement, social commitments, sporting or other community commitments, routine, non-urgent medical, dental or other appointments, computer or printer failure (Students are expected to adopt the routine practice of ‘backing up’ assignments to protect themselves in the event of computer failure).

Request to re-schedule an assessment

- Requests to re-schedule an assessment to another date and/or time must be made using the Special Consideration Application form and be supported by independent documentary evidence as set out within the form.

Advising of missed compulsory class/lab/prac or participation requirement

- Notification of a missed compulsory class/lab/prac or participation requirement must be made in accordance with the MBBS Attendance and Leave Guideline and Clinical Skills attendance processes, available on the Medicine Course Site on LearnJCU.

4.2 Assessment during Formal Examination Period

Deferred Examinations

- If a student is unable to attend an exam at the scheduled time due to extenuating circumstances/circumstances beyond their control, they may apply for a deferred exam.
- Deferred exams are granted in exceptional circumstances such as severe medical conditions or family or personal trauma as outlined in the Special Consideration Procedure.
• Deferred examinations mirror the content, format and weighting of the examination held in the formal examination period.

• For students who sit deferred exams, supplementary examinations will not normally be used in the determination of progression. In circumstances where the Assessment Committee deems that supplementary examinations are required, this may not be until the next designated exam period for the subject, which may be up to 12 months later.

• Deferred examination applications can be found under Special Consideration Applications on the Student Forms webpage.

Adverse Impact

• Students who have extenuating circumstances that have adversely impacted their performance in completed assessment items and exams may apply for Special Consideration by lodging an 'Notification of Adverse Impact'. See Student Forms page to apply details.

• The MBBS assessment committee will consider a students' application for Special Consideration containing evidence that Extenuating Circumstances have adversely impacted their performance in completed assessment items.

Adjustments for Examinations

• Students who require special arrangements for their examinations should contact AccessAbility Services.

4.3 Supplementary Examinations

• A supplementary assessment or examination may be offered to a student who has failed to satisfy the Assessment Committee that they should be awarded a passing result in the subject in question following the completion of all assessment.

• Supplementary examinations should not be considered as an additional opportunity to pass a subject.

• Supplementary examinations are conducted to collect additional information about student performance, where necessary to make a decision about progression. Supplementary examinations are conducted as per the College’s academic calendar.

• Supplementary examinations cover the same content as the formal end of study period examinations. The precise format of the supplementary examinations will be advertised to students before the exams.

• Students who are granted a supplementary examination will be required to meet with the Subject Coordinator or the Site Academic Coordinator to discuss their results in the summative assessment tasks. This should act as a guide to self-remediation and the support resources available to assist prior to sitting a supplementary examination.

• Supplementary examinations are offered at the Bebegu Yumba (Townsville) campus.

• Students should contact the Subject Coordinator if they experience a further short-term and unforeseen event or circumstance that may lead to postponement of an already deferred (or supplementary) assessment/examination. If the request is approved, students will not usually be able to sit the exam until the next time the subject is offered, which may be up to 12 months later.

• Policies and information related to Examinations are available via the link below: https://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/student-services
5. Submission of Assessment Items

Students are responsible for keeping a copy of any submitted assessment item and are strongly encouraged to back up their work. The format of submission is described in the Subject/Year/Rotation Outline.

- Any hard copy should be submitted by the set deadline as per the following:
  - 1 x Generic Assignment Cover Sheet (with student name, number, word count) to be attached to the assessment item
  - 1 x Paper copy to be submitted in a designated assignment box (outside the Academic Services office reception area or Clinical School)

- Any electronic copy should be submitted by the set deadline as per the following:
  - 1 x Electronic copy via appropriate electronic drop boxes on subject/rotation related LearnJCU sites. Emailed assignments will not be accepted.
  - The assignment should be submitted as a single Word document (not front page, then body, then references).

- Failure to submit assignment on required due-date will attract a late submission penalty as stated in the LTA Procedure 3.1.8d.

- Students are strongly encouraged to check the plagiarism percentage using the test drop box in the Assessment section on LearnJCU.

- Consent forms may be required including patient consent where relevant.

- In the situation whereby a student is not able to submit in person (due to being on an approved placement) then he/she will post the item to the relevant staff as per the Subject/Rotation/Year Outline. The date submitted will be the date stamp on the envelope. Students are NOT allowed to request their peers to submit assignments on their behalf.

5.1 Late Submission Penalty

Any task submitted after the due time is regarded as late and will incur a penalty of 5% of the available marks per 24 hour period or part thereof. (See LTA Procedure CP3.1.8.d).

Example 1:

An assignment is due at 9:00am on a Monday. It is collected from the Assignment box or submitted into the SafeAssign DropBox in LearnJCU on the Wednesday at 9:00am, two days after it was due. If the student assignment scored 90 / 100, the penalty will be calculated as follows:

5% x 100 marks x 2 days = 10 mark penalty. The final mark would be 80/100.

Example 2:

An oral presentation is scheduled at 11am on a Wednesday. A student does not deliver and sends an email on the same day to apply for Special Consideration. The College is able to re-schedule the presentation on the Wednesday of the following week. The maximum mark for the presentation is 100. The late penalty will be calculated as follows:

5% x 100 marks x 7 days = 35 mark penalty. Should the student be awarded a 75% for the presentation, the final mark would be 75 – 35 = 40/100
5.2 Non-Adherence to Word Limit Penalty
Graded written assessment items normally have a designated word count range that must be strictly adhered to. The word count range for each assessment item will be indicated in the subject outline and will normally be the target word count ± 10%.

- Students must indicate the actual word count on the assessment item cover page.
- The content that exceeds the upper range of the word limit might not be marked.
- The penalty for submission of an item with a word count outside the word count range = 10% of the available marks deducted.
- The penalty for not stating or mis-stating word count = 10% of the available marks deducted.

Example:
A written assignment task indicates a target word count of 2000 words, therefore the word count range is 1800-2200 words. A student assignment has the word count of 2202 words. The assignment has received a mark of 79/100. The penalty for outside word range = 10 marks; final mark awarded = 69/100

5.3 Re-marking Assessment Items
The College makes every effort to assess students in a fair, valid and reliable way. Students may request a re-mark of their assignment/review of their final grade as outlined in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Procedure.

- To request a review of a piece of Assessment, the student must initially have sought and received feedback about their performance for the assessment from the subject coordinator or examiner concerned. Evidence of this feedback, or the reasonable attempt to seek this feedback, will be required to pursue a request for a review.
- Students should be aware that re-marking might result in a lower final mark than the original mark awarded.
  - Marks incorrectly added: Incorrect additions will automatically be corrected when drawn to the attention of the relevant academic. This should be done within 7 days of the return of the assignment. No requests will be considered beyond this time.
  - Dissatisfaction with marks awarded: Refer to the Review of Assessment and Student Access to Scripts and Materials policy
  - Dissatisfaction with Final Subject Result: Refer to the Review and Appeal of Final Subject Result Procedure.

There are defined criteria that permit students to request remarking of assessments and clearly stated procedure for such remarking. There are defined procedures in place for hearing concerns over the conduct of assessments. There are also defined procedures for obtaining the specific evidence required to investigate such matters. There are also clear definitions of academic misconduct (plagiarism, collusion, cheating and impersonation) in respect to assessment and the consequences and penalties for such behaviour are clearly documented in the Student Review and Appeals Policy.

5.4 Coursework Academic Integrity including Plagiarism
Plagiarism occurs when writers claim ownership of written words or ideas that are not their own. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and any instances of plagiarism will be dealt with promptly according to relevant University policies and procedures. All cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Dean, College of Medicine and Dentistry and are subject to the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure. Also see the LTA Procedure 3.4; Coursework Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure.

The library provides an Assessment Writing Style Guide for Students and the JCU Guidelines for avoiding plagiarism provide ways to avoid plagiarism by accurately referencing others' work. Also see Academic Misconduct Procedure.
6. Standard Setting and Marking

- All written assignments and examination scripts, as far as possible, are identifiable only by student number.
- Analysis of all marks and marking trends should be performed to allow reliable comparisons and provide evidence of consistent standards.
- Validated standard setting methods are used for pass/fail decisions.
- Detailed statistical analysis of all assessments every year is conducted to assist with decision making and for comparison with previous analyses to ensure consistency within, and across assessments.
- An archive of marked examination scripts in all subject areas is maintained for a minimum of five years.
- An analysis of trends to identify relationship between student entry scores and year-to-year assessment outcomes is regularly undertaken.

7. Finalisation of Results

- Results are finalised in accordance with the Student Results Policy.
- Students should be aware that raw scores may be scaled prior to the awarding of an overall result. (See Subject Outlines Procedure)
- Results are compiled according to JCU Student Results Policy but may be moderated to reflect the particular assessments used in the MBBS program.
- Students MUST pass their selective subject in SP1 of MBBS3 in order to progress to MBBS 4.
- Students who have completed all requirements and are in a good academic standing for study periods 3 and/or 1 are given a KU (continuing unit) against their academic result for these study periods. The KU results will be converted to the result obtained by combining all the assessment components.
- MBBS Year 6 Assessment is non-graded. Students are awarded a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory overall result. The MBBS course Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated based on results awarded from MBBS Year 1 to Year 5 and includes the selective undertaken in Year 3.
- The progression decisions are made by the Assessment Committee based on de-identified combined results (On-course and Examinations).
- Students who are approved to sit deferred examinations will not normally be offered supplementary examinations.
- The Assessment Committee will consider special consideration adverse impact applications in the decisionmaking process (Special Consideration Application Form).
- Assessment is always subject to final ratification following the examination period and no single grade represents a final result in a subject.

7.1 Calculating cut-scores for assessment items

- The cut-score for written examinations is determined through an appropriate process that incorporates standard-setting procedures.
- The cut-score for OSCE / MSAT examinations is determined using a borderline regression statistical method.
• The overall pass mark for the year is calculated by applying the weighting of individual assessment components to the individual cut scores for each of these assessment components.

• The standard error of measurement (SEM) is used to support progression decisions (Figure 1).

7.2 Release of Results and Grades
• Results will be released to students via eStudent on scheduled Results Publication dates as indicated in the JCU academic calendar. (See LTA Procedure 3.7)

• The College will provide students with feedback on their individual performance for each exam paper in the formal end of study period examinations.

• Students are responsible for keeping a record of feedback on assessments.

• Students who are required to undertake supplementary examinations will be notified of this in writing shortly after the final results are ratified by the College Dean.

• Students who have sat supplementary and deferred examinations will be notified of their results in writing by the College of Medicine and Dentistry shortly after the supplementary/deferred examinations results are ratified by the College Dean.

7.3 Progression Decision
• Students’ final marks for the year are calculated by applying the weighting of individual assessment components to the marks obtained for each of these assessment components.

• The overall year pass mark and SEM are used to separate students’ final marks into clear Pass, Borderline and Fail groups (Figure 1).

• Students whose marks fall within or below the borderline range for the SP1 exams may be provided an opportunity to undertake supplementary exams in the designated SP1 supplementary exam period.

• Students whose year mark falls within the borderline range for the year may be offered supplementary examinations. Scores for main and supplementary examinations will be averaged to obtain the final result that will be used to determine Supp Pass (SP) and Supp Fail (N) results.

• Students with significant professionalism issues might not progress to the following year. Students are required to meet the attendance requirements, submit all assessment and other required items (e.g. placement documentation, pre-placement requirements) and demonstrate professionalism in their interactions with patients, staff, supervisors and other students in order to successfully complete each year of the MBBS course. See Student Professional Misconduct Procedure

Enrolment in the MBBS course is subject to Satisfactory Academic Performance as outlined in the Unsatisfactory Academic Performance Procedure.
7.4 Correctives

Students may be required to undertake correctives, or directed electives, particularly but not exclusive to Year 6. Such students will be required to remediate academic and clinical competence deficiencies identified on clinical rotation, as well as specific discipline knowledge gaps during Year 5 or in the Year 5 exams or as a result of requiring supplementary exams. The broad areas of the correctives will be determined by the Director of Clinical Studies, the relevant Subject Coordinator and the relevant Rotation Academic Coordinator. The student will be advised of the possibility of requiring a corrective to take the place of the clinical elective in Year 6 shortly after they receive their Year 5 exam results. The design and details of the corrective will be based on the identified individual deficiencies and perceived needs of the student who will meet with the Clinical Site Academic Advisor and Rotation Academic Coordinator early in the year. A learning plan to correct the deficiencies as well as an assessment program will be developed and reviewed on a regular basis.
8. Related JCU Documents, Legislation and Statutes

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy
Learning, Teaching and Assessment Procedure
Subject Outlines Procedure
Special Consideration Procedure
Student Results Policy
Student Professional Misconduct Procedure
Coursework Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure
Finalisation and Publication of Student Results Procedure
Distribution of Results Procedure

Approval Details

NOTE: Printed copies of this procedure are uncontrolled, and currency can only be assured at the time of printing.

JCU Approval Details

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College Endorsement

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Revision History

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<td>21-1</td>
<td>20/12/2020</td>
<td>01/01/2021</td>
<td>MBBS Assessment Guidelines reviewed to align with the new JCU LTA Policy and its associated Procedure documents. Inclusion of PEAL ePortfolio as a summative assessment.</td>
<td>CMD ADLT; Team Leader Assessment, Manager Academic Services</td>
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<td>16-2</td>
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<td>Guideline aligned to fit within the Policy and Delegation Framework as a supporting document to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy. 4.4 removed that failing grade students receive notice prior to official release of results</td>
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<td>Apr 2016</td>
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<td>Dec 2015 - New 50% pass mark for Foundation years. Physician Assistant excluded. Clarification on progression rules for Deferred students.</td>
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