Assessing international students

Assessors face particular challenges with the design of assessment for international cohorts of students. Common issues include:

- lack of local cultural knowledge. Many of our assessment tasks include case studies or exemplars that assume considerable cultural knowledge. How are our international students disadvantaged by these kinds of tasks?
- unintentional plagiarism. The replication of the work of others is the subject of a range of different cultural meanings and practices. How well inducted are international students into conventions of referencing and citing others’ work?
- discussions and group work. International students may be quite unfamiliar with Australian norms of social interaction, and may also be less confident with their oral language skills. This may mean that they are less comfortable in assessment tasks that require intensive social interactions. International students should be supported and briefed about and supported in relation to expectations and processes for these kinds of tasks.
- written assessment tasks. International students face inherent disadvantages in demonstrating their understanding of a topic in a second language. It may be appropriate that alternative assessment tasks are offered in some instances that allow alternative ways for students to demonstrate their achievement of objectives.

Web resources

Assessing students unfamiliar with assessment practices in Australian higher education, University of Melbourne

This page is part of the AUTC project Assessing Learning in Australian Universities (2002). It discusses the issues raised above,
and also provides a guide *Advice for students unfamiliar with assessment practices in Australian higher education* which can be printed and distributed to students.

http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/03/intstaff.html

From this same project is a case study from The University of Southern Queensland of an assessment scheme that has been developed with particular sensitivity for students from a non-English speaking background.