



# Frequently Asked Questions: AI-Assisted Grading

This document answers common questions about the UCT APC Professional Programme's use of Traverse Studio, an AI-assisted marking tool, for grading assessments in 2026.

## About the Change

### ***What is changing about how my assessments are marked?***

From 2026, the UCT APC Professional Programme is using an AI-assisted marking tool called Traverse Studio to grade your case study assessments. The tool was developed over more than a year in partnership with Groundflr, an educational technology company, and has been extensively tested on past assessments to ensure accuracy and reliability.

### ***Why is UCT making this change?***

The programme identified an opportunity to leverage technology to enhance the assessment experience. AI-assisted marking enables consistent grading across all submissions and delivers detailed, specific feedback to help you understand exactly how you performed against the expected competencies. The academic team believes Traverse will provide you with richer insights to support your learning and preparation for the SAICA APC.

### ***Which assessments will be marked by the AI tool?***

Traverse will be used to grade the marked assessments in the programme, including the Foundation Phase, Group Case Study, the June Mock Exam, and the two Qualifying Exams. Self-assessed activities (such as Mastering Professional Competence, Recognising Professional Competence, and Polishing Professional Competence) remain unchanged. The actual SAICA APC in December is administered and marked by SAICA, not UCT.

### ***Has this been approved by UCT?***

Yes. The use of Traverse has been developed in alignment with UCT's Framework for AI in Education and UCT's Assessment Policy. The programme has engaged with relevant UCT stakeholders throughout the development process. SAICA has also been informed and is supportive of this approach.

## How the AI Grading Works

### ***How does the AI actually mark my work?***

When you submit your case study attempt, your submission is uploaded to Traverse. The system uses advanced language model technology to read and assess your response against detailed marking criteria set by the UCT academic team. The AI evaluates your submission based on the assessment objectives, competency level descriptors, and expected standards established by the academics for each task.



### ***Does the AI understand the context of APC-style questions?***

Yes. The tool has been calibrated to match the competency-based assessment framework used in APC-style case studies, and tested thoroughly to ensure consistency. It has been validated against past assessments, with results compared against established marking standards. The APC requires integrated assessment of professional skills, and the tool has been configured to assess these appropriately.

### **Accuracy and Fairness**

#### ***How do I know the AI will mark my work accurately?***

The tool has been extensively tested on past assessments, with AI grades compared against established marking standards. Where discrepancies arose, the team investigated and refined the system's calibration accordingly. Testing continued until the academic team was confident in the tool's accuracy. *Additionally, and importantly, every assessment includes quality assurance steps where human academics review borderline cases and any submissions where the system indicates lower confidence in its grading.*

#### ***What if the AI makes a mistake?***

Several safeguards are in place. First, the system has a built-in confidence indicator - any submission where the AI has lower confidence in its grading is automatically flagged for human review. Second, all borderline results (those close to the Competent/Limited Competence threshold) are reviewed by a human marker or the programme convenor. Third, you will receive detailed feedback explaining exactly how your work was assessed, which allows you to understand and query specific marking decisions. Additionally, it is worth saying that this is not a new risk as human markers were never assumed to be perfect either.

#### ***Is AI marking fair to all candidates?***

The academic team is committed to ensuring fairness. A key benefit of AI marking is consistency - every candidate's work is assessed against identical criteria in exactly the same way. The programme continues to evaluate assessments for evidence of bias and to ensure fair access to resources for all candidates.

### **Privacy and Security**

#### ***Is my work kept confidential?***

Yes. Traverse operates within a secure, ring-fenced environment. Your submissions are not shared with the open web, public AI systems, or third parties. Your work is never used to teach or train other AI systems. Traverse Studio includes end-to-end encryption, secure login authentication, and role-based access controls. Only authorised UCT academic and administrative staff can access your submissions.



**What personal information does the system have access to?**

Only your student number is uploaded to Traverse alongside your submission. Your name and other personal details are not included. Your student number cannot be linked to your identity without access to UCT's separate registration database, which Traverse does not have.

**Does my work get used to train AI systems?**

No. Your submissions are processed in real-time for grading purposes only. No student data or work is ever stored or used to retrain AI models. Groundflr has a confidentiality agreement with UCT covering the security of all data.

**What data protection standards does the system meet?**

Traverse is designed to comply with POPIA (Protection of Personal Information Act), GDPR, and UCT's IT security protocols. The system includes full audit trails for transparency and can integrate with UCT's existing systems.

## **Feedback and Results**

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**Will I still receive feedback on my work?**

Yes - and the feedback should be more detailed than before. Traverse is designed to provide clear, specific feedback that cites exactly what you wrote and explains where you succeeded or fell short in demonstrating particular competencies. Every candidate receives consistent feedback based on the same criteria.

**How is the feedback different from previous feedback?**

AI feedback is explicit about exactly which parts of your response earned marks or needed improvement. The system references your specific answers and maps them to the assessment criteria, helping you understand precisely how you performed against the expected competencies. It will also be framed to guide you and better prepare you for future assessments.

## **Human Oversight**

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**Are humans still involved in the marking process?**

Absolutely. The UCT academic team maintains ultimate responsibility for all grading. Humans are involved at every stage: setting the assessment criteria and instructions for the AI, reviewing samples before full grading, conducting quality assurance on flagged submissions (including all borderline and low-confidence cases), and making final decisions on grades. The APC programme views Traverse as a tool that assists with marking, not a replacement for academic judgment.

**Who sets the marking criteria?**

The same UCT academic team members who set your case study questions also create the detailed marking instructions for Traverse. They provide the AI with context, objectives, assessment criteria, competency level descriptors, and model answers. This ensures the AI grades according to the academic standards the team has established.



***Can I request a human to review my submission?***

As mentioned above, the quality assurance process already includes human review of borderline and flagged cases. Therefore, a further human review is not considered to be necessary, nor part of our programme offering. If you have specific concerns about how your work was assessed, you will be able to discuss this in small online coaching sessions. But the detailed feedback you receive, and the webinars that take place after results are released, should help you understand the basis for your grade and identify any areas you wish to query further.

## **Getting Help**

***Who can I contact if I have questions or concerns?***

For questions about the AI marking system or any concerns about your assessment, contact the Admin team at [info.ppd@uct.ac.za](mailto:info.ppd@uct.ac.za). They will forward your query on to the relevant person.

***What if I believe my grade is incorrect?***

Review the detailed feedback provided with your results first - this will explain exactly how your work was assessed. If you still have concerns, contact the Admin team with specific details about which aspects of the grading you wish to query. The transparency of the AI feedback should make it easier to identify and discuss any areas of disagreement.