



POLICY ON ASSESSMENT

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¹ Approval must be by the same structure that approved the initial policy.

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1. PREAMBLE

This Assessment Policy reflects and underpins the University of Johannesburg's (UJ) commitment to excellence in assessment as integral to teaching and learning. The policy aligns with the *UJ Strategic Objectives 2014 - 2025*, namely:

- Excellence in research and innovation
- Excellence in teaching and learning.

The policy provides a set of principles for assessment practices across all faculties² and is directed at achieving quality learning outcomes. The policy should be read with Faculty Assessment Policies and assessment guidelines. Faculty assessment guidelines may not derogate from these principles but will align faculty assessment practices and requirements to these.

The policy is informed by current theory and practice in assessment in higher education internationally and within South African Higher Education (HE).

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 2.1. establish the principles of assessment in support of quality learning and teaching,
- 2.2. align assessment strategies across all learning programmes, whether whole qualifications, short learning programmes, subsidised, or continuing education programmes, across all faculties in line with national guidelines, UJ's strategic goals, and the requirements of professional bodies as relevant.

3. DEFINITIONS/CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The following are key concepts in the assessment domain:

Assessment	the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting evidence against a defined competence to make a judgement about a student's achievement.
Assessment criteria	are transparent statements of assessment tasks used to ascertain whether a student has achieved the learning outcomes.
Assessment methods	activities used by assessors to determine student competence
Assessment Opportunity	An assessment opportunity allows the student to demonstrate their learning and may be scheduled and supervised or not. All opportunities require a clear and predetermined submission date which is clearly communicated to students.
Assessor	person appointed / responsible for the assessment of the achievement of learning outcomes.

² 'Faculty' or 'faculties' includes the College of Business and Economics, and the Johannesburg Business School.

Authentic assessment	allows students to experience learning in a realistic situation. Authentic assessment is contextualised assessment.
Continuous Assessment	is a form of assessment that evaluates students' ongoing progress in achieving the stated learning outcomes in a particular module.
External assessor	an expert outside the University who assesses the student's performance.
Formative Assessment	an assessment conducted during the process of teaching and learning which provides feedback to students for improvement.
Integrated assessment	assessment which involves different types of assessment tasks to examine the overall competence of students
Memorandum/ marking guide	used to assess the student's evidence, for example, model answers, rubrics, checklists, frameworks with mark allocation.
Moderation	the process by which an internal or external person familiar with the module/programme content regulates the assessment undertaken. Moderation ensures that assessment meets national and institutional requirements, as is appropriate to the programme type, discipline and level required.
Internal Moderator	an academic employed by UJ nominated by the Department/ Head of Department (HOD) / Dean / faculty board to moderate assessment. An internal moderator is an experienced assessor with knowledge of the learning area/ module/ field of study.
External Moderator	a subject field expert who is external to the university and who performs no function other than the moderation of assessment for the University. External moderators are ordinarily employed at other higher education institutions and must be appropriately and adequately qualified (usually one NQF level higher than the level of the module being assessed).
Summative Assessment	assessment conducted at the end of module, and which evaluates the extent to which the student achieves the learning outcomes.

4. PRINCIPLES

All UJ assessment must reflect academic integrity. All faculties and academic departments must ensure that all assessments are of good quality. This means that assessment must be at an appropriate NQF level; internally or externally moderated as required; demonstrate consistency in marking; provide timely and constructive feedback, etc.

The following principles of assessment apply:

- 4.1. *Clear and explicit:* Assessment is a coherently designed, an integral part of the teaching and learning process, and is aligned to the purpose, learning content and outcomes of the module / programme. Assessments must be high quality, use appropriate language, be clear, and be technically and logically laid out.
- 4.2. *Reliable:* Assessment practices reflect current good practice in higher education and contemporary research in assessment practice.
- 4.3. *Transparent:* The purpose (what is being assessed, why and how) of the assessment and assessment criteria must be clearly communicated to students prior to the assessment.
- 4.4. *Valid:* A range of appropriate assessment approaches and methods is encouraged and

the use of integrated assessment is recommended. Both formative and summative assessment is used and is conducted at appropriate points in the learning experience.

- 4.5. *Fair*: students are treated equally and are not unfairly disadvantaged. Appeal mechanisms are available. Formative assessment is followed by timely and constructive feedback which supports learning.

5. ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

Assessment approaches could be formative or summative, or a combination of both formative and summative.

- 5.1. *Formative assessment* (see definition) is diagnostic, developmental and contributes to students' capacity for self-assessment. Formative assessment is assessment for learning and provides feedback to the student on their progress in order to improve future performance. Not all formative assessments result in a mark. However, if they do students must be informed of this prior to the submission.
- 5.2. *Summative assessment* is ordinarily conducted at the end of module and evaluates the extent to which the student has achieved the learning outcomes of a unit/module and/or programme. The results of summative assessment are expressed as a final mark and indicate either a pass or a fail.
- 5.3. Integrated assessment may be formative or summative. It examines the overall competence of students in one or more of the following ways, by:
- Combining the assessment of a number of outcomes
 - combining a number of assessment criteria into one assessment
 - using a combination of assessment methods and instruments to assess the outcomes/assessment criteria
 - requiring students to apply the outcomes of several modules in one assessment (such as in a capstone project)
 - collecting naturally occurring evidence (such as in a workplace setting)
 - acquiring evidence from other resources such as supervisor's reports, testimonials, portfolios of work previously done

6. ASSESSMENT FORMATS

- 6.1. The number of assessments and their relative weightings must be appropriate to the discipline, level of the module, programme level and must be coherently designed to achieve the outcomes of a module / programme.
- 6.2. The assessment format per module/programme must be approved by the department/faculty and must take into account the structure of the programme (i.e., the number of modules and the students' overall workload) and provide for a sufficient number of formative assessment opportunities for students to monitor and improve on their performance in time for the summative assessment/s. The assessment format and timing per module is to be included in the learning guides and communicated to students at the beginning of the academic cycle.
- (a) Assessment for learning takes place in a number of formative and summative opportunities. Each assessment (whether in a semester/year) contributes toward to the semester/year mark. A summative assessment is completed at the end of the semester/year.
- (b) Continuous assessment assesses students' progress in achieving the outcomes on an ongoing basis. A variety of consecutive assessment opportunities and methods is used, each of which has a predetermined weighting across all the outcomes on

the module. There are two possibilities that pertain to continuous assessment:

(i) Continuous assessment where selected assessments had a supplementary/resubmission opportunity for heavily weighted assessments. The weighting of all assessments and rewrite/resubmission opportunities are determined in advance and communicated to students at the outset of the semester/year.

(ii) Hybrid continuous assessment where a supplementary opportunity is offered, in the form of an comprehensive and integrated assessment at the end of the semester, subject to the prevailing university academic regulations which apply to assessments (e.g. a 40% admission requirement). The mark for rewrite/resubmission opportunities or a final supplementary opportunity is capped at 50%.

7. SPECIAL AND SUPPLEMENTARY SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The assessment of coursework modules takes place in accordance with faculty-specific regulations as determined by the relevant Faculty, approved by Senate and contained in the relevant Faculty Rules and Regulations. Consideration and granting of supplementary summative assessment or special summative assessment opportunities for coursework modules is determined by Faculty in terms of the rules set.

8. ASSESSMENT METHODS

8.1. A variety of fit-for-purpose methods of assessment is available to assessor/s, depending on the demands of the discipline, and the principles of assessment and outcomes to be assessed.

8.2. The selection and use of any one type of assessment, for example multiple choice questions, must be at the level and purpose of assessment.

8.3. An over- reliance on one type of assessment method is discouraged. An appropriate balance across types is recommended, as is appropriate to the discipline.

8.4. Online Assessments

8.4.1 UJ is a contact University and online assessments should be used for contact programmes only where the nature of the module / programme and the teaching and learning context makes it logistically favourable to verify the assessment outcomes. In instances where this is not possible, in-person invigilated assessment is required.

8.4.2 All online assessments should be hosted on the UJ Learning Management System. The use of third-party software applications or portals for assessments should be pre-approved through standard UJ processes, should provide security of data such as required by law, and not generate additional costs for students, beyond UJ student fees.

8.4.3 See UJ Academic Regulations published annually for arrangements to ensure the integrity of online assessments.

9. COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS

9.1. Students are to be informed before and after assessments of the channels of communication to be used. For example, the learning management system, the learning guide and so on.

9.2. Communication *before* assessment should include:

(a) information on the purpose, assessment criteria, dates and venues (if applicable),

weightings, type of assessment, guidelines on how to answer questions, e.g. write a case study or write an open book exam, etc.

- (b) reasonable penalties for late submissions must be included in the learning guide.
 - (c) procedures for the review of assessment results must be in the learning guide.
- 9.3. Communication *after* assessment must be constructive. Feedback, whether written or verbal, should take place throughout the learning process to support and enhance student learning. Students should be encouraged to seek additional assistance where required.
- 9.4. Constructive feedback to students includes the viewing of their marked evidence/assessment script/assignment, etc.
- (a) Requests for the explanation of the final mark for a summative assessment opportunity must be made within 10 days after classes commence for semester 2 for semester 1 assessments. In the case of a semester 2 assessment, requests must be made three days prior to the commencement of classes in the following year. No assessment material (for example, answer scripts or portfolios) or copies of it may be removed by the student if it would not otherwise have been returned to the student.
 - (b) Constructive feedback for continuous assessment should be given within ten working days of the assessment being written.
 - (c) Exceptions (i.e. due to large student numbers and University holidays) are addressed by faculty schedules.
 - (d) Assessment results are confidential. No assessment results may be disclosed to any third party.

10. ASSESSMENTS RELATING TO SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES

Assessment in the various assessment contexts identified below must be conducted by taking this Assessment Policy into consideration, as well as the relevant UJ policies and/or Academic Regulations:

- 10.1. *Work integrated learning (WIL) and service learning (SL): see the WIL policy and/or relevant faculty/college regulations.*
- 10.2. *Recognition of prior learning (RPL): See RPL policy and/or relevant faculty/school/college regulations.*
- 10.3. *Students who require exceptions* to the assessment specified for the module (whether to the weighting or nature of the assessment) must apply to HOD/Dean in writing. The written request must clearly explain the reasons for the application and supporting evidence / documentation must be provided. Exceptions will only be considered for:
- (a) serious medical condition/s or an extended illness period;
 - (b) death in the family or extended family;
 - (c) exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the student (fire, flood, accident, etc.).
- The Dean, in consultation with the relevant HoD, may approve the request if warranted. Appeals are escalated to the Registrar.
- 10.4. *For qualification/s and module/s being phased out:* all students are notified as early as possible of the phasing out and are to be provided with a phase out plan for their year of study. The last year of offering of the qualification/ module/s must be clearly communicated. Where replacement modules are available, the rules must be provided. In special cases, the Dean in consultation with the HOD may schedule a special / alternative examination for students unable to graduate due to a phased out or discontinued module.
- 10.5. *Students with disabilities* wishing to apply for special assessment conditions do so in

accordance with the *Policy on People with Disabilities and Academic Regulations*.

11. THE ASSESSOR

An assessor must possess expertise in the subject matter and be proficient in the assessment process. Assessors are to be appropriately and adequately qualified (at least one level higher than the level of the programme in which they are assessing). Assessors are appointed by faculty or the department (consult the Standard Operating Principles for Faculties).

- 11.1. Provision is made for the appointment of chief assessors, co-assessors, assistant assessor and/or external assessors as the need arises.
- 11.2. Workplace supervisors, managers, team leaders and designated community workers may be appointed as assessors, provided that they possess relevant expertise and/or qualifications.
- 11.3. External assessors for dissertations and theses are appointed in accordance with the *University's Policy on Higher Degrees and Postgraduate Studies*.

12. MODERATION

Moderation ensures that assessment is fair, valid and reliable and that students are assessed consistently and accurately. Moderation provides an evaluation of the performance of assessor/s as well as assures the quality of the assessment of the students. Consult the Standard Operating Principles for Faculties .

- 12.1. Faculty Boards determine and implement moderation processes and procedures to ensure assessment is consistent, accurate and well-designed.
- 12.2. At least one assessment opportunity (including the replacement assessment or supplementary thereof) is moderated in a 14-week or semester module. In a 28-week (year), module at least two assessment opportunities (including the special assessments or supplementary thereof) are moderated.
- 12.3. Moderated assessment opportunities are those with the greatest weighting in the calculation of the final module mark and are determined by the assessor.
- 12.4. All question papers and related materials and/or set of instructions (e.g. in the case of an assignment, portfolio, etc.) must be internally quality checked and either internally or externally moderated, as set out in 12.5, below.
- 12.5. The last summative assessment (final examination) or most heavily weighted assessment, , of an exit level module must be moderated externally, as follows:

Qualification	Total Credits	External moderation required
Higher Certificate	120	120 at level 5
Advanced Certificate	120	120 at level 6
Diploma	360	120 at level 6
Advanced Diploma	120	120 at level 7
Degree (exit level 7)	360	120 at level 7
Degree (exit level 8)	480	120 at level 8 <i>and as required by professional body</i>
Postgraduate Diploma	120	120 at level 8
Bachelor Honours degree	120	120 at level 8
Master's degree by coursework	180	All credits at level 9

12.6 Supplementary and special examinations must be internally moderated.

13. MONITORING

- 13.1. Monitoring the quality of assessment processes is performed by the assessment committees or relevant portfolios in faculties/college.

14. PLAGIARISM

- 14.1. Dishonesty and/or plagiarism is handled in accordance with University policy and/ or Faculty Rules and Regulations.

15. APPLICATION FOR A REVIEW OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

A student may apply to the assessor responsible for an explanation of the mark and a possible remark, in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations related to appeals.

16. FACULTY ASSESSMENT POLICIES

Faculties may develop faculty-specific assessment policies in line with the University's *Assessment Policy* and approved by the Faculty Board and Senate. Faculty assessment policies are:

- (a) developed within the unique context of the faculty concerned;
- (b) aligned at faculty level to avoid contradictions between different faculty policies
- (c) communicated to students, who are able to access the Faculty Assessment Policy;
- (d) managed at lecturer/assessor, departmental and faculty levels (see Standard Operating Principles for Faculties)

17. PUBLICATION AND REVIEW

- 17.1. The Registrar delegates the responsibility to the Central Academic Administration for inclusion of the policy in the University policy databases and makes it available on the University intranet.
- 17.2. On Senate approval of the Assessment Policy, the faculties/college are responsible for the communication of the policy to students and employees and for making opportunities available to employees to develop assessment competences where relevant.

18. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

Regular review of the policy is conducted in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at faculty and institutional level (i.e. the STLC) and under the auspices of the official custodian of this policy, namely the DVC: Academic.

Senate approved: 15 September 2016

Senate changes approved: 14 November 2019.

Senate changes approved: 16 November 2022.