

PGDDS - Assessment and Learning Experience Manual

IIIT-B and upGrad Post-Graduate Diploma in Data Science

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IIIT-B Assessment Policy

As a general IIIT-B assessment policy, assessments are divided into two formats, namely, formative and summative, without too much emphasis on a single format. Hence, a variety of assessment formats are planned in order to mirror the workplace today and the global university standards. The list below describes the different assessment formats used in the program:

- **Group case studies** will assess the participants based on their ability to produce quality deliverables on large analytics projects as a team. This will help in building team-playing skills, which are considered invaluable by analytics recruiters in the 21st century workplace.
- In-module **Graded Questions**, individual **assignments** and **exams** will assess the participants based on conceptual clarity.
- **Class participation** will be encouraged via a **Discussion Forum**, which will enable the students to learn faster by clearing peer doubts as well as accelerate the learning for the overall cohort.

The Academic Committee deliberates regularly on the academic structure and grading elements of the program, and it holds the right to change any component of the same. Any change to the grading elements or the academic structure of the program will be communicated to the learners in advance.

It is recommended that the participants focus on learning as opposed to focusing solely on assessment scores. Given that it is a Post-Graduate program, the **participants are expected to do research on their own during the learning process**, and deal with ambiguous assessment scenarios.

Assessment Structure

Assessment Components and Respective Weights

The Post-Graduate program comprises of five assessment components. Their distribution and weightage are summarised in the table below.

Type of Assessment	Subset
Quizzes	Graded MCQs and coding questions (may include timed assessments)
Assignment	Individual assignments
Group Case Studies	Group submissions of case studies
Exam	Three proctored online exams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First: A 60-min exam for course 1 • Second: A 90-min exam, with 45 min each for courses 2 and 3 • Third: A 90-min exam, with 45 min each for courses 4 and 5
Class Participation	Discussion forum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Points only for faculty/TA verifications on the Discussion Forum. - Penalty for inappropriate posts.

There may be viva for certain assessments.

**Two exam slots are offered per exam.*

	Weight Distribution in the Courses				
Course	Assignment	Case Study	MCQ	Exam	Class Participation
Statistics & EDA	30%	15%	20%	25%	10%
Machine Learning 1	30%	15%	20%	25%	10%
Machine Learning 2	30%	15%	20%	25%	10%
Big Data & SQL	30%	15%	20%	25%	10%
Elective	0%	45%	20%	25%	10%
Industry Project	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Let's take an example to understand this. Suppose you have scored the following marks in Course 1.

Each component is mentioned with its respective weightage in parentheses:

1. Assignment (30%) - 200/300
2. Case Study (15%) - 120/150
3. Graded Questions (20%) - 325/600
4. Exam (25%) - 21/30
5. Class Participation (10%) - 80/100

Your final percentage score will be calculated as:

$$\{[0.3 \times (200/300)] + [0.15 \times (120/150)] + [0.20 \times (325/600)] + [0.25 \times (21/30)] + [0.1 \times (80/100)]\} \times 100$$

$$= 68.33\%$$

The final percentage scores of all the learners are calculated in this manner, and then the grades are assigned to the learners by the course faculty based on the relative scores of the cohort.

Grading Policy

Grade Point Average (GPA) Computation for a Course

The marks given for each assessment, scaled by the weight assigned to an assessment, add up to the overall score for a course. Grade Point Average (GPA) is awarded on a four-point scale based on the normalised course-level scores of the entire batch. **The faculty has autonomy to decide on the grading scale based on the relative scores of a batch.**

There are 10 letter grades: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, D, F and I. The relation between grades and points (on a four-point scale) is shown in the table below:

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	F
Grade Points	4	3.7	3.4	3	2.7	2.4	2	1	0

The grade 'I' does not carry any grade points and is interpreted as 'Incomplete.'

If a learner is unable to fulfil the requirements for a course due to a legitimate reason and is found to be eligible for a Grade Improvement Opportunity (GIO), then the Academic Committee may award the grade 'I' (Incomplete) to that student. An 'I' grade must be converted to a regular letter grade by appearing in a GIO exam, failing which it is converted to an 'F' grade automatically.

Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) Computation for the Program

The program has a total of 36 credits, which are distributed as follows:

Course	Credits
Statistics & EDA	6
Machine Learning 1	7
Machine Learning 2	7
Big Data & SQL	6
Elective	6
Industry Project	4

The GPA scores for each course weighted by the respective proportion of credit add up to the CGPA for the entire program. The GPA is truncated (and not rounded off) at two decimal places.

For instance, if the grade points awarded to a participant are, respectively, G1, G2, etc., in courses with the corresponding credits of U1, U2, etc., then the CGPA = $(U1 \cdot G1 + U2 \cdot G2 + \dots) / (U1 + U2 + \dots)$, wherein U1 and U2 refer to all the courses taken up until the time of computation of the CGPA.

A learner must pass each course by securing at least a D grade (1-grade point on a 4-point scale). However, to receive the PG Diploma certificate, the Cumulative Grade Point Average, or the CGPA, should be greater than 2.4. The learners will also awarded a **completion certificate** solely by upGrad on completion of the pre-preparatory course.

The learners are strongly recommended to invest all the effort to make sure they are meeting these criteria. In addition to that, each learner needs to score **at least 20% in each of the assessment elements** (Quizzes, Assignments, Group Case Study, Final exams) to pass a course. If a student secures a grade below D in any course or fails to score at least 20% in any of the assessment elements, then they will fail the course and will not be eligible for the PG Certificate. The students will, however, have access to content just like their peers and will be given feedback on their submissions. They will be eligible for a letter of completion only if they have successfully consumed all the content of the program and have achieved a score of 40% and above in the graded questions (MCQs and the graded coding questions). The 40% score in the graded questions is at an overall level of the program and is not restricted to any course or module.

Grade Improvement Opportunity (GIO)

We understand that in a rare scenario, a student may not be able to meet the criteria for passing a course due to unforeseen circumstances. We do not want our learners to become ineligible for receiving the PG certificate because of such circumstances.

Hence, in such cases, a Grade Improvement Opportunity (GIO) will be given to the learner to help them complete the program and be eligible for receiving the PG certificate. The list below shows the salient points of a GIO:

1. A learner can avail a maximum of **one GIO** for exactly one course in the entire program.
2. If a student scores less than 50% in a GIO exam or does not appear in the GIO exam, then they will fail the course and will become ineligible for the PG certificate.
3. The GIO will be decided by the Academic Committee and will be in form of an online proctored exam or any other mode of assessment as deemed fit by the Academic Committee.
4. If the marks scored by a student are less than 20% in any of the assessment components, that is, quizzes, assignments or case studies, then the usual exam for that course will be treated as a GIO exam.
5. If a student fails in more than one course, then they will not be eligible for the PG certificate as a GIO can be availed for only one course.

Code of Conduct

As stated in the Code of Conduct, plagiarism in any form in any graded individual or group assessment is not acceptable.

The participants are not allowed to request for the final solution or share the solution for any graded question on any platform. Any violation on this count will result in a **zero** score for that question, assignment, group case study or exam.

Further, any form of plagiarism and impersonation by the participants, including presenting others work as their own, sharing solutions with each other, copying codes from public repositories, etc., will not be accepted. The submissions by the learners will be subjected to random plagiarism checks to ensure compliance. Each learner will also be subjected to random viva by the concerned faculty to ensure that the submissions have in fact been created independently by the learner or the group of learners (in case of group case studies). Plagiarism in any form will result in a participant failing that particular course.

The IIIT-B Academic Committee has the final authority to decide upon the required disciplinary action in case of plagiarism and impersonation.

Similarly, participant mis-behaviour on any online or offline forum will not be tolerated, and will entail appropriate disciplinary action.

Escalation Matrix for grievance redressal

upGrad believes in adopting a transparent approach with all its learners, and in order to match our learners' expectations in terms of grievance redressal, we have created an Escalation Matrix. Based on the kind of queries we receive from our learners, we have defined the levels of the Escalation Matrix. We request you to refer to the same in case you ever find the need to escalate an issue.

Type of Query	Point of Contact
Non-academic queries (For example, live sessions, program structure related queries)	Your Student Mentor
Content-related issues/queries (If you find any issues with or have queries pertaining to the content on a session page)	Click on the "Report an Error" button on the bottom left corner of the session page.
Referral refund / fee receipts-related queries	refunds@upgrad.com - Put your Student Mentor on CC
Not satisfied with the resolution provided by your Student Mentor? Write to:	dsescalations@upgrad.com

Assessment and Grading Timelines

Assessment Submission Timelines

The program is structured such that the entire cohort can experience a course together. All the modules will be made available to the learners at the beginning of each course. The participants will be given sufficient time to complete the modules, assignments and case studies.

A calendar with all the module, assignment, case study and exam deadlines for an upcoming course will be shared with the participants via email and will be visible on the platform calendar before the beginning of that course. **The deadlines for the respective assessments are non-negotiable except under critical circumstances.** All assignments and case studies submitted after the stated deadline, but within one week after the deadline, will be graded on 70% of the total marks of the assessment (including Quizzes, Assignments, Case Studies, etc.). This second deadline is also termed the Hard deadline. Submissions received after the Hard deadline will be graded and will receive feedback, but will attract a penalty of 100%. Feedback will be given so as not to hamper learning, but the marks would be considered zero for all official purposes.

Please note that all the deadlines are in IST (UTC +5.5). Hence, if you are in a different time zone, then your deadline may vary according to the local time. For example, if you are in London and following BST (British Summer Time), which is UTC +1, then for a deadline of 11:59:00 PM IST in India, the deadline for you in the local time would be 7:29:00 PM BST.

Deadline Extension Policy

As mentioned earlier, the deadlines are non-negotiable except under dire circumstances such as a major health issue, a work-related issue, etc. In such cases, you may be given an extension of up to 1 week. This means that you can submit your assignment up to one week after the deadline without the 30% penalty. However, no extension will be given beyond the Hard deadline (1 week after the actual deadline) as solutions are released the very next day. Here are the guidelines for the same:

1. A learner can avail a maximum of two extensions during the entire program period.
2. Extensions are allowed only on individual assignments and group case study. No extensions will be given on the graded MCQ deadlines.
3. No extensions will be given beyond the Hard deadline (1 week after the actual deadline) as solutions are usually released a day after the Hard deadline.
4. To avail an extension, the students must contact their respective Student Mentors, with a formal request letter addressed to "Academic Committee, PGDDS", clearly stating the reason for requesting the extension, along with proof of the same.

5. The final decision to grant an extension lies with the Academic Committee. Students will be notified by their respective Student Mentors if their request has been accepted.
6. Learners must be very careful while uploading their submissions on the platform. Any wrong file extension request post the first (soft) deadline of an assignment/case study will attract a penalty of 30% on the revised submission. No wrong file extension requests will be entertained after the second (Hard) deadline.

Grading and Feedback Timelines

The timelines for release of solution, feedback and grades for various components are given below.

Assessment Component	Solution	Grades
Graded Questions	Immediately after attempting	Within 2 weeks of the Hard deadline
Assignment	Within 1 week of the Hard deadline*	Within 2 weeks of the Hard deadline
Case study	Within 1 week of the Hard deadline	Within 2 weeks of the Hard deadline
Exam	Solution is not released	Within 3 weeks of the last exam
Class Participation	Not applicable	Within 3 weeks of the last exam
GPA	Not applicable	Within 3 weeks of the last exam

***Hard deadline:** It refers to the deadline 1 week after the actual deadline, during which 30% penalty is imposed on the submissions.

Once these scores are available, each participant can access them on their Individual Performance Profile on the platform.

The GPA and CGPA will be available only after the first two courses, as the exam is held jointly for the first two courses.

The participants will receive immediate feedback for graded questions. Ideal solutions for assignments and the case study will be available for download within one week of the final submission deadline of an assessment. Qualitative feedback will be provided along with the scores only for the case study and assignments.

Guidelines for Re-evaluation

1. A re-evaluation request (if any) should be submitted within 3 days of declaration of the results. For example, if results were declared on 13/06/2018, then requests for re-evaluation made till 16/06/2018 (end of day) will be considered.
2. A learner will be able to request for a re-evaluation on the learning platform itself.
3. A learner may request a re-evaluation of their assignment by claiming discrepancy of marks when compared with the ideal solution. In such cases, the learner should clearly specify the particular portion (Q. No.) of the assignment that is required to be re-evaluated plus the remarks regarding the claimed discrepancy. Requests that do not have all of this information or are very generic/vague in nature will be flagged as invalid and will not be considered. **Note: If the claim for a discrepancy of marks holds invalid, then the concerned learner will be awarded a penalty of 15% points (of the total points).**
4. Re-evaluation requests claiming discrepancy of marks when compared with another learner's graded assignment are highly discouraged and will NOT be considered. **Note: If any such requests are made, then the concerned learner will be awarded a penalty of 15% points (of the total points).**
5. Re-evaluation requests for assignments that have been uploaded after the Hard deadline will not be considered and are highly discouraged.
6. All re-evaluation requests will receive a response any time up to 2 weeks after the re-evaluation deadline.

Class Participation - Discussion Forum Process

Class Participation marks will be calculated using the Discussion Forum scores. This is designed for the participants to help create a strong learning community. The participants are encouraged to respond to peer questions as it will also help reinforce their learning.

Participants are requested to post only academic questions on the Discussion Forum. Faculty and teaching associates (TAs) will act only in response to questions related directly to the program content and assessments. On the Discussion Forum, they will either verify participant answers or respond to questions posted within 24 hours of a question being posted.

Faculty and TAs will not take any action on general posts that are meant to facilitate discussion among peers. **Inappropriate posts that are of no learning value will be deleted and the students concerned will be penalised.**

Points are awarded **only** on the basis of quality of posts, which is measured by peer up-votes and faculty/TA verifications on the verified answers, not on the basis of quantity of posts. No points are awarded for simply posting questions or answers. Note that the faculty and TAs can verify multiple answers to the same question. Also, the students must note that the points on the Discussion Forum do **not** equal the direct marks awarded in peer-peer participation. Faculty will award marks to participants based on the overall performance of the batch. Please go through the community guidelines that have been shared with you already. Any attempts to misuse the scoring mechanism will be penalised.

Faculty and Industry Live Lectures

As part of the program, all participants can expect access to multiple live sessions per course, which will be delivered by a mix of industry professionals and academicians. However, the mix can vary by course. Details about these live sessions will be updated on the participant calendar on the platform or the students will be informed via email. These live sessions are an integral part of the overall learning experience, and we highly encourage the participants to attend and actively participate in all these sessions.

Apart from the live sessions, offline sessions such as BaseCamps are conducted in order to increase peer-to-peer interaction across cohorts and networking among students, and to help connect with industry experts. The venues and frequency of the BaseCamps will be decided based on the learner demographic and is at the discretion of upGrad and IIT-B. Details about the BaseCamps, such as timings, venue and topic, will be communicated to the learners in advance.

Deferral Policy

If a learner is facing severe issues in dedicating time to a course, then we provide them an opportunity to defer to another batch. A learner can request for deferral **ONLY ONCE** and to one of the next four scheduled cohorts of the same program. The learner will be required to pay a deferral fee, which is 10% of the program fee*. The deferral request will be approved once the deferral fee is paid. Till this step is completed, the learner will be assumed to be continuing in the same cohort. The learner will start learning on the new cohort from the point of leaving the deferred cohort. If, however, the deferral request is raised before the issue of login, then the 10% deferral fee will not be charged and the learner will be deferred to the next scheduled cohort. **A learner will not be allowed to defer if they are failing or bound to fail in a course.** Since all the grades till the time of deferral are carried over to the batch that a student defers to, the deferring will not help the student complete the program.

* The deferral fee is defined as 10% of the TOTAL program fee. This is irrespective of the discount/scholarship that a student would have received. The deferral fee is payable based on the program fee at the time of enrolment of a student. The policy also states that if the price has been increased and if a student is deferring to a cohort with increased price, then they need to pay the differential fee for the new cohort along with the deferral fee.

WhatsApp Policy

We understand that networking with peers is one of the biggest takeaways from the program. We truly believe that learning is a lot more fun with peers, and it is the relationships that the students build during this program that can help open new doors in their careers. To encourage such collaboration, we are creating **an Official WhatsApp group** through which the students can interact with their peers from the program. To manage this effort effectively and efficiently, all group members must be aware of the following guidelines:

1. The group will be used by the Student Mentor for sharing important notifications related to the program, course content, live sessions, exams, events, etc.
2. Learners must use this group only to share and discuss program-, academic or domain-related content, which can foster and create a healthy environment conducive for studying. We recommend that the students limit the amount of personal information shared on this group.
3. A Student Mentor and a Program Coordinator from the Academic Committee will be part of the group to ensure that everyone maintains discipline and conducts themselves as per IIIT-B's and upGrad's policies.
4. Students are not permitted to discuss the solutions of any graded component of the program, including, but not limited to, Quizzes, Projects and Case Studies, in the group before the deadline. Sharing of exam questions over the WhatsApp groups after the first exam slot is also not permitted until the exam for the second slot is conducted.
5. Mutual respect is expected during discussions. Each student must respect the others' viewpoints, even if they are not aligned to their own.
6. This group is not a portal for grievance redressal, and the students are not permitted to use this group as a medium to vent. Should a student have any concerns regarding upGrad, the University partner or their peers, they will be required to direct such communication to upGrad ONLY via email.
7. upGrad and IIIT-B will NOT be collecting any personal information via this group, and shall not be responsible for any misuse of personal information by any member of the group. However, we will provide you with all reasonable assistance to take action against any student who misuses such information.
8. Students are advised NOT to spam the group with unrelated messages, such as irrelevant forwarded audio, videos, photos, messages, advertisements or promotions for any service. However, verified job postings that are relevant to the program are allowed.

9. Once the program ends, the Student Mentor and the Program Coordinator will exit the WhatsApp group. Post their exit, all the activities in a group will fall outside the purview of upGrad and the Academic Committee, and we shall no longer be liable for the activities within the groups.
10. The WhatsApp groups should not be considered media for official query resolution. For any such queries, the students should reach out to their respective Student Mentors via email or phone call, or by using the chat function available on the learning platform. The Student Mentor is not liable to answer any/all queries over the WhatsApp group.
11. Any kind of breach of our policies, misbehaviour/misleading comments or hate speech on the WhatsApp group will not be tolerated. As an immediate step, we will remove such an individual from the WhatsApp group, at our sole discretion. In certain cases, the concerned learner may have to face appropriate disciplinary action, which will be at the discretion of the Academic Committee. This can lead to permanent expulsion of the learner from the WhatsApp group or even from the program.
12. The Academic Committee reserves the right to report any inappropriate comments to law enforcement authorities for investigation if found necessary or required by law.

We hope you will make the most of this platform and contribute to the learning of the rest of the cohort as well.