**ASSESSMENT STRATEGY**

**Ensure that all responses relate to the relevant mode(s) of provisioning.**

1. Explain how the assessment strategy for the programme aligns to the institutional assessment strategy, the programme outcomes and mode of provisioning.

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| This assessment strategy document is applicable to both contact and distance mode of provisioning.  The University of Johannesburg (UJ) acknowledges that assessment constitutes a key element in its commitment to offering academic programmes that have international recognition as well as national legitimacy, credibility, and well-understood academic, professional, and career-oriented outcomes. Assessment and assessment practices at UJ are regulated in accordance with the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for registered standards and qualifications. The Assessment Policy is one of the principle means by which the University ensures that the quality and standard of learning outcomes of subsidized and non-subsidized programmes are assured. The policy applies across all faculties, departments, and campuses. The acceptance of an integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment, as well as an outcomes-based and programme-based approach to education, serves as a point of departure for the University’s Assessment policy.  UJ’s philosophy of ‘learning to be’ finds expression in the assessments across the programme which forms an integral part of the learning and teaching process. Suitable experts are identified for the purpose of external moderation; all moderators have a qualification of at least one level higher than the level to be moderated. Both internal and external moderators are appointed in line with the UJ’s Assessment Policy requirements. The same rules as stipulated in the University policies and their application in terms of plagiarism and misdemeanours, settling of disputes and the recording of results apply to this programme.  All UJ assessments should reflect academic integrity. All faculties and academic departments ensure that all assessments in the programmes, are of good quality. This means that assessment must be at an appropriate NQF level; aligned to the outcomes; internally or externally moderated as required; demonstrate consistency in marking; provide timely and constructive feedback to students. Assessments in the programme should demonstrate alignment with the purpose of the programme.  The following principles of assessment apply to any programme at UJ:   * 1. *Clear and explicit:* Assessment is a coherently designed and integral part of the teaching and learning process and is aligned to the purpose, learning content and outcomes of the module/programme. Assessments should be of high quality, use appropriate language, be clear, and be technically and logically laid out.   2. *Reliable:* Assessment practices reflect current good practices in higher education and contemporary research in assessment practices.   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 conducted.   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 are used and conducted at appropriate points in enhancing the learning experiences of students in the module/programme.   5. *Fair:* students are treated equally and are not unfairly disadvantaged. Appeal mechanisms are available. Assessment is followed by timely and constructive feedback, which supports learning.   The assessment strategy balances theoretical and practical application in line with the programme purpose, the NQF level of the programme, as well as the relevant aspects of the discipline. In achieving the exit level outcomes of the programme, students are required to meet assessment requirements set for the exit level of the programme, in line with the Institution's Assessment Policy. These requirements are cascaded down to module level. Assessment methods and types vary depending on the module purpose and the learning outcomes.  Assessment approaches could be formative or summative, or a combination of both formative and summative.     * 1. ***Formative assessment*** is diagnostic, developmental and contributes to students' capacity for self-assessment. Formative assessment is an assessment for learning and provides feedback to the student on their progress in order to improve future performance. Not all formative assessment result in a mark awarded to the student. However, if they do, students are informed of this prior to the submission.   2. ***Summative assessment*** is ordinarily conducted at the end of the module and evaluates the extent to *which the student has achieved the learning outcomes* of aunit/module and/or programme. The results of the summative assessment are expressed as a final mark and indicates either as a pass or a fail.   3. Integrated assessment may be formative or summative. They examine the overall competence of students in one or more of the following ways:      + - 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   The weighting of assessments toward the calculation of the final mark is clearly indicated to students in a comprehensive learning guide containing all the information pertaining to the administration of assessments in a particular module. The learning guide for every module is loaded onto Blackboard, which is the University’s Learning Management System. Below is an example of a criteria for the calculation of the semester results for a module that has adopted continuous assessment strategy:  *Please note that the table below should be used as a guide, academics and relevant staff personnel should customize in line with the module assessment strategy. The table should include both formative and summative assessment.*   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Example of Assessment Criteria for a Module | | | Minimum full period Mark for Examination admission | 40% | | Full Period Weight |  | | Examination Mark Weight | 40% | | Examination Mark Weight | 40% | | Minimum Final Mark | 50% |   Formative assessment opportunities for each module take place in different forms such as assignments, case studies, written tests, etc., in line with programme assessment strategy as well as programme purpose and exit level outcomes.  Summative assessment in a module that uses examination may take place in a variety of forms, such as a contact examination, or a distance online proctored examination. For a module that applies continuous assessment, the summative assessment may take the form of a project, an assignment, or a test. Whatever approach is decided by an academic staff, the summative assessment leads to the final mark awarded to the student in accordance with UJ's Assessment Policy. Access to supplementary and special assessments is in line with UJ Assessment Policy and the Academic Regulations published annually. |

2. Explain how the assessment strategy will ensure the evaluation of the achievement of the outcomes across the curriculum, at the various levels of the programme.

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| As stated above, at UJ, qualifications have been designed in keeping with the NQF and the appropriate SAQA level descriptors. In certain instances, some modules might have pre-requisites in terms of progression although students will be academically advised on a preferred order of studies. This information is contained in the Faculty Yearbook as well as module learning guide.  All modules in the programme are designed to ensure the achievement of exit level outcomes, integrated across the curriculum. This means that the students’ competencies are developed and built across the various elements in the programme. The learning outcomes of each module prepare students, whether individually, or in combination, are designed to ensure that the exit level outcomes are served. The assessment from a lower level are built to build student capabilities as they progress across the levels to be able to be assessed at the exit level. The whole curriculum is structured so that the assessment as aligned to learning and teaching will assure the evaluation of whether students have achieved the exit level outcomes of the qualification.  The assessment strategy includes a combination of formative and summative, weighted assessments. In addition, and as relevant, students will be expected to complete additional, self-assessment tasks, designed to encourage learning and independence. These will be loaded onto the Blackboard learning management system. In-class and in-tutorial / laboratory / clinical / discussion and activities ensure that students are exposed to a variety of assessment methods and opportunities, and that the different assessment tasks allow students to perform to their strengths.  In addition, the **[Name of the Department**] closely reviews the reports from all moderators to determine the areas identified which require improvements in the module or in the programme. This also helps to validate if the principles of Assessment, according to the UJ Assessment policy have been implemented consistently across the levels of the programme. Improvements are then actioned by the individual lecturers with close monitoring conducted by the Programme Coordinator (PC) and the Head of Department (HoD) to improve the assessment approaches and practices across modules in the programme.  Students are given an opportunity to complete a module evaluation for each module they are enrolled for, to provide input in terms of improving the delivery of modules with regard to enhancing the experiences of students in teaching, learning and assessment practices. In addition, lecturers develop diverse approaches to solicit student feedback on assessments and these range from informal to formal instruments. As indicated in the sections earlier, assessment are used as a diagnostic tool in improving student learning to enhance the likelihood of their success in the programme. Students who are identified as ‘at risk’ of failing a module are provided various academic support interventions to help them to progress across the levels of the programme towards completion. The student voice becomes a key part in evaluating the assessment strategy of the programme. |

3. Discuss policy implementation for this programme / qualification and the quality assurance mechanisms in place with regard to:

* **Formative and summative assessment** – As discussed in the section above, formative assessments are conducted for each module across the semesters in the programme. Summative assessment per module takes place either within the specified UJ’s exam venues for contact programmes or in the form of a distance online examination, for distance programmes. The summative assessment leads to the final examinable mark in accordance with UJ's Assessment Policy. The weighting of the formative minimum semester mark is 40%, and that would result to a student being expected to get a minimum examination mark of 60% in order to get a final mark of 50%, except in cases where the weighting requirement is higher for specific modules, in such instances, the weighting requirements are approved by the Faculty Board and ratified by Senate. External, pre-moderation of the assessments for exit level modules, is undertaken to assure the quality of the assessment prior to these being administered to students. The Programme Coordinator works closely with all academic staff (including service module lecturers) to ensure that the assessments meet the requirements of the programme, the Department, and the policies of the University. This further ensure that the quality assurance mechanisms in place are adhered to in line with the internal quality structures and procedures of the University.
* **Roles and responsibilities of academic staff and external parties** – Academic staff are recruited to deliver and implement quality learning, teaching and assessment for each module in a programme. The academic staff also serve as internal examiners and assessors of each module and are responsible to set up and ensure the quality of the assessment practices. **Internal and external moderation -** Internal moderation is undertaken by the internal academic staff teaching in the programme, who ensure that assessments are checked and that they meet UJ’s policy and quality requirements. External moderators assure the quality of all assessments in the exit-level modules of the programme. External moderators are appointed in keeping with University and Faculty policy, to ensure the quality of assessment for exit level modules in a programme. Furthermore, the external moderator assures that the learning achievements are in line with appropriate SAQA level descriptors and that the programme purpose is achieved.
* **Appointment / selection of internal and external moderators** – The Programme Coordinator coordinates the nomination of internal and external moderators for all the modules in the programme, by ensuring that suitably qualified candidates are nominated. The process for nomination and selection of moderators is overseen by the HOD, who submits the list of nominated moderators to the respective Faculty Board for approval. Once these lists are approved by the respective Faculty Boards, then the moderators are appointed.
* **Feedback on assessment** – For both contact and distance programmes, the results of formative assessment opportunities are communicated to students via the UJ Learning Management System within 10 working days after the submission date of the module assessment. The lecturers also discuss the feedback on assessment in the classroom with students. A memorandum and / marking rubric is uploaded on the LMS and discussed with students to enable them to compare their assessment answers to the model answers. This process ensures that students are provided with detailed feedback on the assessment, e.g., how marks were awarded, and why as well as tips on how performance may be improved. Should a student require further explanation, the student is free to arrange a consultation appointment with the lecturer where the assessment is discussed in detail. Assignment and projects are marked in line with the developed assessment rubric which is shared with students when they are given the assessment tasks in a particular module. The marking rubric outlines to students how marks will be allocated.
* **Quality assurance of assessment** - There are variety of approaches undertaken by lecturers in assuring quality in the modules of a programme. For example, the assessment rubrics and memoranda are developed to ensure the assessment expectations are clear. Student feedback during and after assessment tasks are used as part of understanding challenges students felt during the assessment process. The student feedback is also formalised in the form of the module evaluation surveys they complete. The moderation processes are also applied to enhance the quality assurance processes of the assessment. Furthermore, assessment methods and techniques are discussed extensively in programme meetings to ensure that students are exposed to diverse assessment practices across modules in a programme. Furthermore, the identification of students at risk as well as interventions implemented for academic student support also serve as the quality assurance measure for enhancing student success in a module and subsequently in the programme.

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| **Quality Assurance of Assessment**  Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and is fully aligned with the programme purpose and the exit level outcomes of a programme. The learning content and learning outcomes of a specific module inform the assessment for that module in the programme. These assure that the quality of assessments is an integral responsibility of the department. The UJ assessment system is reliable, robust, and secure to uphold a high level of integrity of assessment.  The following procedures are implemented to assure quality of assessment across modules:   * All summative assessment question papers with their memorandums are compiled by the lecturer responsible for the module. These assessment question papers are checked and verified against the study material by an appointed moderator to ensure that the assessment is fair, transparent, valid, and clear. The internal / external moderator signs off on the approved question papers. * Competent markers are appointed in a particular module, in cases of very large student numbers – but usually it is the individual lecturers who mark the assessments, and they are also responsible for managing the markers in their respective modules. * All the assessment results are checked through the verification of the results management process which is undertaken by the department. The submission flow of results is from a lecturer to the HOD for approval, and the release of assessment results take place via the UJ electronic mark management system. |

4**.** How will students’ grievances regarding assessment be managed?

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| A student grievance procedure is made available in the Faculty Yearbook, which is given to students upon registration. This is further explained during the orientation programme to ensure that all the students are aware of the grievance process and procedure regarding any teaching, learning and assessment-related issues.  If post the release of formative assessment results (with memorandum or marking rubric) via Blackboard, a student is not satisfied with the mark awarded; the student makes an appointment with the lecturer to discuss his/her concerns regarding the assessment. Lecturer contact details are contained in the learning guide including hours when the lecturer is available for consultation. If the student is not be happy with the outcome from the initial discussion with the lecturer, the student refers the matter to the departmental assessment committee who then investigate the matter. Students can escalate the matter beyond the department to the faculty Deanery.  Also, after the results of the final summative assessment have been released, students have an opportunity to query their results within a specified time as per the University academic regulations. Upon request from the student, an explanatory discussion takes place between the student and the module lecturer. If, after the explanation the student is still dissatisfied with the awarding of the final mark for the module, he/she may appeal to the Executive Dean of the faculty. The Dean at his/her own discretion, may decide to appoint an external candidate to review the matter and provide recommendation to the Dean. Furthermore, a student may apply for remarking of the summative assessment script. Proof of the reassessment administration fee is presented to the faculty in order to facilitate the remarking of the assessment as stipulated in the University assessment policy. |

5. How will the integrity and security of assessment be ensured?

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| Formative assessment opportunities for each module take place through various forms such as assignments, projects, case studies, and written tests etc. A variety of methods is implemented to minimize academic misconduct of students, including plagiarism. Students are informed of these methods in the Faculty Yearbook and during the orientation programme. UJ has robust IT infrastructure that enables protection of information which in the process assists in securing the assessment systems especially those relating to plagiarism and other forms of wrongdoing. The Blackboard assessment system has information security measures that are set up to ensure that students are both discouraged and prevented from cheating, as far as possible. Finally, a semester mark of a minimum of 40% provides for access to the summative assessment. To pass a module, a final mark of 50% is required, and this is applicable in both the module that has examinations and those that have continuous assessment strategy.  The summative assessment is conducted through diverse forms, for example, for both contact and distance (online) programmes where modules have examinations, the examinations are written under proctored conditions at the end of each semester or year in line with when the module is offered. This is scheduled according to the academic examination timetable. The summative assessment leads to the final judgmental mark in accordance with UJ's Assessment Policy. In addition, summative assessments are also conducted for modules that do not have examinations,  *Additional information can be provided here, should there be other forms of ensuring integrity and security of assessment.* |