



Stellenbosch University Assessment Policy

Purpose	To provide a framework for establishing valid, reliable and justifiable assessment practices and for setting clear criteria according to which faculties can orient and evaluate such practices
Type of document	Policy
Accessibility	General (external and internal)
Date of implementation	1 January 2022
Revision date	The policy must be reviewed during the fifth year of its having come into effect. It may be reviewed earlier, or more than once during this period, at the discretion of the policy owner.
Previous revisions	First approval 2004, revised 2012
Owner of this policy ¹	Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching
Curator of this policy ²	Senior Director: Division of Learning and Teaching Enhancement
Date of approval	September 2021
Approved by	SU Council
Keywords	policy, assessment of student learning, purposes of assessment, assessment as teaching practice, effective assessment

SU policies are available at <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/policy>.

¹ Policy owner: head(s) of responsibility centre(s) in which the policy functions

² Policy curator: administrative head of the division responsible for implementing and maintaining the policy

1.	Introduction	4
1.1	National perspective	4
1.2	Institutional perspective	4
2.	Implementation	4
3.	Definitions	5
4.	Purpose	5
5.	Aims.....	5
6.	Principles.....	5
7.	Provisions.....	7
7.1.	Process of assessment	7
7.2.	Purposes of assessment.....	7
	Assessments serve various purposes that would further the primary goal of facilitating learning and preparing students for lifelong learning, such as:	7
8.	Framework for effective assessment.....	8
8.1	Validity	8
8.2	Authenticity.....	8
8.3	Reliability.....	9
8.4	Educational impact	9
8.5	Academic integrity	9
8.6	Transparency.....	10
8.7	Fairness	10
8.8	Achievability.....	10
8.9	Learning-centred feedback	10
9.	Roles and responsibilities.....	11
9.1	Responsibilities aimed at improving assessment practice.....	11
9.1.1	Assessor competence	11
9.2	Responsibilities aimed at implementing the assessment policy	12
10.	Conflict settlement	14
11.	Policy control	14
11.1	Owner.....	14
11.2	Curator	14
11.3	Monitoring and reporting	14
11.4	Release	15
11.5	Revision	15

11.6	Non-compliance	15
12.	Supporting documents.....	15
13.	Related documents	15
14.	List of references.....	16
Annexure A: Glossary		18

1. Introduction

Stellenbosch University (SU) recognizes that assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching. The higher educational context is dynamic and complex, and SU accepts that assessment practices are contextual. Therefore, this policy does not propose to be prescriptive about assessment practices; instead, it allows for flexibility in applying the guidelines and principles for excellent practice regarding assessment.

Although SU supports a unified assessment system, it does not propose a unified approach in applying the guidelines and principles set out in this policy. Also, the University acknowledges that decisions regarding assessment that promotes student learning will differ from one faculty to the next.

1.1 National perspective

At national level, the policies of the Council for Higher Education (CHE) on the *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)*, *Credit Accumulation and Transfer*, and *Assessment in Higher Education* (CHE, 2016) set out to provide directives and procedures for assessment practices. This document describes assessment as “an integral part of the teaching and learning process” that is “systematically and purposefully used to identify, gather and interpret information against the required competencies in a qualification in order to make judgement about a student’s achievement” (CHE, 2016:12). By this definition assessment is “a continuous and iterative process that is not used to measure learning only but is also a means to develop lifelong learning and to promote innovative and creative thinking in order to consolidate existing learning and build further learning” (ibid.).

1.2 Institutional perspective

At institutional level, SU’s Assessment Policy strives to make explicit the points of departure for assessment that are implicit in existing institutional, facultorial and departmental regulations and practices. In the spirit of “quality teaching and learning that embraces the rich potential of an increasingly diverse student body and the need for graduates who can contribute to a complex society”, as stated in the University’s *Teaching and Learning Policy* (SU, 2018:2), this policy is intended to align assessment practices at SU to the institutional *Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019-2024* (SU, 2019). Of special importance here is strategic theme 1: *A transformative student experience* (SU, 2019:20) and theme 2: *Networked and collaborative teaching and learning*. Additionally, the development of the graduate attributes as described in SU’s *Strategy for Teaching and Learning 2017–2021* (SU, 2017) is to be embedded in all learning, teaching and assessment activities where necessary and/or applicable.

2. Implementation

This policy applies to all assessment activities across the University, including:

- a) all registered students;
- b) all programmes and modules that are part of registered and accredited certificate, diploma and degree programmes – whether undergraduate or postgraduate – as well as short courses and co-curricular activities that include assessments;
- c) on- and off-campus assessments, including work-integrated assessments;
- d) individual and group assessments;
- e) face-to-face or online assessments, supervised or unsupervised, written or oral, and practicals; and

- f) permanent SU employees as well as external, accredited and/or contract staff and students (e.g. tutors) involved in the assessment of student learning.

Individual faculties, departments or centres, however, have the responsibility to interpret the policy for their specific circumstances and to apply it with reference to their contexts. Such interpretations must be defined in faculty-specific assessment rules and regulations and approved by the relevant faculty board(s) or approval structure(s). This process of approval is set out in the *SU Calendar (Part 1): General*.

All statutes, rules, regulations and guidelines that have a bearing on the assessment of student learning at SU, including the section “Assessments and Promotions” published annually in the *Calendar (Part 1)*, and any faculty-specific assessment rules and guideline documents, are subject to and must comply with this policy.

3. Definitions

Assessment refers to the systematic evaluation of students’ abilities to demonstrate their having achieved the learning goals set for a curriculum (CHE, 2016:2). This can include a variety of tasks, products, outputs or competencies used to gather evidence and compare the students’ performance against the set assessment criteria and outcomes.

Please consult Annexure A for a comprehensive glossary.

4. Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to provide a flexible assessment framework that delivers robust assessments across all programmes and modules, and a system that effectively promotes students’ learning at SU and beyond as well as evaluates students’ achievements for certification.

5. Aims

- a) Draw on principles of good assessment practice in higher education which are research-based and in keeping with national policy frameworks and quality standards, so as to establish an institutional benchmark that informs faculty-specific assessment practices, processes and procedures.
- b) Provide the rationale for a flexible yet robust assessment framework that adheres to policy principles and that fulfils an integral role in enhancing the quality of curricula, learning, teaching and research.
- c) Provide guidance for an effective assessment management system at SU.
- d) Support the achievement of SU’s *Vision 2040* of being a transformed and integrated academic community that celebrates critical thinking, promotes debate and is committed to democracy, human rights and social justice with an outward, international and future-oriented focus, as well as to the relevant strategic themes of the University’s *Strategic Framework 2019–2024*.
- e) Support the achievement, where necessary and/or applicable, of the SU graduate attributes that are purposefully embedded in curricula, learning, teaching and assessment with a view to developing enquiring minds, engaged citizens, dynamic professionals and well-rounded individuals.

6. Principles

- 6.1 The University’s vision, mission and values guide learning, teaching and assessment. Assessment forms the essence of an **integrated approach to student learning** where

assessment constitutes the learning and teaching practice through which the most direct influence may be exerted on student learning, as well as the practice in which most is at stake for students. In the words of David Boud: “Students can, with difficulty, escape from the effects of poor teaching, they cannot (by definition, if they want to graduate) escape the effects of poor assessment” (Boud, 1995:35).

- 6.2** Therefore, this policy promotes assessment that **enhances student learning**. This is achieved specifically by means of *formative* assessments (assessments *for* learning), which offer students opportunities to learn how to judge their own understanding. Thus they are prepared for *summative* assessments (assessments *of* learning), which are implemented to measure (by lecturers, peers and students themselves) what learning has been achieved. According to this approach, assessment happens not only at the end of the learning process but throughout, and the formative and sustainable elements of assessment are emphasised (refer to 7.2).
- 6.3** This policy situates assessment as an integrated part of a learning and teaching process that **constructively aligns** learning outcomes, learning opportunities and assessment practices (Biggs, 1996). This means that outcomes are predetermined, learning opportunities are designed for maximum attainment of the outcomes, and assessments judge how well the outcomes have been achieved. The alignment process must take into account the level of achievement measured against, for example, Bloom’s taxonomy of cognitive dimensions (Anderson et al., 2001), Miller’s pyramid of clinical (practical) competence (Miller, 1990) and Biggs’s SOLO taxonomy on levels of understanding (Biggs, 2012).
- 6.4** This policy advocates a **flexible** assessment approach; i.e. that encourages faculties and responsibility centres to do various assessments throughout the module to contribute to the final mark. Although test-type assessments during dedicated assessment periods are still widely used where necessary, SU’s position is that an effective assessment strategy requires consideration of the multiple other forms of assessment available. Thus, each programme or module must consider an effective assessment strategy and the most appropriate methods for their defined purposes. In designing assessment strategies the utmost care must be taken that the methods and approaches chosen comply with the guidelines and framework set out in this policy.
- 6.5** This policy accepts that **assessors are competent** (refer to 9.1.1) to decide on assessment methods within their disciplines, programmes and modules, and that they are prepared to strive towards excellence in knowledge practice and to keep developing their skills. This policy does not propose to be prescriptive about assessment strategies; instead, it leaves lecturers room to make justifiable choices regarding assessment within their own environments.
- 6.6** Thus, this policy assumes that assessors approach assessment as a purposeful activity in which each step of the process has been carefully considered and justified. Such assessment strategies **do not privilege one form or purpose of assessment over another**; instead, they include the following:
- a) A sufficient number of appropriate *formative* assessment opportunities to allow students to judge their own progress before final summative assessment. Key in the process of formative assessment is adequate learning-centred feedback to inform future decisions. This feedback need not be one-to-one or lecturer generated, but can also be automated, self- or peer generated.
 - b) Reliable and fair *summative* assessments that produce valid conclusions about student progress and achievement or mastery of the material. The validity of decisions about

student achievement depends greatly on the reliability and replicability of the assessment methods, the fairness of the assessment strategies and the transparency of the assessment process.

- c) A sufficient number of opportunities to develop the skill of *lifelong learning or sustainable assessment*; encapsulated by the SU graduate attribute “an enquiring mind”. One way of serving this end-goal is to deliver students who can assess their own work and that of others fairly. Including opportunities for self- and peer assessment is an assessment strategy that allows students to develop these skills.

This policy finds expression in the assessment procedures and rules that apply at SU, as set out in detail in *Calendar (Part 1)*.

7. Provisions

When faculties/departments/centres consider their assessment strategies, they must take into account the factors listed below and must clearly identify in their assessment strategies where these factors have been incorporated.

7.1. Process of assessment

SU regards the assessment of student learning as a **process** with the following stages:

- a) The expectations of and standards for learning as well as the criteria for evaluating assessments are clear and available.
- b) Evidence is gathered to compare student learning to these expectations, standards and criteria.
- c) The evidence is analysed and interpreted.
- d) The information gathered in this manner is used to document, explain and/or enhance teaching and student learning.

7.2. Purposes of assessment

Assessments serve various purposes that would further the primary goal of facilitating learning and preparing students for lifelong learning, such as:

- a) **diagnostic** purposes, which evaluate students’ strengths, weaknesses, prior knowledge and skills before their instruction; e.g. as a pre-assessment for a module/contact session/tutorial, to decide what action(s) may be required of the students and/or the lecturer, or for the purpose of selection, admission and/or placement;
- b) **summative** purposes (i.e. assessment **of** learning), which inform decisions and findings on students’ progress, e.g. for promotion or certification, to make value judgements about their performance; summative purposes also includes selection, admission and placements;
- c) **formative** purposes (i.e. assessment **for** learning), which serve the learning process primarily by offering students an opportunity to develop the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes with the aid of learning-centred feedback; self- and peer assessment also can promote learning, as this requires students to engage with the assessment criteria;
- d) **sustainability** purposes (i.e. assessment **as** learning), which form students to become lifelong learners who can judge their own performance; self- and peer assessment are key in this regard; and
- e) **evaluation** purposes, when assessment results are considered along with other information to evaluate the quality of a learning and teaching event/module/programme.

Important: Academic environments must ensure that both assessors and students who are assessed grasp the different purposes of assessment thoroughly, and that one kind of assessment may serve more than one purpose.

8. Framework for effective assessment

Assessments that promote student learning need to be designed according to the principles of effective assessment. The purpose of the framework below is to provide assessors with guidelines for measuring their assessment practices – individual assessment opportunities as well as processes at module and programme level. Nevertheless, the responsibility remains with faculties and centres and their staff involved in assessment to interpret this framework for their own contexts and implement it accordingly.

Assessors must ensure in every instance that assessments comply with these principles – at all *levels* of assessment (e.g. individual assessment opportunities and at module or programme level) as well as all assessment *methods and instruments* (e.g. online tests and multiple-choice tests).

Important: These **principles form an integrated framework and are not to be considered or applied in isolation. Instead, they must be balanced against each other as far as possible.** This may mean that individual principles do not apply to the same extent to each assessment; still, each principle applies holistically at modular and/or programme level.

8.1 Validity

Assessments are valid if they measure what they are supposed to measure, and when the deductions and actions that are based on the assessment results are appropriate and accurate.

Indicators of validity:

- a) The assessment component of a programme is planned and developed in a manner that allows students to demonstrate to the extent to which they have achieved the stated outcomes, both specific and generic.
- b) The assessment is aligned with the learning outcomes and assessment opportunities.
- c) Measures are in place to ensure that what is assessed will reflect the content of the stated outcomes satisfactorily.
- d) The assessment methods (e.g. tests, assignments, tasks, practicals or orals) have been selected according to the nature of the learning outcomes to be assessed.
- e) The number of opportunities for the different types of assessment are in accurate proportion to the different learning outcomes.

8.2 Authenticity

Authentic assessment practices are closely aligned with activities that take place in real-world settings, thereby requiring students to apply relevant skills and knowledge. This could enhance student learning for a changing world and create opportunities to develop and assess graduate attributes where necessary and/or applicable. Authenticity is about creating learning environments that involves true-to-life contexts and scenarios, ensuring that assessments measure whether students actually can use their knowledge effectively as opposed to reproducing surface knowledge that is quickly forgotten after the assessment opportunity. This may, however, not be equally relevant to all learning contexts.

Features of authentic assessment (Burton, 2011) include:

- a) a task that is aligned to what would be expected of the student in the real world/workplace;
- b) a task that produces a polished product valuable in its own right;
- c) a task that requires higher-order thinking that incorporates reflection and self-assessment;
- d) learning opportunities that are seamlessly integrated with assessment opportunities;
- e) a task that requires collaboration between students, even between students and professionals;
- f) students making choices and judgements regarding secondary tasks; and
- g) a complex task that focuses on an open-ended inquiry, requiring diverse and novel responses.

8.3 Reliability

Reliable assessment consistently distinguishes between performance that is acceptable, exemplary or in need of improvement. The results of individual assessment tasks or opportunities, as well as the results of assessment processes (programmes and modules), must be repeatable in different contexts or over time.

Indicators of reliability:

- a) Methods are selected that are known for being reliable in assessing the stated outcomes.
- b) Attention is paid to factors that could influence the reliability of the method.
- c) The number and variety of methods are consciously selected to improve reliability.
- d) When one or more assessors are involved in marking the same item, care is taken so ensure uniformity.

8.4 Educational impact

Assessment influences what, when and how students learn.

Lecturers that assess to promote learning do the following:

- a) Employ content-appropriate assessments that are relevant to the set outcomes.
- b) Use assessment formats appropriate to the outcomes.
- c) Schedule assessments to foster a deeper learning approach.
- d) Consider as far as possible how each assessment contributes to the holistic assessment of the module and programme, including how each is aligned with the outcomes and contributes to the final mark.

8.5 Academic integrity

In order to determine whether students have learned and achieved the outcomes of a module or programme, lecturers need to know that the work they are assessing is a student's own; i.e. that they can count on academic integrity. SU has established procedures to promote the academic integrity of all assessment practices, also in the online environment. This implies that all those involved are fully informed of University regulations in this regard as set out in the SU's *Policy on Plagiarism (In Support of Academic Integrity)* (SU, 2016a), which applies to invigilated face-to-face as well as online (whether non-invigilated or invigilated) assessments.

8.6 Transparency

Transparent assessment means that the students are informed about the reasons for the assessment, when it will take place, et cetera.

Indicators of transparency:

- a) Students are informed of any environment-specific appeal procedures that are additional to those set out in *Calendar (Part 1)*.
- b) Students receive clear information about the assessment requirements against which their performance will be measured for the various assessment opportunities and assessment methods.
- c) Marks for assessment tasks, as well as the final mark, are determined according to clearly defined criteria, not with reference to the performance of other students.
- d) The module framework clearly explains the formula for allocating different weights to different assessment opportunities, according to which the final mark is calculated.

8.7 Fairness

In a fair assessment system, all students are treated without prejudice or discrimination. Assignments for assessment must be formulated so as to be understood and interpreted correctly by students from different backgrounds, and must integrate the provisions of SU's *Language Policy* (2016).

Indicators of fairness:

- a) All students have access to learning opportunities before assessments take place.
- b) The calculation of marks for a module is a considered, justifiable process.
- c) Measures are in place to ensure that student performance be judged reliably and validly.
- d) A variety of assessment methods are used, where applicable, including formative assessments, which allow students to learn from their mistakes before summative assessments are taken.
- e) The criteria for assessment are communicated to the students before they have to do a task.
- f) Purposeful efforts are made to safeguard assessment as far as possible against any intended or unintended forms of unfair discrimination.

8.8 Achievability

The cost and practical implications of the assessment process must be reasonable within the context and the purpose of the assessment. This may include that the timing of each assessment, as well as the time and effort required of students, must be appropriate for the purpose of the assessment and its contribution to the final mark (where applicable).

8.9 Learning-centred feedback

Lecturers must provide feedback that enables students to distinguish clearly between sections that were completed satisfactorily and those requiring further study. Student learning is promoted and supported not by a one-sided focus on marks, but by supporting students to monitor their own learning and reflect on learning experiences. Learning-centred feedback on *formative*, *summative* and *sustainable* assessment tasks is critical in this regard, but may be inappropriate or unfeasible in the case of some final assessment tasks.

Indicators of feedback that promotes student learning:

- a) Formative and sustainable assessment with learning-centred feedback is an integral part of the assessment of programmes and modules, whenever applicable.
- b) Assessment opportunities are scheduled throughout the semester to promote quality of learning, which is encouraged and supported by learning-centred feedback.
- c) Students have the opportunity to respond to feedback and thereby improve their performance in subsequent tasks.
- d) Student performance is utilised as a source of information for reflecting on teaching and assessment practice.
- e) Students are educated in using feedback on assessments to further their development.
- f) Lecturers continuously reflect on assessment practices by applying the principles of sound assessment and constructive alignment.

9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1 Responsibilities aimed at improving assessment practice

SU has a well-established culture of quality assurance and enhancement supported by regular evaluation of academic departments and PASS environments (professional and administrative support services) according to a fixed cycle of self-evaluation. However, given the different disciplinary and other contexts, the University recognises that assessment practices may differ across the institution. That said, SU grasps the need for clear, comprehensive and transparent analysis of and reporting on assessment practices to inform the quality enhancement of curricula, teaching, learning and assessment within departments and faculties. Therefore, the responsibilities and tasks of various role-players, as outlined below, are required to comply with this policy as far as reasonably possible and practical.

9.1.1 Assessor competence

One of the directives set out in the CHE's *Policies on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and Assessment in Higher Education* (CHE, 2016) reads as follows:

The development of staff competence in assessment, whereby academic staff members are provided with training support that will allow them to assess validly and consistently to enhance the overall quality of the module/course/qualification, is a necessity (CHE, 2016:16).

In compliance with this directive, SU offers multiple opportunities for developing the required competence in assessment, including:

- a) material in the PREDAC (Professional Educational Development of Academics) short course, which is aimed at newly appointed academic staff;
- b) an online resource on assessment, open to all, offered by our CTL (Centre for Teaching and Learning);
- c) an SU-accredited short course on assessment, open to all, offered by the CTL;
- d) the Blended Teaching and Learning Upskilling Learning Units, which focuses on the digital aspects of assessment, offered by the CLT; and
- e) assessment discussions and workshops hosted in and by faculties.

It is the responsibility of the faculty or centre that hosts the module to ensure that those involved in the assessment of student learning have adequate competence. That would entail

attempts to ensure (as far as possible and reasonably practical) that all ad hoc or non-academic staff – such as tutors and other facilitators of learning, whether in-person or online – are competent assessors and familiar with the assessment approach and rules at SU.

9.2 Responsibilities aimed at implementing the assessment policy

9.2.1 Responsibilities of the student

- a) Be fully informed of SU's assessment rules and regulations as contained in *Calendar (Part 1)*.
- b) Be fully informed of the assessment rules and regulations for a specific module as contained in the module framework.
- c) Takes responsibility for utilising assessment opportunities to the best of their abilities.
- d) Familiarise themselves with SU's [Teaching and Learning Policy](#) (2018) and the [Disciplinary Code for Students of Stellenbosch University](#) (2016b).
- e) Commit to making an honest and diligent attempt at assessment tasks, as explained in SU's [Policy on Plagiarism \(In Support of Academic Integrity\)](#) (SU, 2016a).

9.2.2 Responsibilities of the Academic Affairs Council (AAC) and class representatives (where applicable)

- a) Bring problematic trends related to assessment to the attention of the relevant persons or environments.
- b) Orient students via their faculty structures regarding assessment and their responsibilities in that regard.
- c) Familiarise themselves with the stipulations of the Assessment Policy and assessment guidelines in *Calendar (Part 1)*, and can inform students about them.

9.2.3 Responsibilities of the assessor

- a) Familiarise themselves with the stipulations of the Assessment Policy and any subordinate documents that have a bearing on assessment in their specific context (e.g. *Calendar [Part 1]* and faculty-specific assessment rules and regulations).
- b) Make a purposeful effort to apply the framework for effective assessment in their own context.
- c) Ensure that all information regarding assessment for their module is communicated to students in the module framework.
- d) Takes responsibility, in cooperation with the relevant person at the faculty (e.g. departmental chair and/or programme coordinator) for their own further development and/or training as regards assessment skills.

9.2.4 Responsibilities of faculties and centres that host programmes or modules

Each faculty or centre must assign a person or group tasked with implementing this policy, who must ensure that its requirements and stipulations are interpreted and applied for their context and realised in the assessment practices in their environment. This is to be achieved specifically by:

- a) coordinating and interpreting the policy in light of the faculty's or centre's requirements;
- b) formulating an assessment strategy or assessment rules that regulate the assessments of programmes and/or modules hosted by the faculty or centre;

- c) developing and implementing procedures that will advance effective practices regarding assessment at the faculty or centre;
- d) establishing procedures and mechanisms for identifying and responding to problems related to the implementation of the policy;
- e) ensuring that all those involved in assessment receive appropriate training and/or development opportunities; and
- f) ensuring compliance with assessment requirements from professional bodies where applicable.

9.2.5 Responsibility of programme coordinators or leaders

For each programme, the programme coordinator or leader, or another appropriate person must:

- a) ensure compliance with assessment requirements from professional bodies where applicable;
- b) lead, as prompted by the programme committee chair or another appropriate person at the faculty or centre, cyclical and thematic reviews to investigate, monitor and take action where issues have arisen that relate to appropriate assessment criteria, methods and/or tools for integrated assessment;
- c) monitors and follow up on key requirements, e.g.
 - i. that assessment should provide sufficient evidence that the module/programme outcomes are achieved; and
 - ii. that appropriate assessment criteria and methods are applied.

9.2.6 Responsibilities of the department/centre/school hosting a module

The departmental chair or the director of the centre/school must:

- a) develop a system for monitoring assessment and moderation practices at the department/centre/school to ensure that they comply with University policy;
- b) identify procedures, mechanisms and a support system to deal with deviation from the University's Assessment Policy;
- c) monitor students' perceptions of the quality of their assessment, e.g. by means of module and lecturer feedback, and develop a support system for instances of apparent substandard assessment; and
- d) ensure, upon their being appointed as well as continuously after that, that lecturers involved in the assessment of student learning have sufficient and appropriate training in and/or experience of assessment.

The staff member responsible for the teaching and assessment of a specific module or part of a module must:

- a) support the departmental chair or director of the centre/school in their responsibilities in this regard;
- b) ensure that the assessment of a module by moderated internally and externally – holistically, not as individual assessments – as stipulated by SU's Regulation on Internal and External Moderation; and
- c) ensure that the outcomes, teaching and assessments of the module is aligned with those of the programme (where applicable) by consulting with the relevant programme coordinator (or other appropriate person) and providing feedback on assessment tasks.

9.2.7 Responsibilities of the Committee for Learning and Teaching

The CLT monitors the implementation of the University's Assessment Policy by ensuring that this policy is reviewed five years after its implementation.

9.2.8 Responsibilities of the Centre for Teaching and Learning

The CTL, in consultation with faculties, must:

- a) provide support to assessors in developing and implementing appropriate assessment practices;
- b) provide learning opportunities for assessors, e.g. by means of workshops and a short course in assessment;
- c) consult with individual assessors, programme coordinators, module chairs, departments and faculties on the evaluation, monitoring and adaptation of assessment practices;
- d) support persons or task teams who are responsible for implementing the Assessment Policy at faculties; and
- e) undertake needs-oriented research on relevant aspects of assessment.

10. Conflict settlement

Conflicts regarding this policy are to be resolved according to the normal line management structures within the institution, such as the facultorial learning and teaching committees, the Senate Subcommittee for Learning and Teaching, and Senate itself. The final decision-making authority in this regard resides with the SU Council.

11. Policy control

11.1 Owner

The owner of this policy document is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching, who must:

- a) oversee the development of the policy;
- b) ensure that the necessary documents are drawn up;
- c) appoint a curator for the policy;
- d) ensure that the curator functions effectively; and
- e) appoint a task team for revising the policy document periodically as required.

11.2 Curator

The curator of this policy document is the Senior Director: Division of Learning and Teaching Enhancement, who is responsible for:

- a) the formulation, approval, revision, communication, release, and monitoring of the implementation of this policy document; and
- b) the interpretation of and guidance regarding the implementation of the policy, and for convening a task team for revising the policy periodically as required.

11.3 Monitoring and reporting

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching is accountable for creating the necessary controls to monitor and report on this policy. The curator is responsible for carrying out such measures of control.

Senate monitors the implementation of the policy via an annual report on learning and teaching presented to Senate by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching.

11.4 Release

This policy is a public document, which is published on the Stellenbosch University website. The policy is approved by the SU Council after concurrent consultation with Senate and the Institutional Forum. Approval is preceded by recommendations by all faculty boards as specified by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching and by the Executive Committee of Senate. Sections 11 and 12 of this policy may be updated editorially as new policy documents come into being, but requires approval by the CLT and must be reported to Senate for their information.

11.5 Revision

This policy is reviewed every five years, or sooner, if deemed necessary.

11.6 Non-compliance

In case of non-compliance with this policy, the normal line management practices apply.

12. Supporting documents

The following documents have a bearing on assessment at SU and should be read with this policy:

Document name	Status (e.g. identified, in process or approved)
Teaching and Learning Policy	Approved September 2018
Internal and External Moderation and the Processing of Results	Approved September 2014
Regulation for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation Transfer (CAT)	Approved June 2017
Policy on Plagiarism (In Support of Academic Integrity)	Approved November 2016
Strategy for Teaching and Learning 2017–2021	Approved March 2017
Institutional Intent and Strategy 2013–2018	Approved
Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024	Approved 2019

13. Related documents

Document name	Status (e.g. identified, in process or approved)
SU Rules for Policy and Management Documents	Approved November 2012
Quality Assurance and Enhancement at Stellenbosch University	Approved September 2019
Regulation for the Committee for Learning and Teaching	Approved June 2017
Strategy for the use of ICT in Learning and Teaching at Stellenbosch University	Task team output document, April 2013
Policy with regard to Student Feedback on Modules, Lecturers and Programmes	Approved 2016

Document name	Status (e.g. identified, in process or approved)
Early Assessment: Protocol	Approved 2008
Regulation for Internal and External Moderation and the Processing of Results	Approved September 2014
Language Policy of Stellenbosch University	Approved June 2016
Policy on Teaching and Learning Materials	Approved June 2007; under revision
Policy for Module Outlines and Study Guides	Approved 2002; due for revision
Disability Access Policy	Approved March 2018
Conceptual Framework Document for Academic Literacies at SU	Approved March 2021
Duties and Responsibilities of Programme Coordinators and Programme Committee Chairpersons	Approved August 2004; under revision
Recognising Co-curricular Achievements	Approved July 2015
Formulating the SU Graduate Attributes	Approved 2017
Embedding Graduate Attributes in the Mainstream Curriculum	Approved 2013
Guidelines Relating to SU's Extended Degree Programme (EDP)	Approved 2010
Information Literacy Training Framework	Approved September 2014
Disciplinary Code for Students of Stellenbosch University	Approved 2020
Designing Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DeLTA) process	Developed in 2020
SU Guidelines for Programme Committee Chairs and Programme Leaders	Approved November 2018
Draft SU Regulations for Peer-to-peer Learning Support 2020	Under revision

14. List of references

- Anderson, LW & Krathwohl, DR. 2001. *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy*. New York, NY. Longman.
- Biggs, J. 1996. Enhancing teaching through constructive alignment. *Higher Education*, 32(3):347-364.
- Biggs, J. 2012. What the student does: Teaching for enhanced learning. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 31(1):39-55.
- Boud, D. 1995. Assessment and learning: Contradictory or complementary, in P Knight (ed.). *Assessment for Learning in Higher Education*. London: Kogan. 35-48.
- Burton, K. 2011. A framework for determining the authenticity of assessment tasks applied to an example in law. *Journal of Learning Design*, 4(2):20-28.
- Council on Higher Education. 2016. *Policies on the Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and Assessment in Higher Education* [Online]. Available: <https://fundisa.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/RPL-CAT-Assessment-Policy-Document.pdf> [2020, October 7].

- Cruess, RL, Cruess, SR & Steinert, Y. 2016. Amending Miller's Pyramid to include professional identity formation. *Academic Medicine*, 91(2):180-185.
- Miller GE. 1990. The assessment of clinical skills/competence/performance. *Academic Medicine*, 65(9):63-67.
- Stellenbosch University (SU). 2021. *Calendar (Part 1): General* [Online]. Available: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Documents/Yearbooks/Current/2021-Calendar-Part-1.pdf> [2021, May 5].
- Stellenbosch University (SU). 2020. Draft SU Regulations for Peer-to-peer Learning Support.
- Stellenbosch University (SU). 2019. *Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024* [Online]. Available: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/about-us/strategic-documents> [2021, March 10].
- Stellenbosch University (SU). 2018. *Teaching and Learning Policy* [Online]. Available: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/about-us/strategic-documents> [2020, November 12].
- Stellenbosch University (SU). 2017. *Strategy for Teaching and Learning 2017–2021* [Online]. Available: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/about-us/strategic-documents> [2020, November 12].
- Stellenbosch University (SU). 2016. *Policy on Plagiarism: In Support of Academic Integrity* [Online]. Available: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/about-us/strategic-documents> [2020, November 12].
- Stellenbosch University (SU). 2016. *Disciplinary Code for Students of Stellenbosch University* [Online]. Available: https://sunrecords.sun.ac.za/controlled/C4%20Policies%20and%20Regulations/Disciplinary%20Code%20For%20Students%20Of%20Stellenbosch%20University_2021.pdf [2021, March 15].
- Stellenbosch University (SU). 2016. *Language Policy* [Online]. Available: <https://sunrecords.sun.ac.za/controlled/C4%20Policies%20and%20Regulations/Language%20Policy.pdf> [2021, May 5].

Annexure A: Glossary

Term	Definition	Source
Assessment	The process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information and evidence with reference to the competencies required for a qualification, partial qualification, or professional designation in order to judge a learner's achievement. Assessment can be formal, non-formal or informal; it can cover learning already done or be undertaken towards learning, to inform and shape teaching and learning still to be done.	SAQA. 2014. <i>National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa</i> [Online]. Available: http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/pol/2016/National%20Policy%20for%20Assessment(PrintReady).pdf [2018, May 15].
	The systematic evaluation of a student's ability to demonstrate their having achieved the learning outcomes set for a curriculum.	Council on Higher Education (CHE). 2016. <i>Policies on the Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and Assessment</i> [Online]. Available: https://www.che.ac.za/media_and_publications/frameworks-criteria/council-higher-education-s-policies-recognition-prior [2016, August 31].
Assessment criteria	The standards used to guide learning and assess learner achievement and/or to evaluate and certify competence.	SAQA. 2014. <i>National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa</i> [Online]. Available: http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/pol/2016/National%20Policy%20for%20Assessment(PrintReady).pdf [2018, May 15].
Assessment methods/types	The mechanisms that are used to assess student performance. Several assessment methods should be used to determine the extent to which students have achieved the desired learning outcomes of a module/subject/programme. <i>An A-Z of Assessment Methods</i> , compiled by the University of Reading, offers a list of options.	University of Reading. n.d. <i>An A-Z of Assessment Methods</i> [Online]. Available: https://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/eia/A-Z_of_Assessment_Methods_FIN_AL_table.pdf [2019, November 13].

Term	Definition	Source
Assessment opportunities (no official definition available in national policy frameworks)	The number and frequency of assessments taken during a given period of study (e.g. a semester/year). These may include formal and informal assessments.	
Assessment plan/strategy	Assessment can be taken at various times throughout a learning programme. A comprehensive assessment plan should incorporate several assessment opportunities that maintains an appropriate balance between formative and summative types of assessment.	UFS. 2016. <i>Assessment Policy</i> [Online]. Available: https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/default-source/all-documents/assessment-policy-on-the-ufs-coursework-learning-programmes.pdf?sfvrsn=3716c321_0 [2021, May 12].
Assessment practices (no official definition available in national policy frameworks)	An integral part of the teaching and learning process at the institution, informed by national and institutional policy frameworks, rules and regulations and executed with reference to the relevant principles, functions, types, methods and modes of assessment.	
Assessment system (no official definition available in national policy frameworks)	In higher education, such system often comprises different levels. At <i>module</i> level, student performance is assessed. At <i>programme</i> level, an assessment plan is designed. At <i>institutional</i> level, the various institutional policies, rules and regulations pertaining to the academic and administrative aspects of assessment come together. At <i>external</i> level the overall context of the institution is taken into account, including interaction with national quality assurance agencies and professional bodies.	Joughin, G. & Macdonald, R. A model of assessment in higher education institutions. <i>The Higher Education Academy</i> [Aanlyn]. Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228873474_A_model_of_assessment_in_higher_education_institutions#:~:text=Assessment%20in%20higher%20education%20is,the%20quality%20of%20assessment%20practice [2021, May 12].
Curriculum	A statement of the training structure and expected methods of learning and teaching that underpin a qualification to facilitate a more general understanding of its implementation in an education system.	Adapted from: SAQA. 2014. <i>SAQA Standard Glossary of Terms related to the SA National Qualifications Framework</i> . [Online]. Available: https://hr.saqa.co.za/glossary/pdf/NQFPedia.pdf [2021, May 12].

Term	Definition	Source
Formative assessment	A range of formal, non-formal and informal ongoing assessment procedures that are used to focus teaching and learning activities to improve student achievement, or that are required for the purpose of a final mark.	SAQA. 2014. <i>SAQA Standard Glossary of Terms related to the SA National Qualifications Framework</i> . [Online]. Available: http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/pol/2016/National%20Policy%20for%20Assessment(PrintReady).pdf [2021, Mei 12].
Learning outcomes	The contextually demonstrated end products of specific learning processes, which include knowledge, skills and values.	SAQA. 2014. <i>National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa</i> [Online]. Available: http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/pol/2016/National%20Policy%20for%20Assessment(PrintReady).pdf [2021, May 12].
	What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after having completed a process of learning.	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. 2018. <i>QAA Glossary</i> [Online]. Available: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/glossary [2021, May 12].
Learning/study programme	A purposeful and structured set of learning experiences that leads to a qualification.	SAQA. 2014. <i>National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa</i> [Online]. Available: http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/pol/2016/National%20Policy%20for%20Assessment(PrintReady).pdf [2021, May 12].
	An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. 2018. <i>QAA Glossary</i> [Online]. Available: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/glossary [2021, May 12].

Term	Definition	Source
Moderation	In the context of assessment, internal and external verification that an assessment system is credible and that assessors and learners behave in an ethical way; and that assessments are fair, valid, reliable and practicable.	SAQA. 2014. <i>National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa</i> [Online]. Available: http://www.saga.org.za/docs/pol/2016/National%20Policy%20for%20Assessment(PrintReady).pdf [2021, May 12].
Modes of assessment (no official definition available in national policy frameworks)	Includes aspects such as the individual or collective <i>participation of students</i> in assessment (e.g. self-assessment or peer assessment), the <i>medium</i> of assessment (e.g. written, oral, practical or online) and the <i>level of supervision</i> involved (e.g. closed-book, open-book or unsupervised).	
Qualification	A registered national qualification consisting of a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose – to provide qualifying students with applied competence and a basis for further learning – and which has been assessed regarding exit-level outcomes, registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and certified and awarded by a recognised institution.	Council on Higher Education. 2016. <i>Policies on the Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and Assessment</i> [Online]. Available: https://www.che.ac.za/media_and_publications/frameworks-criteria/council-higher-education-s-policies-recognition-prior [2021, May 12].
Summative assessment	Assessment <i>of</i> learning, to be distinguished from formative assessment, which is assessment <i>for</i> learning. Summative assessment takes place after learning has been completed (e.g. at the end of a quarter, semester or year) and provides information and feedback that sums up the teaching and learning process. The intention behind summative assessment is to validate performance and to award grades or marks.	UFS. 2016. <i>Assessment Policy</i> [Online]. Available: https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/default-source/all-documents/assessment-policy-on-the-ufs-coursework-learning-programmes.pdf?sfvrsn=3716c321_0 [2021, May 12].