



Dire Dawa University

Students Assessment and Testing Guideline

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Dire Dawa University

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Preamble

Assessment and evaluation are integral components of the teaching–learning process and play a pivotal role in ensuring academic quality, accountability, and the attainment of intended learning outcomes. Dire Dawa University, as a national public higher education institution, recognizes assessment as a tool not merely for measuring learning but also for enhancing it through continuous feedback, reflection, and improvement. The University affirms that effective assessment promotes fairness, transparency, and integrity, while nurturing students’ intellectual growth, creativity, and problem-solving capacities in alignment with the goals of the Ethiopian Higher Education Quality Assurance Framework and national development priorities.

This *Student Assessment and testing Guideline* has therefore been developed to establish uniform, coherent, and transparent standards for designing, administering, and evaluating assessments across all academic units of the University. It provides a comprehensive framework that articulates guiding principles, procedures, and responsibilities to ensure that assessment practices are valid, reliable, inclusive, and aligned with program learning outcomes. Moreover, it seeks to foster a culture of continuous improvement and institutional accountability through systematic monitoring, moderation, and quality assurance mechanisms overseen by the Quality Assurance Directorate and relevant academic bodies.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Need for the Guideline

Higher education institutions have a fundamental responsibility to ensure that the qualifications they award are a reliable and valid reflection of student achievement. In the context of Dire Dawa University's commitment to academic excellence, quality assurance, and national development, the absence of a unified, comprehensive framework for student assessment has presented significant challenges. This guideline has been developed in response to a clear and pressing need to:

- 1.1.1. Eliminate inconsistencies in assessment design, administration, and grading across different colleges, departments, and individual instructors, thereby ensuring equity and fairness for all students.
- 1.1.2. Systematically address issues of examination malpractice, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty by establishing clear protocols, secure procedures, and consistent consequences.
- 1.1.3. Ensure that examinations and other assessment methods accurately measure the intended learning outcomes and that results are consistent and trustworthy.
- 1.1.4. Provide all stakeholders—students, academic staff, and administrators—with a clear understanding of their rights, roles, and responsibilities within the assessment process, reducing disputes and fostering a culture of trust.
- 1.1.5. Ensure the university's assessment practices meet the standards set by the Ethiopian Higher Education Relevance & Quality Agency (HERQA) and are comparable to reputable institutions globally, enhancing the portability and recognition of its degrees.
- 1.1.6. Streamline examination scheduling, resource allocation, and administrative workflows, reducing errors and conflicts while optimizing the use of university resources.

1.2. Purpose of the Guideline

The primary purpose of this document is to establish a uniform, robust, and transparent framework for the entire student assessment lifecycle at Dire Dawa University. Its specific objectives are to:

- 1.2.1. Define clear standards for the development, moderation, and administration of all forms of student assessment.
- 1.2.2. Specify the roles, duties, and responsibilities of all entities involved, including examination committees, invigilators, academic staff, and students.
- 1.2.3. Ensure the security and confidentiality of assessment materials before, during, and after examinations.
- 1.2.4. Provide mechanisms for the fair and consistent handling of examination irregularities and student grievances.
- 1.2.5. Outline procedures for accommodating students with special needs to ensure an inclusive and equitable assessment environment.
- 1.2.6. Serve as a definitive reference point for quality assurance and continuous improvement in the University's assessment practices.

1.3. Guiding Principles of the Guideline

The entire guideline and all assessment practices at Dire Dawa University shall be underpinned by the following core principles:

- 1.3.1. **Fairness and Equity:** All students must have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their learning, free from bias or disadvantage.

- 1.3.2. **Validity:** Assessments must accurately measure the knowledge, skills, and competencies outlined in the course learning outcomes.
- 1.3.3. **Reliability:** Assessment processes must be consistent and reproducible, yielding stable and dependable results across different occasions and markers.
- 1.3.4. **Transparency:** All assessment policies, procedures, and criteria must be clearly communicated and accessible to students and staff.
- 1.3.5. **Academic Integrity:** Honesty, trust, and ethical conduct are non-negotiable values for all participants in the assessment process.
- 1.3.6. **Inclusivity:** Assessment methods and administration must accommodate the diverse needs of the student population.
- 1.3.7. **Continuous Improvement:** Assessment practices and this guideline itself shall be subject to periodic review and refinement based on experience and feedback.

1.4. Integration of the Guideline

This guideline is an official policy document of Dire Dawa University and shall be fully integrated into the University's academic governance framework. It shall:

- 1.4.1. Be read in conjunction with all other University legislation and regulations. In all matters pertaining to student assessment, the provisions of this guideline shall prevail, with the explicit exception that any directly conflicting statute within the official Senate Legislation of Dire Dawa University shall take precedence.
- 1.4.2. Supersede any previous regulations, college-level manuals, or departmental directives concerning student assessment that are inconsistent with its terms.

- 1.4.3. Be disseminated to all academic staff, administrative staff involved in assessment, and students through official channels, orientation programs, and dedicated training workshops.
- 1.4.4. Form the basis for the operational procedures of all College and Departmental Examination Committees.
- 1.4.5. Be incorporated into the performance evaluation and professional development plans for academic staff.

1.5. Scope of Application of the Guideline

This guideline applies to:

- 1.5.1. All undergraduate and postgraduate students, all academic staff (including full-time, part-time, and visiting lecturers), invigilators, and all administrative staff involved in the assessment process at Dire Dawa University.
- 1.5.2. All credit-bearing courses and programs offered by the University, including those offered through continuing and distance education.
- 1.5.3. All forms of formal summative assessment, including but not limited to: final examinations, midterm examinations, practical tests, laboratory reports, and major projects/theses that contribute significantly to a student's final grade.

1.6. Conformity

- 1.6.1. All members of the University community are required to comply with the provisions of this guideline. Non-compliance shall be considered a serious breach of academic or professional responsibility.
- 1.6.2. The University Senate, through the Academic Commission and the respective College and Department Examination Committees, is responsible for monitoring compliance.

1.7. Gender Reference

Unless the context implies otherwise, the reference made to masculine gender shall also apply to the feminine gender.

1.8. Definitions of Key Terms

- 1.8.1. **Assessment:** A process of gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data of student learning and judge performance against stated criteria.
- 1.8.2. **Formative Assessment:** Assessment for learning; provides feedback to improve learning and is not primarily used for awarding marks.
- 1.8.3. **Summative Assessment:** Assessment of learning; used to judge and record achievement and award marks/grades.
- 1.8.4. **Learning Outcome:** A clear statement of what a student is expected to know, do or value by the end of a course/module.
- 1.8.5. **Moderation:** Quality assurance processes that ensure marking is fair, consistent and in line with standards.
- 1.8.6. **Invigilator:** Staff member responsible for supervision of an examination.

- 1.8.7. **Academic Misconduct:** Behavior that compromises academic integrity (plagiarism, cheating, collusion, fabrication).
- 1.8.8. **Question Bank:** A secure, organized repository of validated assessment items.
- 1.8.9. **Course Assessment Blueprint:** A matrix that maps learning outcomes to assessment tasks, cognitive level and weighting.
- 1.8.10. **University:** Shall mean Injibara University.
- 1.8.11. **Academic unit:** means a college, faculty, school, an institute, a center established as a constituent unit of the university.
- 1.8.12. **Department:** shall mean a unit of an academic unit that offers courses in which degrees, diplomas or certificates may be obtained.
- 1.8.13. **Dean:** refers to the executive officer of the respective academic units who assumes the position as per the Legislation of Injibara University.
- 1.8.14. **Department Head:** shall mean an executive manager of a department.
- 1.8.15. **College/school Exam Committee:** is a standing committee established by the College/school Council. It is responsible for the overarching planning, coordination, supervision, and integrity of assessment conducted at university level within the college.
- 1.8.16. **Department exam committee:** is a standing committee established by the Department Council. It is responsible for the direct, hands-on planning, execution, and supervision of all assessment activities for courses offered by the academic department. It is the primary body ensuring the smooth and fair day-to-day running of examinations (mid-term and final Examination).

- 1.8.17. **Student:** means a person admitted and registered for undergraduate/postgraduate program of study in any modality (regular, summer, evening, online, distance, etc) in the University.
- 1.8.18. **Exam Blueprint:** refers to a specification of assessment which enables to measure the knowledge, skill, and attitude obtained from the process of learning and the content mastered over a specified period.
- 1.8.19. **Exam Standardization:** shall mean setting a standard to be met the focus areas described in test/exam/ reviewing criteria.
- 1.8.20. **Item Bank:** a platform or system where exam items (questions and tasks) are stored for future use and further investigation

2. Item Bank

2.1. Definition

An item Bank is a secure, centralized, and systematically organized repository of assessment items (questions) for one or more academic courses. It is not merely a collection of items, but a dynamic and quality-controlled resource where each question is cataloged with key metadata such as learning outcome, difficulty level, and marks to facilitate the efficient, valid, and secure construction of various assessments.

2.2. Objectives of developing item bank

To enhance the quality, security, and efficiency of examination development, each academic department at Dire Dawa University shall establish and maintain a secure **Departmental item Bank** The primary objectives of the item bank are to:

- 2.2.1. Ensure a consistent and reliable pool of high-quality assessment items.
- 2.2.2. Reduce the burden of creating new examinations from scratch for each semester.

- 2.2.3. Uphold academic integrity and examination security through standardized procedures.
- 2.2.4. Facilitate the development of multiple, equivalent examination codes as required by university policy.

2.3. Guiding Principles

The development and management of the question bank shall be governed by the following principles:

- 2.3.1. **Quality:** All items must be aligned with course learning outcomes, cognitively appropriate, and peer-reviewed.
- 2.3.2. **Security:** The question bank is a confidential university resource. Access shall be strictly controlled and monitored.
- 2.3.3. **Collaboration:** All academic staff teaching a course are mandated to contribute to the item bank.
- 2.3.4. **Dynamic Nature:** The bank shall be regularly updated and refined to remain current with the curriculum.
- 2.3.5. **Standardization:** All questions shall be formatted and stored according to a uniform departmental template.

2.4. Procedures for developing the Item bank

- 2.4.1. **Item construction:** For each course they teach, academic staff shall develop a set of questions for each major topic/learning outcome. Questions must be of various types (MCQ, Essay, Problem-solving, etc.) and include a detailed marking scheme.
- 2.4.2. **Peer Review:** All submitted questions shall be reviewed by a panel of at least two other subject-matter experts within the department, including the Department Head, for clarity, accuracy, alignment, and appropriateness.

2.4.3. **Moderation and Approval:** The Department Head, in consultation with the Department Examination Committee, will give final approval for items to be entered into the bank.

2.4.4. **Cataloging:** Approved items shall be cataloged by:

- a. Course Code and Title
- b. Module/Chapter
- c. Learning Outcome
- d. Item Type
- e. Domain Level (i.e., Cognitive, Psychomotor, and Affective)
- f. Difficulty Level (e.g., Easy, Medium, Hard)
- g. Date of Entry

2.5. Instructor's Contribution

2.5.1. Every instructor is required to contribute a minimum of hundred (100) new or substantially revised items per course per academic year to the bank.

2.5.2. Contribution to the item bank shall be considered a core part of academic service and will be recognized in the instructor's annual performance evaluation.

2.5.3. For common courses, all instructors shall collaborate to develop and review the shared question pool.

2.6. Frequency of Updates

2.6.1. The entire item bank for each course shall be reviewed bi-annually by the department exam committee and the Department Head to remove obsolete or flawed questions.

2.6.2. New questions shall be added following each examination cycle, especially those proven to be valid and reliable in discriminating student performance.

- 2.6.3. The bank must be updated immediately following any significant revision to the course curriculum or learning outcomes.

2.7. Storing and Securing the Item Bank

- 2.7.1. The item bank shall be stored in a password-protected digital repository on a secure university server with regular backups.
- 2.7.2. Access to the digital bank is restricted by role:
- a. Full Access (Read/Write/Delete): Department Head.
 - b. Controlled Access (Read/Add): Course Coordinators and the Department Examination Committee.
 - c. No Access: General academic staff and students.
- 2.7.3. All access is logged, and the printing or downloading of large portions of the bank is prohibited and monitored.

2.8. Management of the Item Bank

- 2.8.1. The **Department Head** is the designated custodian and manager of the Departmental Question Bank. He/she is responsible for;
- a. The security, integrity, and proper management of the item bank.
 - b. Managing and monitoring user access privileges to the digital repository.
 - c. Coordinating the bi-annual review and update process, ensuring all instructors fulfill their contribution obligations.
 - d. Chairing the moderation process for approving new items and retiring old ones.
 - e. Reporting annually to the College Examination Committee on the status, usage, and development of the department's item bank.
 - f. Ensuring that all examinations, especially those for large classes and common courses, are constructed primarily from the item bank to ensure quality and security.

3. Examination Standardization

- 3.1. Every examination must be explicitly and directly aligned with the intended learning outcomes stated in the course outline.
- 3.2. Examinations must accurately measure what they are intended to measure (validity) and produce consistent results under consistent conditions (reliability).
 - 3.2.1. Questions must be clear, unambiguous, and free from cultural or gender bias.
 - 3.2.2. Instructions for each section and question must be precise.
 - 3.2.3. The marking scheme must be detailed and objective to ensure consistent grading, especially across multiple markers.
- 3.3. The integrity of the examination process must be protected from the development stage through to administration.
 - 3.3.1. For a major course with an enrollment of greater than 25 students, the examination must be developed at least in two (2) codes.
 - 3.3.2. For common courses (e.g., offered to multiple programs), a minimum of three (3) distinct codes are required.
 - 3.3.3. All exam materials are confidential documents. Instructors must store drafts and final versions securely (e.g., password-protected files, locked cabinets).
- 3.4. To ensure equity and consistency for all students taking the same course across different sections or departments, examinations must be standardized for all major assessments.
 - 3.4.1. For all common courses, a single, identical examination shall be developed for all students during major exam periods (Midterm and Final examinations).

- 3.4.2. All instructors teaching a common course are mandated to contribute examination items (questions) to a shared pool. This ensures collective ownership and improves the quality and breadth of the exam.
- 3.5. No examination paper is final until it has been reviewed and moderated to ensure its quality, appropriateness, and fairness.
- 3.6. Examination papers must be submitted well in advance to allow sufficient time for moderation, printing, and administrative processing.
 - 3.6.1. The Department Examination Committee shall set a strict deadline for exam submission (e.g., at least 1 week before the examination date).
 - 3.6.2. Late submission shall be reported to the Department Head and may result in disciplinary action against the instructor, as it jeopardizes the entire examination process.
- 3.7. Examination design should consider the diverse needs of the student population.
 - 3.7.1. Instructors should consider, where appropriate, providing exam papers in large-print format or in electronic form for students with visual impairments, as coordinated through the Disability Support Unit.

4. Time allocation for Examination

4.1. Guiding Principles for Examination Time Allocation

The following principles shall serve as a standard guideline for instructors at Dire Dawa University when determining the time required for their examinations. These are designed to ensure fairness, consistency, and validity across all assessments.

- 4.1.1. The total examination time should be calculated by summing the time required for each section of the exam, followed by adding buffers for reading instructions and reviewing answers.
- 4.1.2. Time allocated must be proportional to the cognitive effort required. Lower-order thinking questions (e.g., recall) require less time than higher-order thinking questions (e.g., analysis, synthesis).
- 4.1.3. A standard buffer must be added to the calculated time for reading instructions and reviewing answers. **A minimum of 10-15 minutes** should be added for these activities.
 - 4.1.3.1. Exams with dense text, complex graphs, or long passages may require a longer reading buffer.
 - 4.1.3.2. Students with approved accommodations must be granted extra time (e.g., 25% or 50%) as mandated by the **Disability Support Unit**.
- 4.1.4. After designing the exam, the instructor must themselves attempt to solve it, timing their effort. The total time allocated for students should be **approximately double the instructor's time** to account for student stress, proofreading, and a lower fluency level with the material.

4.1.5. Standard Time Allocation per Item Type

Based on global best practices and cognitive psychology, the following generic time allowances per question type are recommended:

Question Type	Recommended Time Allocation	Description
Multiple Choice	1 - 1.5 minutes per item	Time to read the stem, consider all options, and select the correct answer. More complex MCQs with long stems or calculations may require up to 2 minutes.
True/False	0.5 - 1 minute per item	Quick judgment of a single statement.
Matching Items	0.5 - 1 minute per pair	Time to read and connect related items. The total time should be based on the number of pairs.
Fill-in-the-Blanks	1 - 1.5 minutes per item	Time to recall a specific term or phrase and write it down. Slightly more time than MCQ due to recall and writing.
Short Answer (Listing items)	1.5 - 2 minutes per item	Time to recall and concisely list or define several points. Assumes answers are phrases or a few sentences.
Short Answer (Explanation)	2 - 3 minutes per mark	For questions requiring a brief explanation or calculation. Time is better calculated per mark than per item.
Problem-Solving / Calculations	3 - 5 minutes per mark	Significant time is needed for setting up problems, performing calculations, and showing work.
Essay / Extended Response	4 - 5 minutes per mark	Time for planning, structuring arguments, writing coherently, and providing evidence. A 20-mark essay should have ~80-100 minutes.
Laboratory Practical	5 - 10 minutes per mark	Time must account for equipment setup, conducting the procedure, observing results, and recording data. Often requires a large block of time (e.g., 3-4 hours).
Performance-Based / Demonstration	10 - 15 minutes per student	For individual presentations or skills demonstrations. Time is allocated per student for the actual performance, plus setup time.
Buffer time	+10 to +15 minutes	This is a mandatory buffer added to the total calculated time. Allows students to read the entire paper and check their answers.

5. Examination committee

5.1. Definition

An Examination Committee is a formally constituted academic body entrusted by the university with the supreme authority and responsibility for overseeing, administering, and upholding the integrity of all student assessments within its designated jurisdiction.

5.2. Core purpose and function of examination committee

- 5.2.1. To serve as the principal guardian of the credibility and value of the university's awards by preventing and addressing malpractice, thereby ensuring that grades are a true and accurate reflection of a student's achievement.
- 5.2.2. To ensure the seamless, efficient, and error-free administration of often logistically complex examination processes, involving hundreds of students, staff, and resources.
- 5.2.3. To translate university-wide assessment policies into actionable procedures tailored to their specific context (e.g., College or Department) while ensuring consistent application.
- 5.2.4. To provide a structured and impartial mechanism for resolving disputes, investigating irregularities, and ensuring that all students are assessed under equitable conditions, including those with special needs.

5.3. Levels of Examination Committees

- 5.3.1. **College/school-Level Examination Committee:** is a standing committee established by the College Council. It is responsible for the overarching planning, coordination, supervision, and integrity of all assessment activities within the

college. It acts as the central governing body for examinations, ensuring consistency, fairness, and compliance with university-wide policies across all its constituent departments.

- 5.3.2. **Department-Level Examination Committee:** Serves as the operational and executive layer. It is responsible for the hands-on, day-to-day tasks of exam preparation, invigilation, and initial handling of incidents for its specific courses and programs.

5.4. College/school-level Examination committees

5.4.1. Composition

- a. **Chairperson:** Vice Dean for Academic Affairs (or equivalent). In cases the college of the school has no vice dean, the dean shall assign a senior academic staff
- b. **Members:** Five senior academic staff members appointed by the dean
- c. **Secretary:** Senior academic staff member appointed by the chairperson.

5.4.2. Terms of Service

- a. **Tenure:** All appointed members shall serve a term of **two (2) academic years**.
- b. **Appointment:** Members are appointed at the beginning of the academic year.
- c. **Renewal:** Membership may be renewed for one additional term to ensure continuity.
After two consecutive terms, a member must rotate off the committee for at least one term.
- d. **Resignation/Removal:** A member may resign in writing to the Dean. The College/school Council may remove a member for negligence of duty, unethical conduct, or upon recommendation by the Chairperson.

- e. **Replacement:** Vacancies shall be filled within one month by appointment by the Dean for the remainder of the term.

5.4.3. Duties and Responsibilities of the Committee

- a. Ensure all departments within the college/school strictly adhere to the university's assessment guidelines and academic regulations.
- b. Formulate and approve detailed examination procedures for the college/school, where necessary, within the framework of the university's policy.
- c. Conduct periodic audits to ensure departmental examination processes are compliant.
- d. Receive and consolidate examination timetables from all departments to avoid room and invigilator conflicts at the college level.
- e. Review and approve the master examination timetable for the college/school before it is published.
- f. Oversee the administration and coordination of college-wide common courses.
- g. Supervise the work of all Departmental Examination Committees within the college.
- h. Receive, investigate, and make final decisions on serious examination irregularities (e.g., mass cheating, invigilator misconduct).
- i. Act as an appellate body for disputes arising from decisions made at the department level.
- j. Submit a comprehensive report on the conduct of examinations and any major issues to the college/school council after each major examination period.

- k. Conduct an annual review of the examination processes within the college/school and recommend improvements.

5.4.4. Duties and Responsibilities of an Individual Committee Member

- a. Attend all scheduled committee meetings and official exam activities. Members must provide advance notice of absence to the Chair.
- b. Review all relevant materials (e.g., draft schedules, incident reports, policy documents) before meetings to contribute effectively.
- c. Maintain strict confidentiality regarding all exam materials, committee deliberations, and student information.
- d. Perform all duties with the highest degree of objectivity and fairness, avoiding any conflict of interest.
- e. Voluntarily undertake and complete any specific tasks assigned by the committee chair (e.g., auditing a department, investigating an incident).
- f. Serve as a liaison between the committee and their respective department, communicating committee decisions and reporting departmental concerns.

5.4.5. Duties and Responsibilities of College Level Examination Committee chairperson

- a. Provide strategic leadership and direction to the committee.
- b. Convene and preside over all meetings of the College Examination Committee, setting the agenda in consultation with the secretary.

- c. Act as the official spokesperson and representative of the committee in all communications with the University Senate, Academic Commission, other colleges, and the Registrar.
- d. Ensure the committee's decisions and university examination policies are implemented effectively across all departments in the college.
- e. Oversee the entire examination process at the college level, from scheduling to the resolution of major incidents.
- f. Delegate specific tasks to committee members and college staff as necessary.
- g. Coordinate with Departmental Committee Chairpersons to ensure alignment and address college-wide issues.
- h. Guide the committee's deliberation and have a casting vote in case of a tie during decision-making.
- i. Approve and authorize the final college-wide examination timetable and the deployment of resources.
- j. Present a formal report on the conduct of college/school examinations to the College/school Council after each major examination period.

5.4.6. Duties and Responsibilities of the Secretary

- a. Handle all official correspondence of the committee under the direction of the Chairperson.
- b. Prepare and distribute meeting agendas, minutes, and supporting documents at least 48 hours before meetings.

- c. Record accurate minutes of all meetings, capturing decisions, action items, and responsible persons.
- d. Maintain a secure and organized archive of all committee records, including approved schedules, incident reports, and policy documents.
- e. Manage the calendar and logistics for committee meetings and examination-related events.
- f. Communicate decisions, schedules, and announcements to all departmental committees and relevant college staff as directed by the Chairperson.
- g. Compile data and prepare draft reports for the Chairperson's review.
- h. Ensure the strict confidentiality of all committee documents and discussions.

5.5. Department Level Examination Committee

5.5.1. Composition

- a. **Chairperson:** Department Head or a senior academic staff appointed by the Department Head.
- b. **Members:** Two senior academic staff members elected by the department.
- c. **Secretary:** A departmental staff member appointed by the chairperson.

5.5.2. Terms of Service

- a. **Tenure:** All elected and appointed members shall serve a term of two (2) academic years.
- b. **Staggered Terms:** To ensure continuity, the terms of members should be staggered so that approximately half of the committee has experience from the previous year.
- c. **Renewal:** Membership may be renewed for one additional term.

- d. **Resignation/Removal:** A member may resign in writing to the Department Head. The Department Council may remove a member for negligence of duty, unethical conduct, or upon recommendation by the Committee Chairperson.
- e. **Replacement:** Vacancies shall be filled within two weeks by appointment by the Department Head for the remainder of the term.

5.5.3. Duties and Responsibilities of the Committee

- a. Prepare a detailed draft examination timetable for all department courses and submit it to the College Committee.
- b. Ensure exam items align with course learning outcomes and approved for duplication.
- c. Identify and request the required number of invigilators, venues, and materials from the college committee.
- d. Receive exam questions from instructors, ensuring they are submitted on time and in the correct format.
- e. Maintain secure, locked storage for all exam materials before distribution.
- f. Coordinate with the college or central printing unit for the secure duplication of exam papers.
- g. Assign invigilators for all department courses and notify all invigilators.
- h. Ensure examination rooms are properly set up before each exam.
- i. Securely distribute exam materials to invigilators immediately before the exam session.
- j. Be the first point of contact for any examination irregularities within their department courses.

- k. Conduct a preliminary investigation into any irregularity and submit a detailed report with recommendations to the College Examination Committee.
- l. Ensure all exam booklets (after examination) are collected, counted, and stored securely.

5.5.4. Duties and Responsibilities of the Chairperson

- a. Provide direct, hands-on leadership for the planning and execution of all departmental examinations.
- b. Convene and chair all meetings of the Departmental Examination Committee.
- c. Serve as the primary liaison between the department and the College Examination Committee, submitting reports, schedules, and requests.
- d. Request and manage the department's allocation of invigilators, venues, and materials from the college.
- e. Approve the final invigilation duty roster for the department.
- f. Serve as the first point of contact for any serious examination irregularities within the department.
- g. Lead the preliminary investigation and prepare the official report for the College Committee.

5.5.5. Duties and Responsibilities of the Secretary

- a. Schedule meetings in consultation with the Chairperson and notify all members.
- b. Prepare and distribute agendas and take detailed minutes, specifically noting action items and deadlines.

- c. Assist in drafting the departmental examination timetable and communicating it to students and staff.
- d. Manage the receipt and secure logging of exam questions from course instructors.
- e. Maintain records of invigilation assignments, venue bookings, and resource requests.
- f. Handle all day-to-day communication related to examinations within the department under the guidance of the Chairperson.
- g. Post official exam notices and updates on departmental boards and portals.
- h. Maintain a comprehensive and confidential filing system for all departmental examination records, including copies of exam papers, and incident reports.
- i. Provide administrative support to the Chairperson in the execution of their duties.

5.5.6. Duties and Responsibilities of an Individual Committee Member

- a. Attend all departmental examination committee meetings and be present during critical exam periods as required.
- b. Fulfill specific operational roles assigned by the chair, such as:
 - i. Serving as a venue supervisor.
 - ii. Checking the setup of an exam hall.
 - iii. Verifying the secure transport of exam papers.
- c. Be observant during exams and report any potential issues or irregularities immediately to the committee chair.
- d. Strictly follow all security and administrative protocols for handling exam materials

- e. Maintain absolute confidentiality regarding exam content, student information, and committee discussions.
- f. Provide constructive feedback to the committee on how to improve the examination process within the department.

6. Invigilator

6.1. Definition

An invigilator is an academic staff assigned by department/college examination committee to supervise the conduct of an examination to ensure a fair, secure, and consistent environment for all students.

6.2. Duties and Responsibilities of an Invigilator

6.2.1. Before the Examination

- a. Report to the designated Department Office at least **45 minutes** before the exam start time.
- b. Present official identification to collect the exam materials.
- c. Sign the exam materials handover sheet, acknowledging receipt and accepting responsibility.
- d. Proceed directly to the assigned venue with the secured materials.
- e. Ensure the venue is prepared: clean, adequately spaced desks and good lighting.
- f. Clean all unauthorized educational materials on boards.
- g. Do not allow students to enter the examination room freely.

- h. Check each student's Official University ID Card *before* they enter the room. Do not allow any student without a valid, original ID to enter.
- i. Assign each student their seat directly. Do not permit them to choose their own seat. Instruct them to proceed directly to their assigned desk.
- j. Once all students are seated in their assigned places, make a final announcement regarding the exam rules and duration.
- k. Let the student sign the attendance sheet
- l. Distribute the exam materials only when the official start time arrives and the room is completely secure and quiet.

6.2.2. During the Examination

- a. Circulate quietly and continuously around the venue. Do not remain seated, read, use a phone, or engage in conversation with other invigilators.
- b. Be vigilant and observant. Watch for any signs of suspicious behavior (e.g., looking at another's paper, whispering, having unauthorized materials).
- c. Ensure silence is maintained throughout the exam.
- d. Sign and record the start and end times on the invigilation form.
- e. Answer only administrative questions (e.g., "May I have more paper?"). Do not answer any questions related to the exam content.
- f. If a student has a question about the exam paper, direct them to write their query on a piece of paper. Collect it and seek clarification from the Departmental Examination Committee or the course instructor, if present.

6.2.3. After Examination

- a. Announce a **5-minute and 1-minute** warning before the end of the exam.
- b. At the exact end time, instruct all students to **"Stop writing."**
- c. Instruct students to remain seated until their scripts have been collected and accounted for.
- d. Methodically collect all exam booklets and used/unused supplementary materials row by row.
- e. Ensure every student has submitted the exam papers. If a student leaves without submitting, note their name and ID number immediately.
- f. Return the exam papers directly to the Department Office, sign it back in, and complete the handover.

6.2.4. When Cheating Incidents Happen

- a. If suspicious behavior is observed, position yourself nearby to observe more closely without directly accusing the student.
- b. If malpractice is confirmed (e.g., seeing a "cheat sheet," phone, or copied answer), approach the student quietly and discreetly. To avoid disrupting others, you may ask to see their ID first as a pretext to engage them
- c. Politely and calmly inform the student that they are suspected of an examination irregularity.
- d. Confiscate the unauthorized material or evidence **without altering it**. If it is a phone or device, do not navigate through it; simply secure it.

- e. Allow the student to continue with the exam. (Note: Unless the incident is severe and disruptive, preventing the student from continuing is typically a decision for the exam Committee, not the invigilator).
- f. On the spot, write a detailed, objective note for your report. Include:
 - i. Student's Name and ID Number.
 - ii. Exact time of the incident.
 - iii. Precise description of the observed behavior and the evidence confiscated.
- g. Immediately after the exam, report the incident verbally and in writing to the Chairperson of the Departmental Examination Committee.
- h. Submit the written report and all confiscated evidence. Do not discuss the incident with other students or staff. The committee will then take over the investigation according to the university's academic integrity policy.

7. Use of Technology in Assessment

Applied science universities use various technologies to create a more dynamic and efficient assessment environment. These tools facilitate the application of theoretical knowledge to practical, hands-on tasks, which is central to the curriculum.

7.1. Learning Management Systems (LMS)

A Learning Management System or LMS is a platform that supports the implementation of e-learning. It enables course information, lecture notes, learner communication and other learning activities to be accessed online through the institution's computer network. It also serves to enhance collaborative activities among learners and instructors. The Dire Dawa University-mandated LMS (e.g., Moodle, Canvas, Blackboard) is the primary hub for all assessment-related activities. All course outlines, assessment briefs, rubrics, submission portals, and grade centers must be maintained here. Instructors must utilize the LMS for: Distributing assessment instructions, rubrics, and criteria, Setting up and managing online quizzes and tests, Creating

assignment submission folders with clear deadlines, Providing electronic feedback and grades securely and Facilitating peer-review and collaborative assessment tasks.

7.2. Online/Remote Assessment Procedures

When tests and examinations are administered online, instructors must ensure the assessment is accessible to all students and that time constraints are reasonable for students in different time zones. Hardware and software requirements, including any tools to prevent academic misconduct, must be communicated to students at the beginning of the course. Clear instructions on allowed materials and what to do in case of technical difficulties including alternative submission methods must also be provided. Also, For proctored remote exams, specialized software, webcams, and secure browsers may be required to maintain academic integrity. Except in the case of an emergency, any hardware and software requirements for the assessment, including the use of software or services that help prevent breaches of academic integrity, are communicated to students at the start of the course in the Course Information System. Online assessments must be designed to measure applied knowledge and skills, moving beyond simple recall. This includes open-book case studies, virtual lab simulations, design projects, and timed problem-solving exercises.

7.3. Digital Security Measures

Recognizing the widespread use of digital platforms and the risks of academic misconduct, the following security measures are mandatory for all online assessments in Dire Dawa University:

- 7.3.1. All digital assessments must be conducted on the Dire Dawa University's designated Learning Management System (LMS) or approved secure platforms.
- 7.3.2. These systems must have robust security features, including data encryption. Technology solutions such as plagiarism detection software (e.g., Turnitin) are mandatory for written submissions to uphold academic integrity.

- 7.3.3. To prevent screen capture and sharing, only one question should be displayed on the screen at a time, with no backtracking.
- 7.3.4. Protecting student data is a top priority.
 - a. The university should implement robust digital security measures to safeguard students' personal information and assessment data.
 - b. This includes using secure servers, data encryption, and strict access controls.
 - c. Only authorized personnel, such as the instructor and a limited number of administrators, shall have access to students' grades and personal information.

7.4. E-Portfolios and Online Submissions

For e-portfolio submissions, the course syllabus must specify the purpose, required artifacts, rubrics, and criteria for evaluation. Students own the content of their e-portfolio and can maintain it after graduation, while the university may retain a copy for accreditation purposes. The official submission time is based on the timestamp recorded by the LMS.

- 7.4.1. E-portfolios enable students to compile and showcase their work digitally, offering a broader view of their learning journey beyond standardized tests. Online submission platforms support timely, verifiable delivery of assignments, allowing for efficient feedback and record-keeping.
- 7.4.2. The university will provide and support a designated e-portfolio platform. Students will own the content of their e-portfolio and will have the option to maintain it after graduation, subject to platform policies. Access to the portfolio will be controlled by the student and the instructor for grading purposes. The university may also retain a copy of the portfolio for a specified period for accreditation and institutional assessment purposes, with strict privacy protocols in place.

- 7.4.3. Instructors must specify the required file formats (e.g., .pdf, .docx,) and any other formatting requirements in the course syllabus. Students are responsible for submitting their work in the correct format.
- 7.4.4. Instructors must clearly define the purpose of the e-portfolio (e.g., formative for reflection, summative for a capstone project) and its intended audience (e.g., instructor, peers, potential employers).
- 7.4.5. In the event of a technical issue that prevents a student from submitting their work, they must document the issue (e.g., with screenshots) and contact their instructor immediately. A backup plan, such as emailing the instructor, may be a temporary solution, but the official submission must still be made to the designated platform as soon as possible.

8. Quality Assurance and Monitoring

A continuous cycle of quality assurance ensures that assessments are valid, reliable, and fair.

8.1. Internal Quality Assurance

- 8.1.1. Internal quality assurance involves continuous oversight of assessment practices within departments to verify that assessments are valid, reliable, and aligned with learning objectives. This includes instructor training, self and peer reviews of assessment tools, and moderation of grading to ensure consistency.
- 8.1.2. All course outlines must be reviewed and approved by the department head and relevant academic committees.
- 8.1.3. The review process will verify that assessment methods are clearly aligned with the course's stated learning outcomes.

- 8.1.4. Rubrics and grading criteria must be explicit, consistent, and appropriate for the level of the course.
- 8.1.5. All assessments are subject to internal moderation before (pre-moderation) and after (post-moderation) administration to ensure consistency and alignment with learning outcomes. Department Heads and program leaders will regularly sample assessed work to verify marking standards and feedback quality across different instructors and courses.
- 8.1.6. Regular marking calibration sessions will be held for instructors to ensure a consistent understanding and application of grading rubrics.
- 8.1.7. Department exam committees often review other staff's assessment materials (exams, projects, rubrics) to ensure they are clear, fair, and aligned with course learning outcomes.
- 8.1.8. Departments must regularly analyze data from assessments, including grade distributions, pass/fail rates, and item analysis (e.g., for multiple-choice exams).
- 8.1.9. Significant deviations from expected performance (e.g., an unusually high or low pass rate) will trigger a review to identify potential issues with the assessment design, teaching, or student support.
- 8.1.10. The university will conduct regular student surveys and course evaluations to gather feedback on the fairness, relevance, and effectiveness of assessment methods.

8.2. External Review Standards

External review standards for university student assessment are vital for quality assurance in higher education. They ensure that internal practices are fair, reliable, and consistent with national and international academic benchmarks. External bodies, like accreditation agencies, use these standards to evaluate an institution's effectiveness. They verify the validity and reliability of assessment methods, checking for alignment with learning outcomes and national

benchmarks. Additionally, they ensure fairness and transparency in grading and the existence of a robust system for handling student grievances. While internal self-evaluation is essential, the external review validates the institution's findings, promotes accountability, and maintains the credibility of degrees. Key External Review Standards;

- 8.2.1. **Academic Rigor and Integrity:** Reviewers verify that assessment policies effectively prevent and detect academic misconduct, such as plagiarism and cheating. They check for evidence of clear policies, robust proctoring measures, and the use of tools to maintain academic integrity.
- 8.2.2. **Alignment with Learning Outcomes:** The standards ensure that assessments are directly aligned with the intended **learning outcomes** of a course or program. Reviewers check that a student's performance on an assessment accurately measures their achievement of the stated goals.
- 8.2.3. **Validity and Reliability:** This is a fundamental standard. Reviewers assess whether the assessment methods are valid (measuring what they are supposed to measure) and reliable (producing consistent results). This includes evaluating the quality of exam questions, marking criteria, and moderation processes.
- 8.2.4. **Fairness and Transparency:** External reviews ensure that assessment policies are fair to all students. This includes checking for clear communication of assessment criteria, rubrics, and feedback mechanisms. The process must be transparent so students understand how their work is being graded and can appeal results.
- 8.2.5. **External Examiner and Peer Review:** A key part of the process is the use of external examiners, who are experts from outside the university. They review a sample of student work, assessment tasks, and marking standards to provide an independent judgment on the quality and comparability of the degrees awarded.
- 8.2.6. **Data-Driven Improvement:** Reviewers look for evidence that the university uses assessment data to drive continuous improvement. This means the institution should

analyze student performance, identify areas for improvement in teaching and curriculum, and implement changes based on the findings.

- 8.2.7. Stakeholder Engagement:** External review standards often require that assessment policies are developed with input from various stakeholders, including faculty, students, and, where appropriate, employers or professional bodies. This ensures that the qualifications awarded are relevant to the needs of the wider society and the job market

8.3. Stakeholder Feedback Integration

- 8.3.1. Stakeholder feedback is evaluative information, reactions, and responses from individuals or groups who have a vested interest in the educational process. In the context of student assessment, key stakeholders include: Students, Academic staffs, university leadership and external stakeholders.
- 8.3.2. The primary end-users who provide feedback on the fairness, clarity, and relevance of assessments are students. Academic Staff (Instructors, Assessors, etc.) are who provide feedback on the feasibility and effectiveness of assessment methods. External Stakeholders (Employers, Industry Partners, and Professional Bodies): Who provide input on whether assessment outcomes are aligned with the skills and knowledge required in the workplace.
- 8.3.3. Feedback should lead to actionable changes. For example, if feedback indicates that students find a particular assessment confusing, the institution may: Revise the instructions for clarity, provide more examples or a detailed rubric and Offer workshops or support sessions on how to approach the assessment.
- 8.3.4. Formal student feedback on assessments (e.g., through course evaluations) and informal feedback must be collected, reviewed, and considered as part of the continuous improvement process. Feedback from industry partners on the

relevance and rigor of graduate skills will be integrated into the design of applied assessments.

9. Duties and Responsibilities of Quality Assurance Directorate (QAD)

The Quality Assurance Directorate plays a central role in upholding the credibility, consistency, and continuous improvement of the University's assessment and evaluation system. It ensures that assessment practices align with institutional academic standards, national higher education quality benchmarks, and the University's mission of producing competent graduates. More specifically;

9.1. Policy Oversight and Alignment

- 9.1.1. Ensure the Student Assessment and Evaluation Guideline is implemented and periodically reviewed in alignment with national standards and University regulations.
- 9.1.2. Verify that all assessment practices maintain academic rigor and fairness.
- 9.1.3. Recommend updates to the Academic Board or Senate based on review outcomes and stakeholder feedback.

9.2. Assessment Quality Assurance

- 9.2.1. Oversee the development, validation, and moderation of assessment tools to ensure fairness and consistency.
- 9.2.2. Review course assessment blueprints, rubrics, and marking guides for compliance.
- 9.2.3. Monitor grade distributions and moderation reports to detect irregularities.
- 9.2.4. Ensure assessment design promotes higher-order learning and authenticity.

9.3. Capacity Building and Support

- 9.3.1. Provide training and workshops for the academic staffs on assessment design, moderation, and feedback.
- 9.3.2. Support departments in developing item banks and marking rubrics.
- 9.3.3. Collaborate with staff development units to integrate assessment literacy into capacity development training.

9.4. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 9.4.1. Conduct regular audits of assessment processes, including exam administration and grading.
- 9.4.2. Collect and analyze data on reliability, student satisfaction, and misconduct.
- 9.4.3. Produce semester and annual reports on assessment quality and compliance.

9.5. Academic Integrity and Ethical Standards

- 9.5.1. Oversee the enforcement of academic integrity policies related to assessment.
- 9.5.2. Evaluate the effectiveness of plagiarism detection tools.
- 9.5.3. Maintain records of academic misconduct and outcomes.

9.6. Documentation and Reporting

- 9.6.1. Maintain comprehensive archives of moderation reports, audits, and misconduct records.
- 9.6.2. Prepare reports to the academic affairs vice president office and Senate summarizing compliance and recommendations for improvement.