

Policy name:	Assessment and Award of Qualifications, University of Peradeniya
Policy number:	UOP-P 005
Date of Approval:	27.02.2021 (approved at the 502nd Meeting of the Council)
Supersedes:	Not relevant
Approving Authority:	The Council, University of Peradeniya
Administrative Responsibility:	The Senate, Faculty Boards, Board of Examiners
Monitoring responsibility:	The Council, University of Peradeniya

1. Overview

Assessment is a process of systematic collection, analysis, interpretation and communication of information about educational achievements of learners, measured against identified goals and criteria, for the purpose of providing formative feedback on learning and facilitating summative decision making on progression, certification or awards.

Review and Repeal of the Policy

The policy shall be reviewed and confirmed by the Council every 5 years to maintain its relevance. The Council shall possess the sole authority and power to exercise its discretion with respect to any or all of the clauses of this policy and to provide for any interpretation, modification or amendment to the policy that shall be made from time to time.

2. Scope and Application

This policy covers all assessment related processes and procedures of all study programmes offered by the University of Peradeniya, including those of Postgraduate Institutes (PGIs) affiliated to the University of Peradeniya. It applies to all administrators, examiners, candidates and all support staff of the University.

In alignment with the national guidelines on higher education standards, the objective of the Policy on Assessment and Awards of the University of Peradeniya are to ensure that assessments,

- a) are designed to promote student learning,
- b) are designed to measure student achievement against intended learning outcomes in order to arrive at judgments and decisions that are valid and reliable,
- c) are designed to produce feedback that is useful for student learning and for the Institution to evaluate relevant programmes,
- d) are designed to ensure that the trust of the public and all stakeholders in the education process of the University is upheld,
- e) are fair, transparent and equitable,
- f) are aligned with relevant national guidelines and maintain the local standards on par with relevant international standards, and

- g) are conducted and awards are recommended by all Faculties and PGIs having followed appropriate procedures and under the supervision and approval of relevant university authorities.

3. Key Policy Principles

3.1 Overall process

- a) The University shall institute procedures for designing, approving, monitoring and reviewing the assessment strategies for programmes and awards with the goal of maintaining academic standards through appropriate assessment practices.
- b) The University shall institute credible procedures and guidelines for effectively conducting assessment processes.
- c) The University shall follow relevant internal and external benchmarking in monitoring and maintaining academic standards measured through instituted modes of assessment.
- d) The University shall review and amend assessment practices and regulations periodically as required to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.
- e) The University shall ensure that students are assessed using criteria, regulations, and procedures, which are published in writing, in the print and/or electronic mode. These shall include, but are not limited to, the dates of importance, deadlines, formats for required work/assessment tasks, the weightage of the components in the assessment scheme, the method of marking (e.g. single marking, blind double marking, conference marking etc.), the procedures followed in the setting of exams/assignments, the procedures involved in returning graded work and releasing results, the provisions for appeal, the requirements for progression in the relevant study programme, and the due notice of dates, times and venues of written/oral examinations and other assessment tasks. This information shall be included in examination by-laws, programme manuals, student handbooks, study guides, schedules and internal circulars which are made available at the beginning of the courses to all students enrolled and the staff involved in carrying out assessments.
- f) There shall be a clear delegation of responsibility of assessment related procedures within Faculties/Institutes/Centers the details of which are determined and communicated to respective individuals by way of by-laws, SOPs, internal circulars, ToRs, and letters of appointment.
- g) The staff involved in assessments shall be competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities, and they shall have no conflicts of interest. Any existing conflicts of interest shall be declared by the relevant students and/or the staff members at the beginning of the relevant academic year.
- h) The University shall ensure that any transfer of credits between the programmes within the University or with those of other universities is subject to prior approval of the Senate of the University of Peradeniya or is carried out in accordance with relevant prior arrangements/MoUs approved by the University.
- i) Information on the mechanisms and procedures for the recognition of prior learning/ qualifications and inter-faculty and inter-institutional credit transfers, where relevant, shall be made available to prospective applicants.
- j) There shall be a validated, quality assured system to support students with disabilities during assessments. Appropriate provisions shall be made for candidates with a formally

recognized permanent or temporary disability during assessments. The University shall ensure that such assessments are made available online.

- k) The University shall institute by-laws, guidelines, and SOPs on conducting e-assessments, including online remote assessment, which comprehensively address issues related to technology failures, candidate authentication, plagiarism and all forms of cheating, including contractual cheating.
- l) The university shall institute a mechanism to adopt/introduce and monitor processes, procedures, rules, regulations, and by-laws to curtail emerging forms of assessment malpractices, especially those associated with remote and online assessments and using modern high-tech devices.

3.2 Ensuring constructive alignment in designing curricula

- a) The University shall ensure that the assessment strategies are aligned with and the designing of programme learning outcomes, course ILOs, teaching and learning strategies, and course content is guided by the relevant level descriptors as defined by the Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF), the requirements of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS), and the requirements stipulated by relevant national and/or international professional bodies.
- b) The University/Faculty shall have a policy on weightage relating to different components of assessments in course specifications. *Each scheme of assessment will set out the individual components of assessment and their respective weighting in the calculation of the final grade for the course.*
- c) The University shall ensure that the volume, timing, and nature of assessment tasks of study programmes enable valid and credible measurement of students' attainment of relevant programme outcomes.

3.3 Setting and conducting of assessments

- a) The confidentiality of examination materials is of utmost importance to the University. The University shall have by-laws, SOPs, and necessary infra-structure and services in place to ensure the security and confidentiality of examination materials and raw scores/marks at every stage of the assessment process (including e-assessments). These by-laws and SoPs shall ensure the secure storage and transfer of examination related materials, including assessment blueprints, questions, model answers, question papers, answer scripts, raw marks, mark sheets, and any other relevant material, and the secure communication among examiners/officials/offices. They shall also ensure that the discarding of any exam related materials follows properly established procedures and practices.
- b) The University shall ensure that newly recruited academic and administrative staff is competent in following relevant standard procedures and guidelines related to the secure delivery of assessments at every stage of the process, before entrusting to them the relevant duties and responsibilities and allowing them to carry them out in an unsupervised manner.
- c) The University shall have by-laws and procedures in place to effectively deal with any breaches in the security and confidentiality of assessments.

- d) Students shall be provided with regular, appropriate, and timely feedback on formative assessments to promote effective learning and support their academic development.
- e) The University shall adopt policies and regulations governing the appointment of both internal and external examiners. Such examiners will be provided with clear ToRs. The reports from external examiners shall be given due consideration by relevant examination boards in finalizing results and also for further improving the assessment processes.
- f) The University shall ensure that assessment blueprints are used for each and every summative assessment at course level to ensure adequate coverage of content and programme outcomes and the use of appropriate assessment methods/tools to measure relevant outcomes.
- g) The Faculties/PG Institutes/Centers shall adopt well defined marking schemes, moderation/scrutiny procedures, relevant forms of second-marking (open marking & blind marking), and procedures for recording and verifying marks, with a view to ensuring transparency, fairness, and consistency.
- h) The University shall ensure the proper maintenance of standards with regard to assessments through appropriate procedures, which may include the involvement of external/independent second examiners, double marking, conference marking, and standard setting.

3.4 Marking, grading and releasing of results

- a) Summative & Formative assessments shall be conducted with rigor, honesty, transparency, fairness, and with due regard to confidentiality and integrity.
- b) The University shall ensure that assessment results and decisions are documented accurately and systematically and the decisions of relevant assessment panels and examination boards are communicated to students within a stipulated time period.
- c) Authenticated and approved results are communicated without undue delay and will be made available on the university/faculty website.
- d) The University shall ensure the proper implementation and strict enforcement of examination rules and regulations, including those on academic misconduct, according to the relevant university policies and procedures.
- e) The graduation requirements shall be ensured in the degree certification process, and the transcript shall accurately reflect the stages of progression and student attainments.
- f) The University shall ensure a system to make available a comprehensive transcript that conforms, in scope and layout, to the principles agreed to by the Senate of the University. Further copies shall be made available from the registry on request (via online) and at a fee. Provisions shall be made available for current students to receive an interim transcript at any point upon request.

- g) The University shall ensure that the degree awarded, including the name of the degree, complies with the national requirements as per SLQF (qualification descriptors, learning volumes, and level descriptors).
- h) The University shall ensure that appeals against the outcome of any assessment are considered in accordance with the relevant provisions of the prevailing rules and regulation.
- i) The University shall ensure that measures are taken immediately to rectify any erroneous results upon the detection.
- j) Provisions shall be made available to cover any infringements of the rules and regulations

3.5 Equity and equality in the assessment process

The University shall ensure that every student is provided with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their competencies.

4. Definitions:

- a) **Assessment criteria:** Specific outcomes that are expected to be demonstrated in any particular assessment task
- b) **Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):** Clear statements that indicate what students are expected to know or be able to do upon the completion of a lesson/unit /programme
- c) **Formative assessment:** Assessments that are designed primarily to provide feedback to students on their progress against learning outcomes.
- d) **Summative assessment:** Assessments that are typically but not necessarily performed at the end of a unit of study that allows a teacher to measure a student's achievement of the ILOs, for the purpose of making decisions on progression, certification, or awards
- e) **Course:** a self-contained unit of study on a particular content with defined level, credit value, aims, intended learning outcomes, mode(s) of delivery, a scheme of assessment, and also pre- and co-requisites (if applicable)
- f) **Course Credits:** the credit rating of a course, based upon the notional learning hours required for its completion and determined in accordance with relevant national frameworks
- g) **Award of Qualification:** a certificate or title conferred by an academic institution indicating that the recipient has successfully completed a prescribed course of study that leads to a qualification such as a degree, diploma or certificate or any other form of formal recognition.

5. Related policies if any:

- *Policy on Curriculum Planning, Development and Revision*
- *Policy on Teaching and Learning*

6. Related Acts, Rules, Regulations, Key Circulars (if any available):

- Universities Act
- SLQF
- UGC circulars on assessment/re-corrections/credit policies
- Examination rules and regulations of the University of Peradeniya
- Guidelines for conducting examinations
- Right to Information Act, No. 12 of 2017
