FORT COX AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY TRAINING INSTITUTE

Fort Cox Agricultural Training Institute policies will be recorded on the institutional policy catalogue, will be available at the library and on the institute's website (http://www.fortcox.ac.za/policies/) which will be regularly updated. As it is important to provide critical information such as when the policy was introduced, what it aims to achieve and who has a responsibility for its implementation and review, the council meeting of [Date] agreed that all new institution-wide policies be presented in a standardised format as follows:

TITLE: ASSESSMENT AND MODERATION POLICY

POLICY PARTICULARS

APPROVAL BY RELEVANT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:

DATE OF APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL   : _____

DATE OF APPROVAL BY THE ACADEMIC BOARD : _____

COMMENCEMENT DATE   : _____

REVISION HISTORY   : _____

REVIEW FREQUENCY   : Every three years

POLICY LEVEL   : [Lecturers/Students/Academic Departments]

RESPONSIBILITY   : [HOD's/TQA/HOA//AETC/BOA]

REPORTING STRUCTURE: [HOD/S's, TQA → DP → AETC → Principal → TQAC → BOA→ Council]

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2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 POLICY DECLARATION
The policy recognises the critical significance of credible learner assessments, how such assessment are perceived by stakeholders and attempts to prescribe how assessment can be effectively and efficiently done in order to sustain education quality comprehensively. This will be achieved through the implementation of the strategic plan of the FCAFTI which states the following vision and mission:

VISION
"Leading Centre of Learning in Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry education and Training in Southern Africa".

MISSION
> a) *To provide quality education and training in agriculture and forestry*
> b) *To engage in applied research and innovation*
> c) *To engage in rural wealth creation through community engagement*

2.2 PURPOSE
To regulate the assessment and moderation of the learners' performance on all the academic offerings to ensure credible, competitive and relevant graduates.

2.3 SCOPE
The Assessment and Moderation Policy applies to all formative and summative assessment of learning outcomes in all accredited and non-accredited programmes and courses offered by both FET and HE bands of the Fort Cox Agriculture and Forestry Training Institute. There are general overlaps between the assessment policy, teaching and learning and examination policies and it is, therefore, recommended that these policy documents be used concurrently and simultaneously to minimise omissions.

2.4 OBJECTIVE(S):

The objective(s) of this policy are to:

> (i) assure reliability, transparency and professionalism in the delivery of student assessment and evaluation processes.
> (ii) comply with CHE accreditation requirements in the framework of SAQA and NQF level descriptors in assessment and moderation of courses.
> (iii) ensure credibility of the qualifications earned at the institution to the satisfaction of stakeholders.

2.5. DEFINITIONS

The following term definitions are used in this document within the context of application of this policy:

Accountability: obligations among stakeholders in the teaching and learning process to account for actions or the omission thereof, accept responsibility for actions or omissions, and to disclose the results of these in a transparent and professional manner.

Accreditation: certification, usually for a particular period of time, of a person, a body or an institution as having the capacity to fulfil a particular function within the quality assurance system set by SAQA.

Aegrotat:
> i. Written communication from the TQA Office that states that a student was too ill to sit for an examination or test.
> ii. Written communication from the TQA office, endorsed by the AETC or such council, that confers a pass for an examination or test that a student was too ill to sit due to illness but having fulfilled the rest of due assessment for a course or programme.

Assessment: the process of documenting, in measurable terms, knowledge, skills and attitudes development in learners, through pre-set assessment criteria.

Assessment criteria: a written basis or rubric for scoring the performance of learners that is made available by an assessor prior to a set task, test or examination in order to facilitate reliability of an assessment.

Credit: the rating of a course of study that is based on the quantity of notional hours that comprise the time taken by an average learner to achieve a particular learning outcome as required by a course of study.

Curriculum: all institution-provided and scheduled experiences that relate to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, attitudes and strategies in thinking critically, creatively and progressively in finding solutions or making decisions collaboratively, communicating well, writing more effectively, reading more analytically and conducting research to solve problems.

Feedback: declaration of results, written or otherwise, of an assessment or observation(s) that is periodically given to learners in order to give guidance and support for the learning process.

Formative assessment: means to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning.

Learning outcome: concise statements of what learners can demonstrate to have learnt as a result of receiving particular instruction in scheduled time.

Level descriptors: statements indicating the skills hierarchy of learning outcomes in a programme of study as defined by SAQA.

Moderation: reliability confirmation exercise that is scheduled and performed by a peer assessor(s) on reported assessment as a quality assurance activity.

Policy: a statement of cardinal guidelines that are binding for the implementation, management or control of institutional activities that fall within a clearly stated and defined scope of application.

Pre-requisite: a specified qualification requirement(s) or credits without which access to registration for a particular course(s) or module(s) shall be denied.

Programme: a qualification that is based on the delivery of a curriculum that is accredited by the Council on Higher Education (CHE).

Purpose: reason or justification.

Qualifying candidate: a learner who, according to the provisions of the learning institution's policies and regulations, is eligible for identified privileges.

Scope: stated parameters that indicate the specific areas, institutional resources, situations and contexts in which or on which the policy or its provisions is/are applicable.

Summative assessment: evaluation of the attainment of learning outcomes on learners so as to score their competency with the intention of making the results of such assessment contribute to the final score or grade of course. The terms and scope of some of such assessment are provided in the policy relating to examinations.

The following ACRONYMS are used in this document within the context of application of this policy:

ACRONYMS

BOA	Board of Academics
AC	Academic Committee
AETC	Agricultural Education and Training Committee
CHE	Council on Higher Education
HOA	Head of Academics
FCAFTI	Fort Cox Agriculture and Forestry Training Institute
FET	Further Education and Training
HE	Higher Education
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HOD	Head of Departments
NQF	National Qualification Framework
TQA	Total Quality Assurance
TQAC	Total Quality Assurance Committee
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SRC	Student Representative Council
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

3. ASSESSMENT AND MODERATION POLICY

3.1. ASSESSMENT

3.1.1. LEARNING OUTCOMES
  a) All assessments shall be in line with learning outcomes of a specific course or programme of the approved curriculum for the course/programme of study.
  b) Only qualifying candidates complying with the FCATI assessment and examinations regulations shall be assessed and moderated.
  c) Notwithstanding b) above, students must meet all the following:
      i. Registration requirements;
      ii. Course pre-requisites;
      iii. Attendance specifications; and
      iv. Aegrotat stipulations as specified in the policy on examinations.

3.1.2. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
  a) Course-specific assessments shall be developed in line with quality standards set.
  b) All assessments shall be done against pre-determined assessment criteria.
  c) All assessments shall be designed to encourage an appropriate mix of techniques and interrogation of learners in their acquisition of knowledge, skills and desirable attitude consistent with targeted learning outcomes.
  d) The assessment criteria shall be developed in line with National Qualification Framework (NQF) level descriptors.

3.1.3. ASSESSMENT METHODS
  a) Apart from traditional approaches to assessment, efforts shall be made in an endeavour to incorporate new and developing technologies.
  b) Each course shall, as far as possible, be assessed using a variety of classroom techniques applicable to learning situations, as informed by level descriptors.

3.1.4. TYPES AND NUMBER OF ASSESSMENTS
  a) The types and number of assessments shall be as follows:
      i. For an 8-credit course, students may be subjected to at least two (2) tests, two (2) assignments and a minimum of two (2) practicals which shall account for 50% of summative assessment for the course per semester.
      ii. For a 12-credit course, students may be subjected to at least two (2) tests, two (2) assignments and a minimum of two (2) practicals which shall account for 50% of summative assessments for the course per semester.
      iii. Project and research-based courses shall be assessed through a written and oral presentation as well as a written manuscript in proportions set for each module.
      iv. For a course above 12 credits or WIL, criteria shall be developed and approved guided by the following:
          • On site assessment by mentor and/or FCAFTI representatives;
          • Written manuscript; and
          • Oral presentation.
  b) Assessment development shall be guided by the impact which such assessments enhance the achievement of learning outcomes.
  c) In the event of failure by a student to undertake an assessment due to illness or other circumstances, the following shall be needed to facilitate re-assessment:
      i. A letter from a recognised medical specialist;
      ii. A letter from community leadership; and
      iii. A formal communication from the HOD and HOA approving the assessment.

3.1.5. FORMS OF ASSESSMENTS
  a) Assessments shall be developed for both formative and summative evaluations.
  b) Formative assessments shall be done to provide regular feedback on the performance of learners, and such assessments shall be offered as demanded by learning outcomes.

c) Summative assessments shall be developed during semester engagement as stipulated in 3.1.4 above as well as an end of semester examination covering 100% of summative assessment for each course.

3.1.6. EXAMINATIONS
a) All examinations shall be undertaken at the end of the semester unless advised and approved by the Board of Academics.
b) The examinations shall form part of the student summative assessment.
c) Examinations for 8 and 12 credit courses shall contribute 50% of the students' final assessment.
d) Administration of examinations shall be guided by rules and regulations published in the examination booklet.

3.1.7. FEEDBACK AND APPEAL
a) Assessment timeframes shall be advised and jointly acknowledged between the assessor and learners.
b) Communication of assessment results shall be done in not more than three weeks after the undertaking of such an assessment unless the HOD approves otherwise.
c) A student may challenge the assessment results if deemed unfair by appealing to the Lecturer then the HOD concerned.
d) The HOD has the final decision regarding formative assessments, while the matter of Summative Assessment may be appealed to the HOA and BOA.

3.1.8. ASSESSMENT RECORDS
Results of scheduled assessments shall be kept in such a manner and for such duration, by specified persons, as stipulated in the policy on institutional records management.

3.2. MODERATION
3.2.1. Internal moderation shall involve an assessor and a moderator employed by FCAFTI.
3.2.2. External moderation shall involve either an assessor or a moderator not under the employ of FCAFTI but contracted by the institution solemnly for the purpose of moderation.
3.2.3. A non-FCAFTI employee may not be allowed to undertake an assessment for summative purposes.
3.2.4. The determination of courses' internal and external moderation requirements shall be made from course to course subject to approval by the BOA.
3.2.5. Persons with expertise in the field or closely related to the course may be appointed as moderators.
3.2.6. Minimum moderator's qualifications for each course shall be at least one NQF level above the qualification of the course moderated.
3.2.7. Moderation of the courses provide the second and an independent opinion for the structure of an examination and marking of the student scripts.
3.2.8. Aims of moderation shall include to:
    (i) Ensure consistency in assessment;
    (ii) Ensure credibility of assessment methods and instruments;
    (iii) Provide advice and guidance to assessors for improving their assessment practices; and
    (iv) Provide curriculum development feedback and essential feed-forward.
3.2.9. Moderation process shall include consideration of:
    (i) The implementation of the assessment according to the specified guidelines provided by HEQC, and
    (ii) Marking and reviewing of the assessment process which shall ensure that assessors are using feedback from peers in improving their assessment procedures.
3.2.10. The moderation process shall serve as a quality assurance practice to regulate and assure assessment quality and eliminate possible errors and prejudice that could be found on an assessment.
3.2.11. On matters not related to awarding of marks, moderators shall provide an independent opinion and such an opinion shall be regarded as final unless overturned on appeal by the BOA.

3.2.12. Where the margin of difference between the assessor and the moderator marks is less or equal to 10%, an average may be considered.

3.2.13. Where the margin of difference between the assessor and the moderator marks is more than 10%, the third moderator may be appointed subject to guidelines on the Examinations Policy as well as Rules and Regulations for Examinations. The opinions of the third moderator shall be considered final unless overturned by the BOA.

3.2.14. The moderator shall be furnished with a full set of learning materials for each course at the beginning of each semester.

3.3. RE-ASSESSMENT

3.3.1. Students have the right to appeal the assessment process and output for the summative and formative assessments.
   (i) The appeal should be submitted to the lecturer/assessor involved within 5 days after receipt of the assessment feedback;
   (ii) Where the matter cannot been resolved between the two, the matter may be referred to the HOD by the lecturer or student within two days after an unsuccessful appeal effort;
   (iii) On receipt of the complaint, the HOD shall arbitrate on the matter and communicate the final decision with five working days to the lecturer and student; and
   (iv) Matters not resolved by the HOD shall be referred to the AC for further interrogation.

3.3.2. Where the assessor is of the opinion that the assessment process was compromised, the assessor may undertake a reassessment subject to approval by the HOD within a reasonable period.

3.3.3. Where the HOD is not satisfied with the outcome of assessments, the lecturer may be consulted and required to carry out a reassessment. An aggrieved lecturer may appeal such a decision to the HOA and/or AC.

3.3.4. Guidelines 3.3.1-3 do not refer to Examinations.

4. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

4.1. The institution shall provide academic staff and students with resources, control of their use and means that enable the optimum circumstances for the implementation of this policy.

4.2. Accountability for the implementation of this policy shall rest with the assessor, HOD and HOA.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

5.1. The implementation of this policy shall be monitored through reports submitted by the HOD in monthly, quarterly and annual reports.

5.2. The success on implementation of this policy shall be reported in the assessment reports by the end of the assessment period.

5.3. The AETC, AC, TQAC and BOA shall be responsible for monitoring and evaluation of compliance and implementation of this policy.

5.4. Feedback for monitoring and evaluation shall be provided to the lecturers/assessors in every semester, and such shall be reported implicitly in the institutional annual report.

6. REVIEW PROCEDURE:

6.1. The policy shall be reviewed five years following its implementation in line with the curriculum review programme.

6.2. Proposals for review shall be submitted in writing by individual lecturers, students, student representatives (SRC) and academic departments to the TQA office.

6.3. Review workshops will be convened and proposed reviews will be presented and considered.

6.4. AETC shall present the reviews to the TQAC and then to the BOA, which will finally present these to the Council.