



# MUAST

---

MARONDERA UNIVERSITY  
OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY

## **ASSESSMENT POLICY**

**POLICY NO. ASP/29/26**



# MUAST

MARONDERA UNIVERSITY  
OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY

TITLE	MARONDERA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT POLICY
POLICY NUMBER	
COMPILED BY	DIRECTOR, TEACHING AND LEARNING INSTITUTE
APPROVED BY	
DATE	

## **Preamble**

Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (MUASt) is a modern and unique institution of higher learning established through an Act of Parliament [Chapter 25:29]. The University is driven by the vision to be a leading global centre of excellence in the provision of technology driven sustainable green agricultural solutions. Underpinned by its unique CORE VALUES: Excellence, Diversity, Innovation, Ethics and Ubuntu; the University aims at producing globally acceptable and competent graduates grounded in agricultural, entrepreneurial and technological skills through excellence in teaching, research and extension services, innovation and industrialization.

MUASt commits to follow a set of clear ethical guidelines of assessment that will strengthen and validate the University's current philosophy and approaches. The assessment practices that the policy intends to streamline, should also be consistent with the University's academic policies and procedures. MUASt adheres to anti-corruption circulars, policies and measures as directed to the attention of the University by other agencies of the State. The policy shall also serve as a deterrent to corruption since it hinders the growth, prosperity and inclusive development of the country. The policy therefore, prompts good governance buttressed by transparency, accountability, integrity and rule of law. This policy also acknowledges the responsibility to lead by example in the fight against corruption and to render services ethically.

The function of assessment in learning is primarily to provide a measurable indicator of the progress of a student. It is carried out to ensure that learning has taken place. Assessment is a quality assurance mechanism whose broad goal should be to check students' progress against the learning outcomes as well as to motivate the student.

## Table of Contents

### Contents

Preamble .....	2
Definitions of Terms .....	4
SECTION A.....	6
1. Introduction.....	6
1.1 Aims and objectives of the policy.....	6
1.2 Policy statements .....	6
1.3 Regulatory Frameworks .....	7
SECTION B.....	8
2. Functions of Assessment.....	8
3.Types of Assessment .....	8
3.1 Formative/Continuous Assessment .....	8
3.2 Summative/Final Assessment .....	9
3.3 Ipsative Assessment .....	9
3.4 Norm-referenced Assessment.....	10
3.5 Criterion-referenced Assessment.....	10
4. Assessment methods .....	10
4.1 Number of assessments .....	10
4.2 Timeliness of submission of assessment tasks.....	10
4.3 Feedback to students .....	11
4.4 Appeals for a re-mark.....	11
5. Moderation.....	11
6. Academic honesty and integrity.....	12
SECTION C.....	13
7.0 Monitoring and Review of the Policy .....	13

## **Definitions of Terms**

**Assessment** - a formal process of evaluating students' learning through specifically designed tasks such as assignments, tests, or examinations.

**course credit** - a unit attained by a student based on contact and non-contact hours per course per week.

**criterion-referenced assessment** - assessment model where student performance is evaluated according to set criteria. A student's performance is rated according to the criteria and is not influenced by the performance of other students.

**formative assessment** - assessment that is given to student to determine their understanding of learning that is given to students throughout the period of their study.

**grade** - a quantitative indicator of a student's achievement in an assessment task.

**hurdle requirements** - a prerequisite that has to be satisfied in order for a student to pass a course/subject or for a student to be assessed for that course/subject.

**ipsative assessment** - assessment model that compares a student's performance against their previous performance.

**learning outcomes** - statements of what a student should know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate or the qualities they should develop at the end of the course.

**learning objectives** - statements of the intended goal of the course that describe what students will be expected to learn.

**moderation** - a quality assurance process by which an individual or group not involved in setting or marking an assessment task confirms that the assessment has been conducted with accuracy, consistency and fairness.

norm-referenced assessment - assessment model where students are assessed relative to the performance of other students.

plagiarism - full or partial copying of another person's work without acknowledgement.

summative assessment - assessment method used to determine student achievement through a test or examination which is given at the end of a period of study.

## **SECTION A**

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of the Assessment Policy is to clearly set out the philosophy and approach to assessment at Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (MUAUST). The ultimate purpose of assessment is to validate learning outcomes. Assessment helps the student to gauge their development whilst allowing the assessor to give valuable feedback where and when appropriate. Its purpose is to measure the student's understanding of the course/module content against the anticipated outcomes set by the course/module criteria. The student needs guidance to understand what it is they have to learn, if they are on track and how they may improve. Assessment is essential to establish whether the student has met the standards and if they are competent and to assess their current knowledge and skills. If a training session has been delivered and no assessment has taken place then you cannot be sure that learning has taken place. If you do not assess the student you cannot know their level of skill.

Assessment methods should continually be improved upon in-line with new trends, expected competences and assessment criteria. For instance, old and new academic staff members need to be acquainted with how to assess effectively competences like creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration skills as well as according to the dictates of Education 5.0.

#### ***1.1 Aims and objectives of the policy***

The aims of the Assessment Policy are the following:

1.1.2 To harmonise the assessment processes and procedures used at Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology.

1.1.3 To validate and strengthen the said assessment processes and procedures.

1.1.4 To demonstrate the soundness and validity of the assessment processes and procedures to internal and external stakeholders.

1.1.5 To ensure that the assessment tasks, processes and procedures satisfy the quality assurance benchmarks of Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology and those of the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE).

#### ***1.2 Policy statements***

1.2.1 Assessment tasks must:

- 1.2.1.1 be aligned to course objectives and learning outcomes;
- 1.2.1.2 motivate students to improve or excel in their learning experience;
- 1.2.1.3 enable lecturers to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching.
- 1.2.1.4 be fair, objective, transparent and consistent;
- 1.2.1.5 not discriminate against gender, ethnicity, religion, age, or disability;
- 1.2.1.6 be authentic and should be able to gauge what students have learnt as well as the learning abilities of each student;]
- 1.2.1.7 be inclusive of the entire course content;
- 1.2.1.8 encourage students to become independent learners, creative and critical thinkers.
- 1.2.1.9 Assessment tasks and procedures must be explicitly stated in the course outline.

### ***1.3 Regulatory Frameworks***

Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology General Academic  
Regulations  
Teaching and Learning Policy  
Quality Assurance Policy

## **SECTION B**

### **2. Functions of Assessment**

2.1 Assessment entails collecting information about the students, the curriculum, the lecturers and synthesising the information in order to make informed decisions. This information assists in identifying a student's strengths, weaknesses and/or challenging topics in the curriculum.

2.2 Assessment is used to validate the attainment of learning outcomes. Assessment is paramount in measuring course quality, student learning and lecturer effectiveness.

Assessment must be used to gauge the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process and offer remediation where necessary.

2.3 The lecturer can gauge his/her performance in relation to successful delivery of information. Assessment serves as a barometer by which a lecturer can see whether the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.

2.4 Assessment tasks must be aligned to course objectives and learning outcomes; Assessment must demonstrate inclusivity. The assessment and evaluation of their learning must be fair to all, be varied in nature and allow them to demonstrate the full range of their learning. The assessment should be valid, fair, flexible, appropriate and not discriminatory.

### **3.Types of Assessment**

#### ***3.1 Formative/Continuous Assessment***

Formative assessment is used to monitor student performance throughout the course of study. Formative assessment entails giving regular feedback to students in relation to their performance throughout the duration of the course. Its purpose is to motivate students in their learning process as well as enable them to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching and learning strategies being offered to them. Through formative assessment the lecturer is also in a position to note those areas where students are having difficulties and that need improvement or further investigation.

A student should have submitted coursework to be eligible to sit for the final examination. Continuous assessment is of paramount importance and is a prerequisite for a student to be able to write the final examination. Students who have not been continuously assessed at the

end of a module cannot be summatively assessed because learning is not about the final examination but is a process that occurs from the first day of the semester until the final examination.

### ***3.2 Summative/Final Assessment***

Summative assessment evaluates the performance of a student at the end of a unit of study. Summative assessment evaluates students according to a given examination, project, or portfolio. Final assessment should test the knowledge and skills acquired by students during the learning period (block, semester) based on the learning outcomes and the graduate attributes of the course. Ideally, teaching, assessment and marking of the final examination should all be undertaken by the same person for fairness, consistency and accountability.

Where a department or faculty intends to include a hurdle requirement as a component of the assessment, the hurdle requirement should be communicated to students in advance. Also, students should be aware of the implications of failing the hurdle requirement. Hurdles should be well articulated in the programme regulations. A student who fails a hurdle requirement for any course will be deemed to have failed the course, regardless of whether they have attained 50% or more in other assessments.

Hurdle requirements may include:

- 3.2.1 Lecture attendance;
- 3.2.2 Tutorial attendance;
- 3.2.3 Completion of all coursework assessments required for a particular course/module.  
Students with no coursework should not be allowed to sit for the final examination;
- 3.2.4 Successful completion of all practical components (including exhibitions) of a course;
- 3.2.5 Successful completion of the work-related learning/attachment requirement and submission of all reports thereof.
- 3.2.6 Work-Related Learning/Attachment and Agri-practice are mandatory components of the curriculum at Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology.

### ***3.3 Ipsative Assessment***

Ipsative assessment is used to measure the performance of a student against his/her earlier performance. Ipsative assessment keeps track of a student's performance from the beginning

of the semester to the end of semester. The purpose of ipsative assessment will be to determine whether there has been an improvement or deterioration in the student's performance. In the case of the latter, remedial actions will be sought.

### ***3.4 Norm-referenced Assessment***

Norm-referenced assessment is used where students are assessed relative to the performance of other students. In this kind of assessment, the performance of an individual student is rated relative to how the other students in the class have performed.

### ***3.5 Criterion-referenced Assessment***

This is an assessment model where student performance is evaluated according to set criteria. A student's performance is rated according to the criteria and is not influenced by the performance of other students.

## **4. Assessment methods**

The choice of assessment methods varies from course/module to course/module and from lecturer to lecturer. What is of paramount importance is that the assessment methods should be appropriate to the stipulated learning outcomes. Some of the assessment methods given in the Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology Teaching and Learning Policy.

### ***4.1 Number of assessments***

The number of assessments given to students for continuous assessment should be guided by the credit weighting of the course. For a given course, the best of at least three assessments should contribute to a student's final mark. This is important because the credit system subsumes that students contribute time towards their learning. The number of assignments, tests and practicals (experiments) should be clearly spelt out in the course/module outline.

### ***4.2 Timeliness of submission of assessment tasks***

Assessment should be formative so that it informs the teaching-learning process. For it to be meaningful, the assessment tasks given to students should be scheduled at a relevant time when meaningful learning has taken place. For undergraduate courses, students are required to have completed at least one assessment task within the first two (2) weeks of learning.

### **4.3 Feedback to students**

Feedback of assessment should be fair, timely, detailed, constructive and developmental for it to be relevant and for it to inform the students' learning. Feedback to students should point out areas where they need further assistance. It is advisable that feedback be written in order to serve as a reference point when so required in future.

### **4.4 Appeals for a re-mark**

7.4.1 A student may appeal against a mark given for both continuous and summative assessment. The grounds for a re-mark should be specific and justified and include the following:

4.4.1 Irregularities between the marks accorded and the marking guide;

4.4.2 Where a student has evidence of bias from the lecturer;

4.4.3 Where there is a mathematical error in the tallying of the marks.

4.4.4 The student can appeal for a re-mark to the respective lecturer of the module. In the event of divergent views between lecturer and student, the student can appeal to the Chairperson of the Department and ultimately to the Dean of the Faculty

4.4.5 The Department/School may request another lecturer in the same department to re-mark the student's work, or may send the script to a lecturer at another institution.

4.4.6 The student may not appeal against the re-marked grade which may be higher or lower than the original mark.

### **5. Moderation**

5.1 Moderation should be conducted in all instances to reduce errors (item writing, typographical, marking and/or scoring) thereby contributing to the continuous improvement of assessment practices and to sharing good practice among colleagues. Moderation contributes to the continuous improvement of assessment practices. After marking, the papers should be moderated and possible remedial action on weak students discussed for implementation.

5.2 Moderation can be internal or external or both and is done by an individual not involved in setting or marking an assessment task confirms that assessment is conducted with accuracy, consistency and fairness.

5.3 Marking guides should be availed during the moderation process.

5.4 Examination question papers should be deliberated upon by the departmental board and then sent to the external examiner with the respective course outline and marking guides to check whether questions are pitched at the correct level, tally with objectives and outcomes of the programme and item construction.

5.5 The external examiner is invited to look at the marked scripts and have his/her input. The departmental board will then sit to consider the results factoring in the recommendations of the external examiner. Where there is no external examiner, the department needs to set up a committee with three (3) or four (4) members as internal assessors.

## **6. Academic honesty and integrity**

6.1 It is the prerogative of the student to ensure that all work they submit for assessment is original. All citations from other sources should be adequately acknowledged. Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology upholds academic honesty and integrity. Plagiarism is a serious offence and will thus not be tolerated at Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology. The General Academic Regulations are explicit in their denunciation of plagiarism and the penalties it attracts.

6.2 All assignments, dissertations and theses produced at Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology will be run through the anti-plagiarism software;

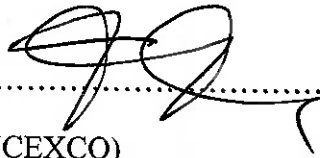
6.3 The permissible similarity index is fifteen (15%) for Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology. Any research with a similarity index of above 15% would be questionable and would need thorough scrutiny before being recommended for assessment or otherwise;

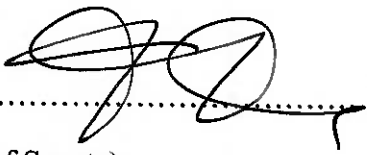
6.4 The use of Artificial Intelligence tools should be curtailed through innovative approaches in teaching and assessment.

**SECTION C**

**7.0 Monitoring and Review of the Policy**

Policies are subject to review after every 4 years

Approved.......... Date..05/06/26.....  
(Chairperson of VCEXCO)

Approved.......... Date..05/06/26.....  
(Chairperson of Senate)