Policy

Assessment

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ACRONYMS

AEC	Academic Executive Committee
CAEL	Council for Adult and Experiential Learning
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
ICLD	Institute for Curriculum and Learning Development
MCQ	Multiple choice questions
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NADEOSA	National Association of Distance Education and Open Learning of Southern Africa
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OBE	Outcomes-based education
ODL	Open Distance Learning
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SENEX	Senate Executive Committee
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
WIL	Work-integrated learning

1. PREAMBLE

The Management College of Southern Africa (MANCOSA) as a supported distance education provider acknowledges that assessment constitutes a core element in its commitment to offering academic programmes that have international recognition as well as national legitimacy, credibility and well-understood academic, professional and career-orientated outcomes.

Assessment and assessment practices are partially guided by the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for registered standards and qualifications as stipulated in the *Criteria and Guidelines for Assessment of NQF Registered Unit Standards and Qualifications* (South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), October 2001). In addition, SAQA has oversight of bodies responsible for the monitoring and auditing of the quality of the teaching, learning and assessment systems, processes and procedures that make provision for the achievement of required standards, although this aspect falls under the CHE as the Quality Council for higher education as legislated in the National Qualifications Act No 67 of 2008.

The Assessment Policy is one of the principal ways in which MANCOSA ensures that the quality and standard of learning outcomes of programmes and graduate characteristics are assured and applied consistently across all programmes. The acceptance of an integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment, as well as the use of outcomes and a programme-based approach to education serves as a point of departure for this policy.

The principles, definitions and interpretations in this document are based on conceptual frameworks developed by South African statutory bodies, namely, SAQA and the Council on Higher Education (CHE) (including its Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC)) and by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

2. PURPOSE

Background

The Higher Education Act of 1997 as amended has assigned responsibility for quality assurance in higher education in South Africa to the CHE. The National Qualifications Act No 67 of 2008 also recognises the CHE as the Quality Council for higher education. The CHE discharges its quality assurance responsibility through its permanent committee, the HEQC.

The NQF is an education and training framework that sets education and training and qualifications standards. As such, the institutional assessment practices and procedures are required to be appropriately aligned to those of an outcome-based education and training system.[1]

In addition to national benchmarks, MANCOSA has also drawn from good practice internationally and incorporates relevant benchmarks, for example, in the assessment of prior learning used by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning's (CAEL) in standards for assessing learning for credit.

With the ongoing developments in technology and good practices in this regard, systems and procedures in this document are not permanent and so this policy document should be regularly reviewed and updated.

This policy applies to all areas of academic assessment at MANCOSA, which Includes, but is not limited to:

- Examinations and supplementary examinations;
- Assignments;
- Group work;
- Projects;
- The appointment of examiners and moderators (internal and external);
- Remarks, appeals, aegrotats;

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[1] Criteria and Guidelines for Assessment of NQF Registered Unit Standards and Qualifications, p6.

- Academic integrity (Plagiarism prevention);
- Assessment of student admissions.

Definition of Assessment

Assessment is the process whereby evidence of performance is gathered and evaluated against agreed criteria in order to make a professional judgement as to whether the learning required for the achievement of specific outcomes is taking place or has taken place.

During assessment the examiner collects evidence to identify the level of knowledge and/or skill acquired so that decisions can be made related to the student/module/learning programme, depending on the purpose of the particular assessment.

The focus of assessment includes:

- Improving the quality of the students learning experience by concentrating on the graduate characteristics, that is significant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and providing motivation to work through the material through tasks and feedback. Assessment focuses on the ability to transfer knowledge to new contexts and to apply knowledge to specific contexts.
- Providing accurate estimates of current competence or potential in relation to desired outcomes to enable lecturers to make appropriate decisions (placement, diagnostic, etc.)
- Making judgments related to competence and progression or qualification.

Formative assessment measures consistency of performance and provides feedback students though contact, support and structure to the learning experiences of students. It is a key motivator of learning.

On an academic level, MANCOSA develops a profile of student achievement of specified outcomes in formative and summative assessment.

Formative data enables the lecturer to plan interventions to support student learning. On an administrative level, assessment provides an accountable basis for credit and eventual certification of students in relation to outcomes of particular qualifications.

Student assessment performance is viewed by lecturers as feedback on the achievement of the overall teaching criteria and standards and is used as part of a systematic monitoring by quality assurance of teaching and learning, and assessment quality.

Assessment is a means of learning about student misunderstandings of study material so that teaching or tutorial support can be modified accordingly.

MANCOSA also uses the assessment data as part of a wider 360 degrees self-evaluation system to inform decision making, identifying at-risk modules, completion rates for modules, teaching standards, etc.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Assessment Policy is to facilitate effective and efficient procedures to ensure quality rather than over-regulate the teaching, learning and assessment environment.

The purpose of this policy is to:

2.1   establish a clear conceptual framework which includes regulations, guidelines and procedures for an integrated, coherent, constructive assessment strategy that effectively supports the achievement of intended learning outcomes and graduate characteristics in all academic programmes at MANCOSA;

2.2   ensure the alignment of assessment practices for academic programmes in accordance with the national higher education legislative and policy environment;

2.3   ensure that assessment is an integrated process within the student learning experience; and

2.4   provide a framework for the management of the quality of all assessment-related procedures and practices at MANCOSA.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all academic programmes that lead to a qualification being awarded by MANCOSA.

4. PRINCIPLES

Academics must continually seek to understand why they need to assess in certain ways to be effective as educators. This section explains some well-established general principles of assessment. Assessment of student learning reflects the tenet of academic integrity and complies with MANCOSA's Code of Academic and Research Ethics, including the rights of students. The following principles apply:

4.1   Assessment is coherently designed as taking into account the level descriptors of the NQF as an integral part of the learning process to ensure internal alignment and coherence of a programme in terms of the purpose and learning content of the programme and its modules, learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and assessment opportunities and strategies.

4.2   Assessment processes are reliable, valid, transparent and fair, and the tasks feasible (practicable) in relation to available institutional financial resources, facilities, equipment and time.

4.3   Assessment is comprised of both formative and summative assessments and is conducted on a continuous basis throughout the learning experience, and the purpose of the assessment and related assessment criteria are clearly communicated to students.

4.4   Assessment includes a wide range of approaches and methods (including integrated assessment) that are fit for purpose and followed by constructive feedback to students to support their learning.

4.5   Assessment practices are based on established good practice and contemporary research, and are aligned with the assessment practices and procedures required or suggested by the relevant statutory bodies.

4.6   Quality assurance is integral to assessment and is the responsibility academic departments.

5. PRE-REQUISITES FOR ASSESSMENT

5.1   As assessment is a structured process in which evidence is gathered to make judgments about an individual's performance in relation to agreed and defined criteria, as well as being central to the recognition of achievement and the provision of credible certification, the following pertain:

5.1.1   Fairness requires that a student is not hindered or disadvantaged when it comes to being treated equally and in an unbiased manner, and that appeal mechanisms are available to all students.

5.1.2   Transparency, on which confidence in the assessment system rests, requires that all parties (students, examiners, moderators, etc.) understand the system and have the assurance that it is well planned, works in practice and is properly regulated.

5.1.3   Reliability requires consistency in that the same judgments are made in equivalent or similar contexts in terms of standards, available assessment information, marks, etc.

5.1.4   Validity requires that assessment processes and instruments assess what they set out to assess in respect of clearly stated outcomes. Validity requires appropriate types of evidence by means of a suitable method of assessment.

5.1.5   Clarity of meaning in the expression of the requirements against which student performance is measured is integral to student success, as well as a built-in mechanism to avoid examiner/moderator deviation, inconsistency and error.

5.2   Assessment in an outcomes-based education system emphasises the assessment of outputs and end products that are expressed as competences in the outcomes and assessment criteria.

5.3   Learning guides are an integral part of the total learning process. At the beginning of each module students are provided with a comprehensive learning guide in which the specific assessment

requirements are explained, viz. the learning outcomes and assessment criteria linked to the different learning opportunities, assessment rules, dates, times and venues (if available), method of assessment and the weight that it contributes to the final summative mark, feedback system to be used, minimum pass requirements and linkages to supplementary assessment opportunities, as applicable.

Principles Informing this Policy

Academic are expected to continually seek to understand why they need to assess in certain ways to be effective as educators. This section explains some well-established general principles of assessment as well as principles that relate to the outcomes-based education system currently favoured by national education policy.

Validity

The assessment must be valid or 'fit-for-purpose'; that is, it must measure predetermined outcomes, using appropriate assessment methods.

Important aspects of validity include:
- Face validity: The assessment should be perceived to be fair, giving students a reasonable opportunity to show what they know and what they have mastered. For example, any suggestion of bias that may be to the detriment of some would reduce face validity for students (e.g., gender or ethnic bias). It should not advantage or disadvantage any student.
- Tuition and assessment are equitable when they take into account the instructional context and the special background of students (e.g. prior knowledge, cultural experience, language proficiency, cognitive style and interests). In supported distance education these characteristics can only be broadly determined based on the student profile for individual modules.
- Content validity: Assessment should be appropriate for the stated outcomes of the module and should cover the knowledge (ideas and skills) adequately. Assessment should focus on testing mastery of important knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and not on peripheral details.
- Construct validity: This refers to the extent to which assessment succeeds in measuring and evaluating the abilities (theoretical or practical 'constructs') that it intends to assess.

Reliability

Assessment should be reliable or consistent; that is, it should produce the same results when:
- Particular students are assessed across time for the same knowledge, skills, attitudes and values using a variety of methods.
- Different markers assess the same piece of work.

The amount of work assessed should be sufficient in proportion to the comprehensiveness of the study package.

Value judgements (such as passing or failing marks) should be as objective as possible. There should be academic and administrative quality control before, during and after the assessment. If a student's mark differs significantly depending on who marked the assignment/ examination, then the assessment is deemed not to be reliable. Guidance provided to examiners for marking must also be transparent and defensible.

Manageability

Assessment should be manageable – that is, not too difficult or expensive to implement – and it should be time efficient. Good assessment practice should be cost effective; that is, assessment should not be carried out by expensive means if adequate information about student performance could be obtained by equally valid, alternative, less-expensive means. Quantity and type of assessment should also allow lecturers to achieve reliable results in a reasonable period of time. This also relates to timely feedback to students in order to improve their learning at the next step in the learning process

Directness

Assessment should be as direct as possible; that is, it should be directly related to the real-life use of the knowledge and skills outside educational settings.

Authentic assessment also includes assessment of processes, practices, skills and reflection that occur in the learning situation. To ensure relevance and validity, the focus should be on measuring student mastery of significant, not trivial, outcomes. During the planning for a new module or programme, tuition and assessment methods should be developed simultaneously in relation to student learning and the meeting of learning outcomes to ensure that assessment is relevant. Directness has to be balanced with manageability.

6. TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

6.1 Summative and Formative Assessment

Both types of assessment are integral components of all modules within a programme.

6.1.1 Formative Assessment

Formative assessment refers to assessment that takes place during the process of teaching and learning. Formative assessment
- supports the teaching and learning process;
- provides feedback to the student on his/her progress;
- identifies the student's strengths and weaknesses;
- assists in the planning of future learning;
- is developmental in nature and contributes to the student's capacity for self-evaluation;
- helps with decision-making with regards to the readiness of the student to do a summative assessment.

6.1.2 Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is conducted for the purpose of making a judgment about the level of competence of a student in relation to the outcomes of a module and/or programme. The result of such a formal assessment (e.g. class tests, assignments, projects, presentations) is expressed as a mark reflecting a pass or fail. The minimum number of summative assessment opportunities required are stipulated by Senate and contained in MANCOSA's Academic Rules as per the Programme Handbook.

6.2 Integrated Assessment

Integrated assessment has application where a need exists to assure overall applied competence, to prevent disjointed learning experience and/or as a time effective assessment method. General assessment principles and practices apply.

Integrated assessment refers to

- assessing a number of outcomes together;
- assessing a number of modules together;
- using a combination of assessment methods and instruments for an outcome or outcomes;
- collecting naturally occurring evidence (such as in a workplace setting);
- acquiring evidence from other sources such as supervisor reports, testimonials, portfolios of work previously done, logbooks, journals, etc.

The use of different types and combinations of integrated assessment will be dependent on the nature of specific disciplines, including its appropriateness at the particular level of study, for example at exit level of an undergraduate degree or at postgraduate level. Applied competence refers to the

foundational, practical and reflexive aspects of learning. In other words, students must demonstrate their understanding of the knowledge, skills and attitudes associated with a particular discipline or field of study (foundational knowledge), they must be able to apply this knowledge in a given context and be able to reflect on the knowledge and application in a critical way.

The use of a 'case study' approach exemplifies the use of integrated assessment. While it can have targeted applicability at the undergraduate level, it is particularly suited for postgraduate programmes.

6.3 Grading of Assignments

Percentages will be awarded when marking and 50% constitutes a pass mark for all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. (See table 8.2 for sub-minima marks.)

6.4 Feedback

Instructional feedback is fundamental to the learning process. Academics are expected to provide timely feedback that identifies where misunderstandings have occurred and the ways in which the student can improve on a marked assignment. Feedback should be individualised to the specific student's attempts whenever possible and practicable. Generic feedback should also be given in answers/ guidelines to self-assessed tasks in study materials and lecturer-marked assignments.

Feedback on assignments or in tutorial letters must reach students before they write their summative examinations.

Additional support is provided for at-risk of failing students academically in the form of enrichment workshops and supported classes, where applicable.

6.5 Student responsibility

Students are responsible for incorporating assessment feedback in their learning; making use of the assessment criteria that they are given; being aware of the rules, policies and other documents related to the assessment of a module; and to provide academics with feedback on the assessment methods used and their assessment practices.

6.6 Students with disabilities

MANCOSA is committed to ensuring fair treatment for all its students. The Examinations Department will collaborate with the Dean's office to make arrangements for students with special needs resulting from disabilities including aspects such as venues, time for completion of examination and mode of the examination (taped, oral, Braille, use of laptops, etc.) at the expense of the student.

6.7 Special examinations

Oral examinations may be arranged face-to-face or through videoconferencing if the discipline demands this method. The first and second examiners must be present, and the external examiner if required. Oral examinations will at all times be arranged through the Examinations Department. Oral examinations will be structured and documented for recordkeeping with clear questions, assessment criteria and/ or memorandums. Admission to special examinations must be approved by SENEX.

6.8 Supplementary examinations

Students will be granted a supplementary examination if they achieve a minimum percentage from the combined year mark and examination mark. The year mark will not contribute to results of a student writing a supplementary examination because s/he failed the main examination.

It will contribute in the case of aegrotat examinations. This rule includes non-venue based supplementary assessment. The granting of a supplementary examination to all those who qualify, except candidates who failed the main examination but qualified for a supplementary examination, will be subject to rigorous scrutiny by the Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee or SENEX.

6.9 Integrity of data

Procedures will be put in place to ensure the integrity of assessment data that will ensure the accuracy, consistency and credibility of results so that the MANCOSA's certification is seen to be reliable.

7. QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Assessment Committee will oversee and monitor the implementation of the *Assessment Policy*. The culture of ongoing reflection and research into the quality of assessment policies, principles and practices should be a feature of regular practice.

7.1 Policy review and revision cycles

This policy will be reviewed and approved every third year by Senate and revised every six years unless circumstances, such as a change in higher education policy, dictate that there should be an earlier review and revision. The Teaching and Learning Committee will periodically review criteria in particular subjects, giving immediate attention to new modules and modules that evidence poor student performance.

7.2 Assessor and moderator functions and training

MANCOSA makes use of moderators for teaching and assessment practices. The procedural rules, functions and application of moderation form part of the Assessment Manual.

8. ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

8.1 Evidence

8.1.1 Evidence is required to serve as proof that students comply with the requirements of the standard for which they wish to gain credits, and is applicable to all types of assessment.

8.1.2 Evidence is:
- Valid;
- Authentic, i.e. the student's own work;
- Sufficient; and
- Current, i.e. skills, knowledge and understanding are applicable.

8.2 Assessment Methods

A variety of 'fit for purpose' methods of assessment are used within a module to assess a student and his/her work as defined by the outcomes.

The development and implementation of assessment methods is based on the principles of assessment. All assessment activities are accompanied by a memorandum/assessment-marking guide.

The assessment method for the programmes at MANCOSA is by:
- Assignments;
- Examinations; and
- Tests for supported distance learning students (undergraduate), where relevant.

The contribution to the final mark is as follows:
- Assignment - 50%; and
- Examination - 50%
- To pass a module a final combined mark of 50% is required, and there is a subminimum criterion which is applicable.
- Entrance to the examination is dependent on the successful completion of assignments for each semester.
- A sub-minimum which is required in each form of assessment for a programme is indicated below.

Programme Listing: sub-minimum criteria

Programme	30%	40%
Higher Certificate Programmes	x	
Advanced Certificate Programmes	x	
Diploma Programmes	x	
Degree Programmes		x
Honours Degree Programmes		x
Postgraduate Diploma Programmes		x
Master Programmes		x

8.2.1   Mitigating Circumstances

8.2.1.1   General

These are defined as unforeseeable or unavoidable serious disruptions of studies caused by circumstances beyond a student's control. All matters of mitigating circumstances must be approved by SENEX.

Students who wish to inform MANCOSA of mitigating circumstances must:
- Submit this in writing within 5 days after the scheduled examination and/or assignment submission date.
- Provide a full and complete account of dates on which the mitigating circumstances apply specifying the assignment(s) and/or examination(s) affected.

- Ensure that application is accompanied by independent supporting evidence, e.g. medical certificate, etc.

Medical certificates dated 1 week before or after the scheduled assignment date will **not** be accepted. Students may be asked to submit evidence of work already completed together with their appeals. Mitigating circumstances must be submitted on the correct form available from MANCOSA offices.

8.2.1.2   Complaints Procedure

A complaint is considered to be an expression of a legitimate concern regarding some aspect of MANCOSA's provision and/or operation which needs a response.

(a)   Principles

- Every attempt will be made to deal with student complaints as efficiently and effectively as possible.

- Complaints will be treated in confidence and no victimisation or discrimination of any kind will be tolerated against the complainant.
- Anonymous complaints against a person or persons will **NOT** be considered.

(b) Procedure

Formal complaints must be made in writing and addressed to:
- The Head: Academic Administration, for assignments.
- The Head: Examinations, for examinations.
- The complaint will be logged.
- The complaint will then be investigated and a final response will be provided to the complainant within 30 days.
- A proposal, remedy or redress will be included in the response.
- Where the complainant is not satisfied with either the investigation or the outcome, a further written complaint may be made to the Academic Dean to submit to the Academic Executive Committee (AEC) and/or to SENEX.
- The AEC and/or SENEX will respond within 30 days following further investigation.

8.2.2 Appeals
Notes to Appeal Form:

(a) Grounds for Appeal

- That there exist circumstances materially affecting the student's performance which were not known to the Assessment and Certification Committee when its decision was taken and which was not reasonably practicable for the student to make known to the Committee beforehand.
- That there were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the examination and/or module assessment as to create a reasonable possibility that the result might have been different had they not occurred;
- That there is evidence of prejudice, bias or inadequate assessment on the part of one or more examiners or moderators.

Note: No appeal will be considered which challenges academic judgment.

(b) Time Limit

- The time limit within which a student may appeal is 5 days from notification of the result.
- The time limit applies to notification received by the Academic Dean to be tabled at the AEC or SENEX for assignments and to the Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee in cases of examinations.
- Discussions with and requests made to an academic do NOT count as notification of appeal.
- This form should be submitted to the Academic Dean without delay.
- It is *the student's responsibility* to ensure that MANCOSA has his/her correct contact details.
- It is *the student's responsibility* to check the mail at their email address, or to contact the post office regarding any recorded delivery notification.

(c) Additional Documents

Any additional document should be the original, typed or word-processed, or hand-written legibly. Faxes and photocopies are not acceptable. PDF documents are accepted, however, the original may be requested for viewing to establish authenticity.

(d)   Reasons for Appeal

Students must ensure that their reasons for appeal are as factual and specific as possible and fall within one or more of the categories in Note (a) above.

(e)   Evidence

Reasons for appeal must be supported by evidence. Unsupported claims or unsupported allegations against an individual or a group of staff will not be tolerated.

False information and defamatory allegations will be dealt with under the Code of Conduct.

(f)   Advice

Advice is available from:
- Academic Dean/ Deputy Dean in the event that the Dean is unavailable.
- The Manager in Assessment or Student Support.

8.2.3   Academic Honesty (Plagiarism)

- Students are assessed on the basis that work presented is their own as per the declaration on the assignment cover sheet.
- Cheating, plagiarism and fabrication of information are academic offences.
- Assignments, research proposals and dissertations will be scanned by plagiarism software (for example, TURNITIN) to ensure that the material used in work submitted is not plagiarised.
- The MANCOSA Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee will investigate allegations of such offences.

The 3 levels of plagiarism are as follows:

Level 1: Minor first time infringement.

Level 2: Repeated minor or first time major infringement.

Level 3: Repeated offences and/or major offences that are possibly intentional and suggest collusion or deliberate dishonesty.

Please refer to the *Academic Honesty and Plagiarism Policy* available on the MyMancosa website at http://www.mymancosa.com

8.2.4   Re-Registration for a Programme/Module

- Students failing a module at the first attempt or after writing the supplementary/aegrotat examination are required to re-register for the module.
- Students are only allowed to carry one (1) module over to the next semester for the current year of registration.
- Only two further registrations for a module are permitted.
- Students who do not pass at the third attempt must submit a written motivation to continue with the programme.

8.2.5 Progression

Upon successful completion of all modules in a year of the programme, a student is eligible to proceed to the next level or year of the programme. The student is required to register at each stage of the programme. There are specific rules related to the carrying of modules in the Programme Handbook.

8.3 Assessments Relating to Specific Circumstances

8.3.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Assessment for RPL purposes complies with the principles and procedures as determined in this policy. RPL systems, processes and procedures are governed by the MANCOSA's *Recognition of Prior Learning Policy*.

8.3.2 Assessment and People with Disabilities

Students wishing to submit an application for special assessment conditions do so in accordance with the procedures set out in the MANCOSA's *Policy on People with Disabilities* and Academic Regulations.

8.3.3 Assessment and Language

MANCOSA's *Language Policy* determines the language of teaching, learning and assessment.

9. ASSESSMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SPECIFIC NORMS

9.1 Marking in Accordance with Specific Norms

MANCOSA requires that all assessment conform to its general policies and regulations on marking and moderation. The Dean must ensure that all academic staff and internal and external examiners apply these policies and regulations and develop specific procedures for the guidance of students and staff in respect of all aspects of their provision. Therefore the following broad principles must apply:

- MANCOSA uses criterion-referenced assessment. This type of assessment is designed to provide a measure of performance that is interpretable in terms of a clearly defined and delimited domain of learning tasks, based on set criteria.
- All student work that is formally assessed by whatever means will be marked in accordance with pre-defined criteria, which are explicitly listed for the student and linked to the outcomes of the module.
- All assessed work when set should also describe the assessment criteria, marking scheme or model answer with sufficient level of detail such that independent markers may be expected to reach a judgement about the student work which lies within an acceptable range.
- The assessment criteria, where appropriate, must indicate how marks are to be allotted against the expected task requirements.
- All marks for summative assessments are provided as percentages. Provisional grades released to students prior to a meeting of the Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee is purely for feedback purposes and not to be taken to be final.
- Marks are provisional until the work has been (externally) moderated and until confirmed by the Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee. The provisional nature of marks should be made clear to students.
- Assignments should be marked objectively against the task as defined and against the criteria as approved. Sufficient written feedback should be provided either on the scripts or on an accompanying note both to support the judgement of the marker and the mark awarded, and to enable the student to identify deficiencies in his/her work and identify areas for improvement.
- Examinations should be marked objectively against the task as defined and against the assessment criteria as approved. Sufficient comments should be included either on the script, or on

an accompanying sheet, to form a basis for a discussion between the markers as to the nature and marker or a moderator must be sufficient to the purpose. Examination scripts are not returned to students.

- Double marking which entails the separate and independent marking of assessed work by another marker shall normally apply to the marking of all postgraduate projects or dissertations. In other areas, where double marking is sample based, this shall be defined as the moderation of the scripts.
- Wherever possible marking should be anonymous with markers not having access to the identity of the student whose assignment/ examination script is being assessed. This requires the use of student registration numbers on examination scripts rather than student names.

9.2 Assessment Criteria

All marking must be affected in accordance with the criteria presented in the table below.

A	Excellent 75%+	Excellent work which demonstrates an authoritative grasp of the concepts, methodology and content appropriate to the subject discipline.
B	Very Good 70 – 74%	Very good work which demonstrates a sound level of understanding based on a competent grasp of relevant concepts, methodology and content; displays skill in interpreting and analysing complex material; material well organised.
C	Good 60 – 69%	Work that demonstrates a coherent response to the requirements of the assessment task; clear expression of ideas; uses relevant source material; demonstrates some understanding of the concepts; draws relevant conclusions; appropriate organisation of response.
D	Acceptable 50 – 59%	Passable but with limited awareness of requirements of assessment task; evidence of some understanding; some attempt to draw relevant conclusions.
E+	Marginal Fail 46 – 49%	Marginal fail. Showing evidence of the understanding of concepts and their application but displaying clear omissions and some technical shortcomings.
E -	Borderline Fail 40 – 45%	Fail. Showing evidence of understanding basic concepts and theory. But limited in illustrating their application. Technical shortcomings.
F	Fail 33 – 39%	Fail. Inadequate but showing some evidence of concepts and relevant theory. No effort to display application of theory and concepts and their relevance. Technical shortcomings.
G	Fail 30 – 32%	Fail. Inadequate and showing limited evidence of knowledge in the field. Limited application of theory. Serious technical shortcomings.
H	Fail 0 – 29%	Little evidence of understanding critical concepts or their application.

9.3 Moderation of Examination Scripts

The purpose of moderation is to determine whether the standard applied to the overall batch of answers conforms to the approved assessment criteria and has been accurately and consistently applied.

All assessments are subject to internal moderation. Formal procedures for the moderation of coursework, examination and other assessed work are the responsibility of the Deputy Dean and the lecturing staff within which the module is based. Below are the general rules relating to internal and external moderation.

9.3.1 Internal moderation

MANCOSA requires all assessed work to be subject to a formal process of review before it is finalised. The Deputy Dean, programme coordinators and the academic staff responsible for moderation must

implement a system that ensures accuracy, clarity and consistency in the assessment process. Internal moderation should be carried out when the work is assessed. The nature of the moderation and any changes made to individual or module results must be fully detailed.

9.3.2 External moderation

All exit level assessments that contribute to the student's award shall be moderated by an External Examiner. Below are the broad policy guidelines on external moderation
- MANCOSA appoints external moderators for a 3 year period, which can be renewed for a further 3 years in their respective areas of expertise.
- External examiners are required to moderate the standards achieved against the criteria set for the assessment and verify the validity of the grades awarded. External examiners must therefore remain aware of the reasons why internal markers have assigned the chosen grades. They must thus have access to comments made on the work and be informed of grades assigned by internal markers.
- The Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee meeting should only be held after the external examiners have had the opportunity to scrutinise and moderate scripts for any and all of the assessments types in a module. The basis on which work is selected for scrutiny by the external examiners must be agreed beforehand (normally a sample of about 20% scripts of over 50 scripts - otherwise all papers are usually reviewed – based on borderlines, fails and distinctions). Where work contributes to a student's final award, the external examiner must supervise the full range of grades, with particular emphasis on those near to the boundaries between classifications. A clear schedule must be set for the dispatch and return of work for scrutiny.
- In exceptional circumstances, following external moderation, it may be agreed to scale a set of marks, up or down. MANCOSA requires that this be done only in exceptional circumstances and where it is agreed that scaling is the most appropriate action. It should be applied within relatively narrow limits and +/-10 proposed as a maximum. However, it will lie at the discretion of the Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee, with SENATE/SENEX oversight.
- Where it is evident that the level of the task was not appropriate to the level of award or where there was some general problem with the assessment such as an ambiguity which affected all students, the Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee has the responsibility of deciding on the most appropriate and academically sound course of action to address the problem.

10. COPYRIGHT, DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

10.1   Materials from copyright-protected sources included in assessments adhere to statutory and other legal requirements and are handled in accordance with DALRO (Dramatic, Artistic and Literary Rights Organisation) principles. The South African Copyright Act 98 of 1978 as amended governs all aspects of copyright in South Africa. It sets out what is protected, from what it is protected and for how long it is protected.

Copyright is territorial. The rights that are protected, the method of protection and even the period of protection can, and often do, differ from country to country. The principle of copyright protection is, however, common to all the nations which are signatories to the Berne Convention and the Universal Copyright Convention.

The countries of the Berne Union (of which South Africa is a signatory) are obliged to incorporate certain basic principles, or minimum standards, in their national laws and are bound to offer reciprocal treatment to works emanating from other parties to the Berne Convention.

10.2   Evidence of academic dishonesty and/or plagiarism is handled in accordance with MANCOSA's Academic Rules and Regulations.

11. VERIFICATION

The monitoring of the quality of the assessment processes from verification of the correctness and accuracy of recorded marks to the receipt and analysis of all moderator reports, the confirmation or overturning of all moderator findings and reports to the Dean is performed by the Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee. The Academic Planning and Quality Committee (APQC) carries out the institutional verification function.

12. ASSESSMENT RECORDS AND REPORTING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In order to meet the requirements of the HEQC, MANCOSA has developed a system for maintaining and updating detailed information about past, present and potential students.

The following information should form an integral part of student records and reporting to the National Learner Records database (NLRD)

- Name and unique student number (an ID number)
- Contact details of student
- Demographic information (age, gender, geographical location, racial group – for equity plans occupation.)
- Education and training background and experience (prior qualifications, prior learning and previous experience, learning skills, language skills and preference)
- Special learning needs (relevant disabilities or learning difficulties)
- Additional learning needs (necessary experience and knowledge of relevant technology)
- Resource factors (place and time of learning, access to resources, technology, financial resources for additional learning or support materials)
- Motivation for entering a program of learning
- Programs for which the student is registered
- Performance during program (internal and continuous assessment)
- Achievement during and at the end of the programme (internal and external assessment, final assessment, award achieved).

In addition, to enable SAQA to maintain accurate information on national learner and learning profiles, this information can serve many of the quality requirements of the provider. This information is also used to design learning programmes or modules within programmes or to NQF standards, materials and student support systems and services. Updating and reviewing this information in a formal and regular way allows MANCOSA to develop a flexible and student-centred approach to learning provision and assessment.