

NWU Business School

Business School Assessment Plan (BSAP) for 2021 during Covid-19 crisis

1. Introduction

As a result of the continuing lockdown, it is important to reconsider existing assessment activities, processes and the mid-year formal formative and summative evaluations. At this time these will apply to the first semester of 2021.

Alternative assessment was utilised during 2020. The nature and scope of these assessments varied with regard of the level and nature of the academic programme of the different modules across programmes.

The Business School EXCO therefore recommends these plans to the F-EMS T&L for consideration and uptake..

2. Risk identification for teaching and learning operations

The following leading risks are still identified with the input from lecturing staff for the implementation of the Assessment Plan. These risks are addressed in the contingency assessment measures of this plan (par.3)

- 2.1.** Access to the Internet is the major challenge for many students. Connectivity, (availability, speed and stability) as well a lack of the required devices are factors to account for. Many students depend on workplace connectivity for access to the Internet (see par. 3).
- 2.2.** Access to eFundi is a core and critical factor for an online teaching and learning strategy. Access to study material, assessment activities (assignments, tasks, tests and quizzes), submissions, up loadings, instructions, announcements, forums and other essential teaching, learning and communication functionalities are key for a successful online teaching and learning programme.
- 2.3.** The lecturers are fully prepared for online teaching, but feel anxious and unsure about the use of the vast variety of teaching and learning sources, technologies and related applications available especially the switch to MS Teams.
- 2.4.** Lecturers indicated that they appreciate the support offered by CTL during this time, but do not have the luxury of unlimited data and time to be spent on online training at this stage.
- 2.5.** The NWU protocol for data support applies and Faculty decided (before the extended lockdown period) on financial support for the staff.
- 2.6.** Some Faculty staff members find themselves in areas where they have unstable or no access to the Internet and little to no mobile phone connection.
- 2.7.** The financial implications for the implementation of an effective assessment process will put additional pressure on already constrained budgets (par.3).

3. Contingency assessment measures

The following general contingency assessment measures provide guidance to staff and students for assessment at the Faculty of Education during the COVID-19 state.

- 3.1.** The NWU Academic Rules (A-rules), Faculty Rules and Faculty Integrated Teaching and Learning Plan (FITLP) are applicable as far as the current situation allows.
- 3.2.** A key aspect to assure a successful School Assessment Plan is clear and regular communication to ALL staff and students affected by the disruption to the teaching and learning project in the faculty. The challenge is to reach students who do not have access to online facilities. It can be expected that the need for regular communication will increase

dramatically to convey information and to deal with student queries in this uncertain time. It is important that communication must reach ALL students and NOT exclude any student based on inaccessibility to online communication based on circumstances due to the COVID-19 situation. In any communication, responses and feedback should be done in the shortest time possible.

- 3.3. The NWU learning management system, eFundi communication tools (announcements, messages, chatrooms and forums) is a valuable platform for those

4. Assessment during the COVID crisis

Formative assessments: Include online multiple-choice question tests on e-Fundi (three sets) contributing to the participation mark. These are formative assessments and will force students to read and study extensively throughout the semester. These tests weigh 10% of the semester mark. The other formative assignment will be a group assignment and an individual assignment comprising one chapter/segment of the rolling PoE (where applicable). In all events, the standard assignment rule (as published in the yearbook) will apply. The individual assignment will carry a higher weight (50%) than the group assignment (40%). The rationale is that some students are guilty of social loafing, and a group assignment is not always valid and reliable in assessing individual skills, competencies and abilities.

Summative assessments: A student needs to achieve a semester mark of 45% or more to be admitted to the final summative assessment/examination. Not achieving the 45% semester mark means that the student fails the module. The summative module assignment should be a PoE/case study (applied as required), which should weigh 50% of the semester mark. The 24/48 hour take-home summative assessment should preferably NOT be applied as this might lead to collusion by students.

Compilation of final semester mark MBA:

1. Class activities/mark/eFundi tests 10%
2. Group assignments (one, including PoE's) 40%
3. Individual assignments (one) 50%

3. Programme Assessment

3.1 MBA programme

General: All module lecturers have been instructed to work according to the formal published schedules and due dates for both the individual assignments and the group assignments. Uploading will be on e-Fundi and/or Drop Boxes. Going forward, this must be amended. Of the six (3 x phase 1 and 3 x phase 2) modules in the first semester, three are submitted PoE's (both formative and summative assessments), with three that have previously written open-book examinations. Of these three, two will be re-directed to summative PoE assessment and one to a 24/48 hour case study event.

Formative assessment: All three sites have already been aligned in terms of assignments: Same assignments on the same due dates. Any additional class activity is the prerogative of the module lecturer for online purposes. Both an individual assignment plus the group assignment (to be completed in syndicate groups) form the predominant participation mark per module. As most of the individual assignments per module have already been submitted during the contact sessions, the remainder (mainly group assignments) are to be submitted via e-Fundi and feedback should also be given to students via e-Fundi. On the MBA, no student assistants/interns are being used to assist with marking of assignments and this gives our lecturers the benefit of practically understanding what contextual difficulties there are, which can be clarified by means of ongoing feedback.

Summative assessment: The MBA programme – on the advice of the AMBA panel – has progressed to non-examination assessment (PoE's) since 2016, with a final summative PoE that needs to be submitted at the end of the semester on the designated examination date/time (the scheduled examination date/time). The PoE approach has three options attached to it, which are broadly addressed as:

1. Rolling PoE – Formative and summative as a single entity
2. Summative PoE – A PoE designed for the summative assessment only.
3. Case study/PoE – Where a case study without the questions is made available 24/48 hours before the submission time for completion and submission at the specified date and time.

The accounting and financial management modules at MBA (NQF 9) level will be managed by applying case studies (without questions) on eFundi and managed on-line by means of time limits or possibly with the proctoring system.

Conclusion: It is the responsibility of each module lecturer to propose how they are going to assess (exam) their students and that both quality standards and credibility are not sacrificed in the process! The critical cross-field and module outcomes are available in each study guide and lecturers must see to it that it is met in accordance with NQF levels 8 and 9, where applicable.

Note 1: Module mark = Participation: Formative Assessment = 50:50 (with exam sub-minimum of 45%)

Note 2: When module activities are done as per module the Summative Assessment model changes to 10(Class activities)/40(group work)/50(individual).

3.2 PGDM

Formative and summative assignments will be done during the semester as part of the Continuous Assessment strategy. It will include various types of assessments, e.g. multiple choice tests, interviews, forum discussions, individual and group assignments. Some or all of the assessments will form part of the Portfolio of Evidence. The individual and group assignments will carry a higher weight. As there is not a participation mark, the final module mark after all the assessments are done, must be a 50% in order to pass the module. Should a student obtained a 40%, such a student may be considered by the lecturer to complete a PoE, which will be marked up to 50%.

External moderation of all modules will be done and 40% of all assessments of 10% cohort of the students will be sent to the external moderator. Moderators will be appointed at the end in April and August for the first and second semester, respectively.

This assessment format will be valid for all modules offered in the PGDIP programme for 2021.