

ST. JOSEPH'S THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

ASSESSMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES

PA 8 ASSESSMENT

PA 8.1 All the principles, regulations and guidelines indicated in the foregoing sections (sections PA 4, PA 5, PA 6 and PA 7) have reference, in the first place, to the Institute's assessment policy.

PA 8.2 Assessment at the Institute takes place within the context of an integrated learning environment. Integrated learning is a combination of knowing, doing, understanding and application of knowledge (or applied competence). In keeping with this principle, therefore integrated learning leads to *integrated assessment*.

PA 8.3 The **POLICIES** regulating assessment at the Institute rest on the following general principles among others:

PA 8.3.1 Core Principles

PA 8.3.1.1 The core principles of assessment at the Institute are those described in the *Criteria and Guidelines for the Assessment of NQF registered Unit standards and Qualifications* (SAQA, 2001, full text on www.saqa.org.za), namely the core principles of

- a) fairness
- b) validity
- c) reliability
- d) practicability
- e) authenticity

PA 8.3.1.2 These core principles are applicable within an environment of teaching and integrated learning in order to assess learning as well as to determine the application of knowledge in authentic situations.

PA 8.3.1.3 Integrated assessment runs across particular or individual units of learning outcomes in relation to the purpose of the qualification.

PA 8.3.2 Purposes of Assessment

PA 8.3.2.1 Among the purposes of assessment are the following:

- a) feedback to lecturers (evaluating module, teaching)
- b) gauging engagement in learning
- c) judging mastery of acquired knowledge and applied competence in the student's ability to integrate concepts, ideas and actions in authentic real-life contexts
- d) measuring improvement over time
- e) motivation of students and encouragement of learning
- f) diagnosing student difficulties
- g) ranking of students

PA 8.3.2.2 Given the broad options available, lecturers are encouraged to avoid over-reliance on only one form of assessment (e.g. the traditional 6 or 10 page written assignment). See further paragraph PA 4.3.6 and Annexure 7 for other forms of assessment

PA 8.3.3 Types of Assessment

While lecturers are encouraged to be creative and innovative in their use of various forms of assessment (see further PA 4.3.6 and Annexure 7), the *timing* of assessment within a module or a programme basically consists of two generic moments: formative assessment and summative assessment.

PA 8.3.3.1 Formative Assessment

PA 8.3.3.1.1 This form of assessment (sometimes also referred to as continuous assessment) takes place during the process of teaching and learning.

PA 8.3.3.1.2 The purpose of formative assessment is to gauge the student's ongoing engagement with the teaching and learning process, usually of specific or units of material or of modules.

PA 8.3.3.2 Summative Assessment

PA 8.3.3.2.1 Summative assessment is used to gauge a student's overall (or comprehensive) engagement with the process of teaching and learning according to the stated outcomes of the module or of the programme.

PA 8.3.3.2.2 Summative assessment is *summative* of either the particular units of teaching and learning as these apply to specific modules (this can be at the end of a semester or at the end of the academic year), or of comprehensive assessment usually at exit level. Applied competence is especially important in this form of assessment.

PA 8.3.3.2.3 At exit levels of programmes assessment should evaluate learning across subjects and modules, and Heads of Departments are to be especially vigilant that exit level exams are set to evaluate comprehensive acquisition of knowledge and its application to concrete life situations.

PA 8.3.3.2.4 Across modules (i.e. comprehensively), the nature and form of summative assessment are proposed by the Departments to QUAAC which has the mandate to establish the quality benchmarks of programmes and their exit level outcomes.

PA 8.3.4 Moderation and External Examination

PA 8.3.4.1 The primary locus of moderation of assessment is at the level of the Department. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to ensure that assessments are conducted in line with the stated policies of the Institute, and that assessments are fair, reliable and valid.

PA 8.3.4.2 An indispensable instrument in the moderation of assessment is the Institute's own *Guidelines for the Evaluation of Scripts* that all lecturers must assiduously follow in evaluating the written work of students (see Annexure 6).

PA 8.3.4.3 Peer assessment is also strongly encouraged as a way of moderating assessment, and lecturers are encouraged to set and mark common (assignment) tasks across modules within their subject committees.

PA 8.3.4.4 Where possible, co-teaching (institutionally or extra-institutionally) of selected modules (as determined by the Head of Department or co-ordinators of the Subject or Field Committees) is to be encouraged.

PA 8.3.4.5 In general, the Heads of Departments are encouraged to submit module and programme outcomes to established Private or Public Higher Education Institutions with a similar ethos to that of the Institute for a collegial and collaborative 'assessment' of their Department's programmes in order to ensure that they are of the highest standard possible.

PA 8.3.4.6 External examination is mandatory at Exit Level. The nature, form and substance of external examination is determined by the Departments in consultation with the Academic Dean. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to ensure that, in all instances, academics of quality are appointed as external examiners. See further paragraph PA 5.3.2.

PA 8.3.4.7 In order to safeguard the high quality and international status of the Institute's programmes, all persons appointed as external examiners must hold an academic qualification not below a Masters degree or equivalent in their area of specialization. See further paragraph PA 5.3.3.

PA 8.3.5 The Role of Subject or Field Committees in Assessment

PA 8.3.5.1 The Subject or Field Committees review the programmes, curricula and methods of assessment on an ongoing basis and may from time to time advise the PRCs in respect of proposed programme or curriculum changes.

PA 8.3.5.2 The Subject or Field Committees, under the guidance of their co-ordinators, are among the first and primary assessors of quality assurance. The major responsibility of the Subject or Field Committees is the moderation of module content, methods of teaching, tasks and methods of assessment and, as need arises, examination questions.

PA 8.3.5.3 The Subject or Field Committee may collectively determine the main content, bibliography, method of assessment (including mode of examination) of individual modules or a group of modules within their area of specialization. However the contribution of the lecturer tasked with teaching the particular module(s) is to be taken into consideration.

PA 8.3.5.4 Subject or Field Committees meet at least once per semester to set joint assessment tasks and devise ways of marking them in such a way that the highest possible level of objectivity in awarding marks to individual students or to groups of students is assured.

PA 8.3.5.5 In the case of a serious disagreement within a Subject or Field Committee with regard to moderation or assessment processes and the awarding of marks to individual students or to groups of students, the arbiter shall be the Head of Department; failing which the intervention of the Academic Dean may be sought.