National Open University of Nigeria

Policy Title	Policy for Managing Facilitations, Authentic Assessments, and other academic services including payments
Policy No:	NQSA/TEL/001
Owner:	National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)
Approved By:	The University Senate
Manager/Driver:	Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academics
Date of Approval:	
Date of Next Review:	The date will be 3 years from the date of approval (to be inserted after approval)

1.0   Introduction

With the power bestowed on the university by the Act. No. 6 of 1983 and reaffirmed in the amended Act. No. 19, 2018, National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) shall have two categories of academic staff that would be classified as full-time and part-time staff.   The part-time staff would be drawn from recognised and reputable universities globally to support the full-time staff in providing academic services to the students.   Such services shall include facilitation, project supervision, teaching practice supervision, seminar assessment, examination of project defence, moderation of undergraduate students' research projects, SIWES/Internship supervision, supervision of practical/practicums, supervision of field works, question item development, moderation of question items, and marking of students' examination scripts.   The university shall adopt a flexible mode to reach the unreached.

2.0   Purpose

This policy sets out the principles and requirements governing the management of facilitation, authentic assessments, payments, and other academic services in the university.   This policy applies to facilitation and assessment in:

a. undergraduate courses.
b. graduate/postgraduate courses.
c. certificate courses.
d. micro-credential courses.

3.0   Scope

The scope of this policy applies to all academic staff and students at the university.

4.0   Definitions

4.1   Facilitation:

A process of providing academic guidance to the learners in their learning journey while in the university by academic staff.   NOUN shall have **Main Facilitator** and **Facilitation Assistance** who will be supporting the Main Facilitator in providing guidance to the learners.

4.2   Research Project Supervision:

Guidance received by learners while working on their academic research projects.   Academic research is a requirement for graduation at both undergraduate and postgraduate studies but classified with different terminologies such as research project for undergraduates, dissertation for master's degrees, and Thesis for doctoral degrees.   Academic staff in the learners' areas of specialisation are selected to provide guidance.   At the graduate levels, professionals in the industries in related field of studies may also be engaged to provide guidance.   The length of supervision is determined by the University.

4.3   Teaching Practice Supervision:

To prepare student teachers for teaching profession at primary and post primary levels of education, they must have real time experience in schools during their student years.   This may be done twice during their student years.   So, teaching practice supervision is the monitoring of pedagogical activities of teaching profession of student teachers during the live practice by academic staff who specialises in education.

4.4   Seminar Assessment:

Appraising of students' presentations derived from research which could be empirical or theoretical or topics in related field of study.   This is done before a constituted academic panel or group with an assessor(s) that is in proposed specialisation of the student.

4.5   Examination of Project Defence:

Evaluation of completed student research work by an academic staff member in the student proposed area of specialisation before a constituted academic panel or group.

4.6   Moderation of Undergraduate Students' Research Projects:

Justification for the scores awarded to completed students' research project through re-examination and blind scoring by an assessor nominated by the department.

4.7   SIWES/Internship Supervision:

Monitoring of students' activities in an institution or industry or organisation where the students are undergoing SIWES/Internship exercise by an assigned academic staff in the in the students' area of specialisation.

4.8   Supervision of Practicums/Field Works:

Practicums/Field Works describes students learning experience where they are involved in direct engagement in the implementation of their future professional roles in real workplace settings. This process requires supervision. This may include guidance counselling practicum, educational administration practicum, news casting, clinical placement, internships, farm practice and so on.

4.9   Supervision of Practical:

This refers to the supervision of students' science practical such as chemistry practical, biology practical, physics practical, computer science practical, language practical, and other related practical.

4.10   Question Item Development:

Development of test items used in assessing students' academic achievement in their respective courses.

4.11   Moderation of Question Items:

Validation of test items for assessing students' academic achievements. This may also include testing for reliability.

4.12   Marking of Students' Examination Scripts:

Scoring of students' responses to examination test items. This may be done manually on paper or semi-automated on the computer screen. The scoring for multiple choice questions shall be fully automated. A set of academic staff are engaged in this exercise.

5.0   Principles

5.1   NOUN is committed to quality service delivery in teaching and learning at a distance.

5.2   NOUN recognises the diversity and inclusion of managing learners at a distance.

5.3   NOUN will take steps to identify and respond to learning needs.

5.4   NOUN recognises the role of learners and staff motivation towards achieving effective and efficient learning outcomes.

6.0   Policy Statements

6.1   Facilitation:

6.1.1   The contact hours of facilitation for each semester shall be 8 contact hours of synchronous video conferencing and 16 hours of asynchronous interaction with the learners on their learning through mails, forum discussions, and meaningful feedbacks that support learning.

6.1.2   Facilitator's Workload:

   6.1.2.1   The maximum number of courses to be facilitated per academic staff shall be eight (8) for full-time staff and four (4) for part-time staff. This is to ensure quality delivery.

   6.1.2.2   Full-time academic staff with major administrative functions such as directors, heads of units, or on deployment to other directorates shall have a maximum of three (3) courses.

   6.1.2.3   A Facilitator or Facilitation Assistance who carries more than the stipulated number of courses may earn an amount for excess workload as may be determined by the University Management. For excess workload to be approved, the Head of Department must provide evidence showing the dearth of human resource in the course(s) in that semester and the capacity of the Facilitator or Facilitation Assistance to carry the excess without being overloaded and reducing quality.

6.1.3   For a facilitator to earn, there must be automated evidence to show that the completed activities of the synchronous and asynchronous (mails, forum discussions, feedbacks) meet the course objectives and the learning outcomes.

6.1.4   The University Management shall decide on the wage a Facilitator and Facilitation Assistance would earn per course and per semester.

6.2   Research Project Supervision:

6.2.1   Supervisors should be assigned project supervision within their area of qualification and cognate experience.

6.2.2   Project Supervisor should not supervise more than 15 undergraduate students' projects and not more than 10 post graduate students' projects per semester and shall not be more than 20 projects per semester where a supervisor combines both undergraduate and postgraduate. This process should be automated for easy check per semester before new allocations.

6.2.3   Project supervisors are to present written reports on their supervisees to the Heads of Department at the end of every semester. This process may be automated.

6.2.4   There shall be automation of supervision activities between supervisors and supervisees on research supervision.

6.2.5   The research timelines shall be clearly made known to both the students and their supervisors.

6.2.6   Abrupt change of research supervisors by a student or centre director or head of department without notifying the first supervisor or with evidence of non-readiness of the first supervisor in terms of non-availability such as ill-health or death or not reachable or not providing required guidance shall be sanctioned. Whoever that is found guilty in the process shall face the university disciplinary committee.   This process shall be automated for easy tracking.

6.2.7   The minimum rank that will qualify an academic staff as research supervisor for post graduate students shall be Senior Lecturer.

6.2.7   For an industrial or professional personnel to serve as a research co-supervisor, he/she must have a minimum of first degree or Higher National Diploma (H.N.D.) in a related field with evidence of current outstanding practice in related industry.

6.2.8   A student shall present evidence that he/she has registered, took examination, and passed the research methodology course in the department before the approval of his/her research topic.

6.2.9   The submission of project scores by the project supervisors shall be automated with access to the Heads of the Departments and Study Centre Directors to view or download the scores **without** access to change of scores.

6.3   Teaching Practice Supervision:

6.3.1   All teaching practice exercises must be carried out in secondary schools since the undergraduate students are trained to teach in secondary schools. But students whose programmes fall within pre-primary and primary levels of education MUST do their teaching practice in nursery and primary school levels of education.

6.3.2   The teaching practice supervisors are to submit reports to the heads of departments who will authenticate the completion of work done. It could be written reports or forms to be filled or both. This process may be automated.

6.3.2 e-teaching practice and e-teaching practice supervision shall be allowed. But the process must be robust to show all activities done synchronously and asynchronously as required by the university.

6.4 Seminar Assessment:

6.4.1 Student seminar presentations and assessment shall be done virtually. Virtual locations shall be provided at all the study centres to support students access to internet.

6.4.2 A student must meet a minimum of 75% attendance virtually in similar seminar presentations in the department before he/she would be qualified to make his/her presentation.

6.4.3 The department shall provide guidelines for students and assessors for seminar presentations.

6.5 Examination of Project Defence:

6.5.1 There must be two internal and one external assessors for Ph.D. project defence.

6.5.2 Ph.D. project defence assessors must receive a student completed research work in a minimum of three (3) weeks before the oral defence.

6.5.3 Project defence shall be done virtually. A virtual support shall be made available at the study centres for students who wished to use the study centre internet facilities.

6.5.4 The faculty must provide guidelines for assessing project to the assessors when submitting the completed research to the assessors. The assessors could be provided a link to access the guidelines.

6.6 Moderation of Undergraduate Students' Research Projects:

6.6.1 Undergraduate research projects shall be moderated virtually within a stipulated time.

6.6.2 There shall be a defined procedure for the moderation and harvesting of moderated of scores.

6.6.3 The Heads of Departments shall be given access to harvest moderated scores.

6.7 SIWES/Internship Supervision:

6.7.1 The criteria for assessing SIWES/Internship shall be clearly defined. There shall be clearly defined rubrics for assessment.

6.7.2 The university shall introduce the use remote supervision for SIWES/Internship for the purpose of inclusiveness to reach all learners wherever they are and shall gradually facing out in-person supervision.

6.7.3 The collation of supervisors' reports and scores shall be automated.

6.7.4 All eligible students for SIWES/Internship must carry out the exercise in a related institution or company or organisation related to their course of study.

6.7.5 There shall be compilation of institutions/companies/organisations where the students can go for internship.

6.8 Supervision of Practicums/Field Works:

6.8.1 The place of students' placement for practicums/Field Works must be clearly presented.

6.8.2 Faculties shall provide manuals guiding the requirements and assessments of practicums/field works. This should be supported with assessment rubrics.

6.8.2 The institution/organisation/company for student's practice must align with the course of study.

6.9 Supervision of Practical:

6.9.1 There shall be manual to guide the students and staff on the required criteria for supervision.

6.9.2 Remote and in-person supervision shall be provided to guide students' practical exercises.

6.10 Question Item Development:

6.10.1 Subject Mater Experts (SMEs) shall be used to generate test items for question banks.

6.10.2 The test items shall be subjected to validity and reliability test for the purpose of standardisation of the test items.

6.10.3 Test items in the question banks are to be reviewed every three (3) years.

6.10.4 The test items in the question banks shall be robust to last three (3) years before review.

6.10.5 The university shall use robust technology to manage the question bank.

6.11 Moderation of Question Items:

    6.11.1   Test items shall be moderated by SMEs not lower than Senior Lecturers before banking.

    6.11.2   The standardisation of test items shall be combined with the moderation of test items.

6.12 Marking of Students' Examination Scripts:

    5.12.1   There shall be a manual that clearly defines the activities involved in marking of students' examination scripts.

    5.12.2   The recording of activities in the marking process shall be automated.

6.13   The Heads of Departments are to ensure that all part-time academic staff are appointed in accordance with the university rules and regulations. In addition, there should be automated documentary evidence of the number of part-time academic staff in each department showing responsibilities assigned and their performance metrics.

6.14 Payments:

    6.14.1   The amount to be paid for each service shall be based on the approved university honorarium or wage for each service.

    614.2   The relevant departments, school, directorates, and academic centres shall present a budget on the various activities for approval by the University Management before the commencement of such activities.

    6.14.3   At the completion of the various activities, the relevant departments, school, directorates, and academic centres shall present claims for payments with evidence of completions subject to verifications to the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic.

    6.14.4   Payments for all services rendered as stipulated in this policy shall be within a maximum of four (4) weeks from the date of completion of the exercise. In addition, there must be departmental or directorate or academic centre automated documentary evidence of responsibilities assigned and their performance metrics.

    6.14.5   The Heads of Departments shall issue a Clearance Note to a staff who has successfully completed his/her activities. This may be automated and would serve as evidence of completion of the service rendered.

7.0   Policy Implementation

7.1   The office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC), Academic shall coordinate the implementation of this policy.

7.2   The departments through the Dean of the faculties, Post Graduate School and the relevant Directorates/Academic Centres shall present their Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the implementation of this policy to the University Senate through the Directorate of Quality Assurance (QA) for approval.

7.3   The SOPs shall be used by the QA Directorate to monitor implementations.

7.4   The faculties, relevant directorates and academic centres must notify and provide guidance to the study centres on the implementation of the policy.

7.5   The University Registrar must provide the online link of this policy in the letter of engagement for all part-time academic staff, while the Heads of Department or Faculties shall ensure discussion of this policy during the orientation of new staff into the department or faculty.

7.6   The University Management shall decide the honorarium or wage to be paid for each service and must be stated in the letter of engagement of each staff.

7.7   The Directorate of SIWES or the concerned academic centre shall present the SOP for the implementation of SIWES/Internship Supervision to the University Senate for approval through the QA Directorate.

7.8   The Directorate of Examination and Assessment shall present the SOPs for Question Item Development, Moderation of Question Items, and Marking of Students' Examination Scripts to the Senate for approval through the QA Directorate.

7.9   There should be clearly stated dates and timelines of activities in this policy in the university academic calendar to guide implementation.

7.10   The Heads of Departments must issue a signed letter of engagement to project supervisors and state the maximum duration required for supervision, progress report submission timelines, approved faculty format for academic research, and any other information that will guide the supervision.

7.11   The Heads of Departments must have a record to track progress of students' research work. This can be done through central automation at the university.

7.12   The Directorate of Learner Support Services (DLSS) is to provide counselling guidance to students in achieving these activities in record time.

7.13   Any staff or student who feels intimidated/threatened while embarking on any of these activities can report to any of the following:

a. The Director, Learner Support Services using the channel that shall be provided by the Directorate of Learner Support Services.

b. NOUN Anti-Corruption and Transparency Unit (ACTU).

8.0 Sanctions of Violating this Policy

8.1 A facilitator who did not complete the stated number of hours for facilitation within the stipulated time in the university calendar shall lose the benefits attached to the service. This includes payment for internet data, the wages for facilitation, and any other benefit for facilitators in that semester.

8.2 Research supervisors may not be eligible for payment where there is violation of not submitting semester progress reports, meeting up with the stipulated timelines, and providing the required guidance to the supervisees.

8.3 The score of student research project will be considered null and void if the student changes research supervisor without adequate approval with evidence of non-readiness of the current supervisor to continue with the supervision or evidence of the current supervisor being indisposed due to ill-health or death.

8.4 Where a staff who is not an academic staff that specialises in education supervises a student on teaching practice, such a staff will be denied payment for supervising students on teaching practice and the student score turn in by such staff will be considered null and void. Also, the centre director or head of department that assigned such staff will face disciplinary action of the university.

8.5 A student who did not complete the required number of weeks for teaching practice will have to repeat the exercise.

8.6 Where a student is found to be doing teaching practice outside the stipulated educational levels or doing other jobs (such as serving as the school administrator, accounting officer, IT provider or support, etc) outside teaching, such student would repeat the teaching practice exercise.

8.7 A student who do not meet 75% attendance of similar academic seminar in his/her department shall be denied the opportunity to present his/her seminar paper.

8.8 The Head of Department may face the University disciplinary action, if failed to comply with the minimum time required of three weeks to send completed and faculty approved Ph.D. thesis to assessors in preparation for a student external defence.

8.9 Where a staff is found guilty of inducement of a student or compelling a student to pay for journal subscription or carrying out duties which are not related to a student project supervision or collecting money to fast-track supervision or to help write the research, or compelling a student to give money or any other

induced buying of items or things, or any other forceful gratifications, such a staff shall be **dismissed** from the university if he/she is a full-time staff, and if the staff is a part-time staff, he/she shall be blacklisted and can no longer take part in all academic services in NOUN. In addition, both shall forfeit the honorarium that would have been paid for the exercise or return what have been paid for the exercise if payment has already been made.

8.10   Staff who sexually harass students shall be dismissed from the university if found guilty.

8.11   Where a student is found guilty that he/she has not passed the research methodology course in the department before research approval or proceeding to write the research paper, such score would be considered null and void, and the research supervisor would not be paid for the exercise.

8.12   Any Study Centre Director who condoles or a staff of the study centre who charges or extort money or connive to extort money from students in any of the activities stated in this policy, and in any form shall face disciplinary action which may range from losing a promotion year or years or non-payment of salary to such persons to a maximum of six months, or suspension for a stipulated time to a maximum of two years or outright dismissal from the university.

8.13   The Study Centre Director MUST receive a letter of authorisation from the University Bursar before he/she can receive any money from students on any activity at the study centre. The Study Centre Director must inform the Study Centre Accountant in writing before any money in whatever form can be received from students and it must be in accordance with the directive given by the University Bursar. Where there is no such authorisation, the Study Centre Director and the Study Centre Accountant shall face disciplinary action which may range from losing a promotion year or years or non-payment of salary to such persons to a maximum of six months, or suspension for a stipulated time to a maximum of two years or outright dismissal from the university.

8.14   A student who embarks on SIWES/Internship excises in an institution/company/organisation that is not related to his/her academic programme of study shall have his/her score null and void. Also, a supervisor who supervises a student in such organisations without adequate report shall be denied payment for the exercise and blacklisted for subsequent supervisions.

8.14   A student score would be considered null and void if found that the practicum or field work exercise was done in an institution/organisation that is not related to the student programme of study.

8.15   Payment for services rendered as stated in this policy may be delayed or denied if there are no departmental automated documentary evidence of responsibilities assigned and the performance metrics of each staff. In this instance, the Head of Department would be held accountable.

9.0   Policy Alignment

This policy aligns with the following documents in the university:

9.1   National Open University of Nigeria: National Open University (No. 6, 1983) CAP N63.

9.2   National Open University of Nigeria: National Open University (Amendment Act, No. 19, 2018).

9.3   Federal Ministry of Education: Blueprint and Implementation Plan for the National Open & Distance Learning Programmes (2002).

9.4   National Open University of Nigeria Academic Brief (2023)

9.5   NOUN Online Facilitation Policy

9.6   NOUN Policy on Students' Assessment and Evaluation

9.7   Civil Service Handbook of Nigeria

9.8   Scheme of Service for Senior Staff of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)

9.9   NOUN Open, Distance and eLearning Policy.

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