



National Open University of Nigeria

Policy Title	Policy on Assessment
Policy No:	NQSA/POL/TEL/029
Owner:	National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)
Approved By:	The University Senate
Manager/Driver:	Directorate of Examination and Assessment (DEA)
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1.0 Introduction

This policy on assessment reflects and emphasises the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)'s commitment to excellence in assessment as an integral to teaching and learning. The policy provides the structure and principles guiding assessment practices in the faculties and academic centres and units of the university. The policy also informs the current practices in open and distance learning universities with integration of digital/virtual learning and assessment.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 2.1 establish the principles of assessment in support of quality teaching and learning.
- 2.2 align assessment with programme objectives that would lead to the production of successful graduates who can demonstrate intellect in solving economic and societal challenges through creative thinking and innovation.

3.0 Scope

This policy covers all academic programmes in NOUN: short courses, undergraduate degrees, and postgraduate degrees.

4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 **Assessment.** This is the process of testing students to make a judgement on the amount of knowledge and value gained after undergoing purposive learning experiences in the university.
- 4.2 **Assessment Criteria.** This refers to the standard or benchmark used in evaluating students' academic performance.

- 4.3 **Methods of Assessment.** This means different ways used in evaluating students' knowledge, skills, and abilities. NOUN uses any or combination of diagnostic assessments, formative assessments, summative assessments, ipsative assessments, norm-referenced assessment, and criterion-referenced assessment depending on what is being assessed or evaluated.
- 4.4 **Assessment Opportunity.** This type of assessment gives opportunities to learners to demonstrate their learning. It may be scheduled and supervised or not.
- 4.5 **Assessor.** This is someone that is appointed or assigned for the assessment of achievement of learning outcomes; in most cases an academic.
- 4.6 **Authentic assessment.** This type of assessment allows students to experience learning in a realistic situation. The assessment is contextual. The authentic assessment in NOUN includes research projects, teaching practice, SIWES supervision, seminar presentations, field work, practical/practicum and internship.
- 4.7 **Continuous Assessment.** This type of assessment evaluates ongoing progress of the students with feedback for improvement. NOUN has TMAs.
- 4.8 **Marking Guide/Scheme.** This refers to rubric, checklists, framework with marks allocation to guide the marking of students' tests or examinations.
- 4.9 **Moderation.** This is the process where an expert is assigned to ensure that assessment meets the expected goals and outcomes. The moderator is provided with a guide to the expected goals and outcomes.
- 4.10 **Moderator:** A moderator is an academic who is competent (academically, or experience wise, or both) in the field in which he/she is called upon to moderate. As a moderator, he/she is supposed to step into the shoes of the examiners to be able to provide a balanced and unbiased point of view. His/her primary concern is to check the accuracy of the question papers and more importantly, however, his/her duty is to ensure that the questions that have been set are suitable, appropriate, and relevant for the level for which they are intended to be addressed.
- 4.11 **Internal Moderator.** This is an expert within the university that is assigned to assess students' performance.
- 4.12 **External Moderator.** This is an expert outside the university that is appointed to assess students' performance.

- 4.13 **Formative Assessment.** This type of assessment is used to monitor the progress of learners throughout a course or unit. NOUN uses self-assessment exercises, discussion forums, and group work during facilitation with the use of breakout rooms.
- 4.14 **Summative Assessment.** This assessment is used to evaluate the overall students' performance at the end of a module(s) or course. NOUN uses Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs) and examinations which includes authentic assessments.
- 4.15 **Diagnostic Assessment.** This assessment is used to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses before beginning a course. It guides the faculty to determine the type of support that would be required by the student.
- 4.16 **Ipsative Assessment.** This assessment is used to compare students' performance against their own previous performance. It is used to monitor progress in students' performance.
- 4.17 **Norm-referenced Assessment.** This type of assessment is used to compare students' performance to the performance of other students. You can compare the performance of two cohort of students. But note, you compare against the norm (standard)
- 4.18 **Criterion-referenced Assessment.** This type of assessment evaluates a student's performance based on a set of predetermined criteria.
- 4.19 **Assessment of Learning.** This type of assessment is used to identify if the students are meeting the standards of the class level. Examples are exams, portfolios, final projects, standardized test. Grades are attached and is used to evaluate levels of performance. The common assessment types of learning include summative assessment, norm-referenced assessment, and criterion-referenced assessment.
- 4.20 **Assessment for Learning.** This type of assessment provides a clear snapshot of student learning and understanding as you teach. This helps the facilitators to adjust as they facilitate. It is a strategy for class management. It is ongoing and actionable. The common types of assessment for learning are formative assessment and diagnostic assessment.
- 4.21 **Assessment as Learning.** This type of assessment involves students actively in the learning process. It teaches critical thinking skills; problem solving and encourages students to set their achievable goals and measurable objectives. This type of assessment helps develop the interest of students in the course.

- 4.22 **Plagiarism.** This is the act where someone takes another person's work or ideas and presents it as one's own. It is regarded as intellectual theft that is punishable. It could be verbatim plagiarism, paraphrasing plagiarism, patchwork plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and so on.
- 4.23 **Conference Marking.** This is a process where experts are put together in a common place to grade students' examination answer sheets.
- 4.24 **Assessment Infrastructure.** This refers to the infrastructure required for assessment. This includes computer, internet infrastructure, software for examining and monitoring examination.
- 4.25 **Examination Monitoring.** This is the act of sending personnel from the university to monitor ongoing examinations at the various study centres to ensure compliance with the university standards of conducting examinations.
- 4.26 **On-Demand Examination.** This is the act where a student can request to take his/her examinations after he/she has had contact with the course materials for a minimum of eight (8) weeks of either self-study or assisted through facilitation.
- 4.27 **Rubrics.** This is a scoring guide that outlines the criteria for evaluating students' performance. It is a tool that helps examiners to grade. Rubric brings objectivity to the grading of students' performance.
- 4.28 **Pen-on-Paper Examination.** This is essay type of examination. NOUN students from 300 Levels and above take pen-on-paper examination.
- 4.29 **e-Examination.** These are examinations taken with the use of the computer. They are usually multiple-choice questions.
- 4.30 **Virtual Examination/Remote Examination.** This refers to when a student takes examination wherever he/she is with the use of the computer and internet. This includes both multiple-choice and essay questions.

5.0 Principles

Assessment is taken as an integral part of teaching and learning in NOUN. The assessment of students is also used to evaluate the performance of staff that are connected to the assessment procedures and practices. In NOUN, the following principles apply:

- 5.1 There is no discrimination in the support provided for learners irrespective of their learning needs.

- 5.2 NOUN drives life-long learning by creating assessments that call for the development of problem-solving skills and that allow for creative thinking.
- 5.3 The learning culture in NOUN allows inclusivity in assessment.
- 5.4 NOUN is flexible in students' access to assessment. Students are given a time frame for their TMAs. Within the time frame, the student can take the assessment any time anywhere as found convenient. Also, from 300 Level and above, students are allowed to choose between taking their examinations in-person or virtually and is proctored.
- 5.5 Assessment practices are based on established best practices to meet the expected outcomes.
- 5.6 NOUN uses technology to make assessment realistic and accessible to all learners irrespective of their learning disabilities.
- 5.7 NOUN uses a range of assessment approaches such as diagnostic, formative, summative, Ipsative assessment, norm-referenced, and criterion-referenced.
- 5.8 NOUN consciously integrates assessment of learning, assessment for learning and assessment as learning in course delivery.

6.0 Policy Statements

6.1 Administration of Assessments:

- 6.1.1 NOUN shall establish a directorate that shall be called Directorate of Examination and Assessment (DEA) to coordinate all assessments in the university.
- 6.1.2 DEA shall be strengthened in terms of human and material resources to enable it to handle all pre and post examination activities in conjunction with the faculties and study centres.
- 6.1.3 In NOUN, assessments shall be conducted using both manual and electronic modes.
- 6.1.4 There would be e-examination for students at 100 and 200 levels and this should be completed by pen on paper examinations from 300 level and above.

- 6.1.5 TMAs shall be done on e-platform but the timeline on submission and assessment shall be strictly observed.
 - 6.1.6 Faculties, Directorate of Management Information System (DMIS) and DEA shall ensure that registrable courses and TMAs are uploaded on record time into students' portals for students to have opportunity to register their courses on time.
 - 6.1.7 NOUN shall recruit appropriate and qualified examiners from appropriate tertiary institutions.
 - 6.1.8 NOUN shall charge fee for examinations.
 - 6.1.9 The university shall provide examination guidelines which shall be made available to the students.
 - 6.1.10 The university shall print at the back cover of every answer booklet all acts that are considered as examination malpractices and call the attention of students to it at each examination. A digital copy of it shall be replicated for the remote examinations.
 - 6.1.11 Examination questions shall be distributed to the study centres Directors through emails. The questions will be sent at 15 minutes to exam start time to give allowance for printing and distribution.
 - 6.1.12 The Centre Directors are the Chief Examiners and therefore shall take responsibility for all the examination questions sent to their email address.
- 6.2 Ensuring Quality in Examination Conduct:
- 6.2.1 Study Centre Directors shall serve as the main supervisors in their study centres and shall be held responsible for examination mismanagement at their study centres. The Centre Directors must take responsibility for all examinations held at their centres.
 - 6.2.2 Every examination shall have invigilators and supervisors irrespective of the mode of examination whether in-person or remotely.
 - 6.2.3 Only senior staff of the university shall be qualified to invigilate or supervise examinations.
 - 6.2.4 NOUN shall device electronic means to monitor examinations.
- 6.3 Assessment Infrastructure:

- 6.3.1 The university shall ensure availability and adequacy of required examination infrastructure for smooth assessments of all types.
 - 6.3.2 The Directorate of Examination and Assessment (DEA) must ensure availability and adequacy of required examination infrastructure before the commencement of any assessment.
- 6.4 Test Items Development:
- 6.4.1 Faculty members shall be trained on test items development with emphasis on objective and essay questions.
 - 6.4.2 All test items must be developed to meet the learning outcomes.
 - 6.4.3 Test items must be developed by academics who are specialists in the courses.
- 6.5 Ensuring Quality in Test Items:
- 6.5.1 The validity and reliability of the test items must be done by DEA to standardise the items.
 - 6.5.2 All test items must be moderated. Test items for level 300 and above must be moderated by external moderators while the other items for below level 300 shall be moderated internally within the faculty.
 - 6.5.3 There shall be vetting of marked scripts at the marking centres by the subject officers from the faculties. The computer manual marking shall also be vetted.
 - 6.5.4 There shall be peer review or moderation of authentic assessments. The authentic assessments shall include project, seminar, internships, SIWES, and practical.
- 6.6 Banking of Test Items:
- 6.6.1 The university shall be committed to banking of examination questions. The questions shall be standardised before banking.
 - 6.6.2 Banked questions shall have a maximum life span of three years.

6.6.3 Conference items development system shall be used to develop questions for banking. This shall involve bringing subject experts in specialised areas to develop test items.

6.6.4 DEA shall coordinate and be in custody of the banking of examination questions.

6.6.5 Questions shall be banked in a secured digital space and for easy retrieval.

6.7 Continuous Assessment and Examination:

6.7.1 Continuous assessments shall take the form of Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs). The question types could be multiple choice questions, essay questions, portfolios, practical, quiz, and presentations.

6.7.2 Continuous assessment test items shall be developed by the lecturers who oversee the courses who may also serve as the facilitator for the courses.

6.7.3 Continuous assessment shall be 30% of the course total score, except in authentic assessment where the faculty would present the modality for scoring to the Senate for approval.

6.7.4 A student's request for on-demand exam shall be granted once there is a proof that he/she has interacted with the courses in a minimum of eight (8) weeks.

6.8 Examination Deferment:

In the spirit of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and the flexibility that comes with the mode, a student is qualified to apply for deferment of examination(s). The deferment permits a temporary postponement of participation in examination(s). The guidelines of the policy include and not limited to the following:

6.8.1 Owing to the peculiarities of the Open and Distance Learning System which gives room for flexibility, students are allowed to defer their examination if the following conditions are met:

- i. Such students must have fully registered for the semester.
- ii. Such students must have registered for the examinations.
- iii. Application for deferment must be received before the start of examinations.

- 6.8.2 All applications are to be endorsed and forwarded to the Registrar through the Study Centre Directors.
 - 6.8.3 All applications should be backed with relevant documents and a desk officer in the Registry shall be assigned to check the authenticity of the documents.
 - 6.8.4 Students whose applications are received and approved and who have paid examination registration fees before the examinations shall not pay registration fee for the same examinations when they are ready to take them.
 - 6.8.5 A dedicated portal shall be opened within the time frame of one month before the commencement of examination for deferment cases.
 - 6.8.6 The request for deferment attracts no fee.
 - 6.8.7 Applications for deferment because of emergencies such as illness, accident, death, or serious illness of person in the immediate family or other persons with whom the student has a similarly close relationship, which requires the student's attention, etc, shall be addressed at the discretion of the University Management.
- 6.9 Grading:
- 6.9.1 The maximum score in a course shall be 100%.
 - 6.9.2 The grading system shall be in accordance with the directive of the National Universities Commission (NUC) as at the time of scoring and grading.
 - 6.9.3 Peer-assessment is only allowed in formative assessment.
 - 6.9.4 The scoring of multiple-choice questions for TMAs and examinations shall be automated/computer scoring.
 - 6.9.5 Grading of pen-on-paper examinations shall be by conference marking as in-person in specified locations.
 - 6.9.6 The grading of virtual or remote examinations shall be both e-conference marking or done individually with the use of the computer. It shall be manual computer grading.

- 6.9.7 Grading of students' performance or marking exercises must not take more than two weeks to complete.
- 6.9.8 Marking guide/scheme or rubrics shall be provided by faculty to guide grading of essay and authentic assessments. This will help to bring objectivity in the scoring and grading.
- 6.10 Remarking of examination script. See the policy on Remarking and Re-Computation of Students' Examination Scripts
- 6.11 Storage, Retrieval, and Disposal of Examination Scripts:
- 6.11.1 DEA shall be in custody of all examination answer booklets (used or unused).
- 6.11.2 There shall be digital storage for all e-examinations answers.
- 6.11.3 The life span of already used students' answer booklets shall be in accordance with the national and legal regulation.
- 6.11.4 All used answer scripts or booklets shall be disposed in line with the national and legal law.
- 6.12 The university shall integrate plagiarism software into facilitators' portal for assessments to check plagiarised submissions such as TMAs, assignments, and research reports. It will also help to check computer written examinations.
- 6.13 Feedback:
- 6.13.1 Students shall receive semester results in their portal.
- 6.13.2 Students shall receive their TMA scores in their portal within 5 minutes. This shall be automated.
- 6.13.3 Students shall receive feedback on authentic assessments in their portal providing the scores, listing the areas of strength and weakness and how to overcome the weak areas.
- 6.13.4 All students' examinations scores and results shall be released to students in a maximum of one month counting from the end of the marking exercise.

7.0 Policy Implementation

The Directorate of Examination and Assessment shall coordinate the following:

7.1 Faculties shall submit names of moderators to Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic for Management approval before they are invited.

7.2 The faculties shall in conjunction with DEA, invite the moderators.

7.3 The Moderator shall:

7.3.1 Moderate all questions on the examination paper, paying particular attention to clarity and mechanics of language and spellings.

7.3.2 Moderate the marking scheme/indicative marking criteria. This will include moderating the outline model answers for essay-type or open-ended question and the allocation of marks for each part/section or step.

7.3.3 Moderate the general instructions on the front cover of the question papers, including module name, code, time-allocation and any other instruction.

7.3.4 Ensure that special tables, formulae and other technical documents accompanying the question papers are available.

7.3.5 Edit and suggest improvements to the questions.

7.3.6 Ensure that there is a balance between the time allocated for the paper, the complexity or level of difficulty of the questions and marks allocated.

7.3.7 Check and suggest improvements to the model answers or outline model answers and marking schemes/indicative marking criteria to dovetail with intended answers.

7.3.8 In collaboration with the examiner, he/she may modify, change or even replace a question.

7.4 Qualifications of Moderators

Internal and external moderation of examination questions shall be carried out by the faculties. In the case of External Moderators (Senior lecturers and above), they shall be approved by Senate. For internal moderators, the academic staff shall not be less than Lecturer II with PhD. Where a Lecturer II with PhD is not available in the department, any qualified examiner in the relevant course shall be allowed to moderate.

7.5 External Moderation

- 7.5.1 External Moderation shall be limited to postgraduate and final year courses.
- 7.5.2 External Moderators shall be provided with this policy and the course module to ensure the design of the examination papers and the subsequent marking processes are educationally and pedagogically relevant to NOUN and adjudged to be administratively feasible and sustainable.
- 7.5.3 It is imperative for moderators to maintain STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY.
- 7.5.4 Moderation of examination papers at Semester Examinations shall be done by moderators approved by the Senate of the University especially in the case of external moderators.
- 7.5.5 Moderators shall be Senior Academic whose field of expertise falls in the subject area of the examination paper.
- 7.5.6 Moderators shall ideally be senior academic higher than the setter of the examination paper.
- 7.5.7 Moderation of examination papers shall be done after an interactive session between the setter and moderator.
- 7.5.8 During the moderation process, the moderator shall pay attention to the following points: (a) compliance with the prescribed standard format; (b) clear instructions to the candidates in the rubrics; (c) time allocation against the number of questions; (d) mark allocation for questions and distribution of marks within sections and sub-sections of a main question; and (e) availability of a detailed marking scheme (should be submitted with the paper).

7.6 What Shall Be Done During External Moderation

- 7.6.1 The process of moderation of examination papers shall be done as an interactive session between the setter and the moderator without any prejudice.
- 7.6.2 During the process, the moderator shall present constructive criticisms to improve the standard (quality) of the question paper in a friendly yet in a professional way to avoid any misunderstanding or ill feelings in either party.

- 7.6.3 During the process of moderation both setter and examiner shall collaborate with each other to achieve timely moderation of examination papers and offer fullest cooperation to the examination and assessment. Departments of the university are to ensure a smooth operation of the semester examination.
- 7.6.4 External Moderators shall be made to realize by the faculties that moderation should not be carried out by proxy. The moderator shall NOT delegate any of the work entrusted to him/her.
- 7.6.5 The External Moderators shall complete Moderation Report Form provided as annexure to this policy.

7.7 The Role of Academic Departments in Ensuring Effective Procedures for Setting Exam Papers

- 7.7.1 All the teaching staff and examiners shall be made aware of the educational and pedagogical orientation of NOUN as an ODL institution. This can be carried out through meetings, seminars, workshops, or conference briefings. This shall be done by the faculties and academic departments.
- 7.7.2 Setting achievable and realistic deadlines at the beginning of the semester to ensure that members of academic staff, including adjunct staff, have enough time to thoroughly carry out their duties in respect of setting exam questions.
- 7.7.3 Beginning the exam paper setting process as early as possible; February for first semester examination and June for second semester examination.
- 7.7.4 Remind staff and External Examiners of deadlines for setting and moderating papers.
- 7.7.5 Advise staff on study leave to prepare exam papers before the deadline to allow sufficient time for moderation.
- 7.7.6 Ensure that if a member of staff (or adjunct staff) fails to meet a deadline that procedures are in place to make those responsible aware of the situation and the potential repercussions on the semester exams and the students.
- 7.7.7 Ensure that the paper setters are fully aware of how they should set their exam papers, when, and in what format the papers should be submitted

to the department. For example, by providing the paper setters with clear and timely information.

7.7.8 Ensure that the setter is aware of the need to address the following requirements governing the setting of examination papers:

- i. The questions assess the stated learning outcomes.
- ii. The questions are properly structured and clearly expressed.
- iii. The questions allow the use of creative thinking and problem-solving skills.
- iv. The questions are clear and not ambiguous.
- v. The paper makes it possible to distinguish across the full range of students' ability.
- vi. Questions are appropriate in length and difficulty, and given the marks allocated to them.
- vii. The marks/questions add up correctly.
- viii. The correct statements for the year appear on the rubrics.

7.7.9 Vetting of examination questions by the DEA, using professors, shall be done before external examiners' moderation of the question papers. The professors' area of specialization shall be in the same discipline as the courses to be moderated or in allied discipline.

7.8 General Rules to Be Applied by Academic Departments Regarding the Development of The Marking Schemes by External Examiners

Developing and providing an appropriate set of marking schemes ensure the validity of marking, and they also help maintain the consistency of the marking. Recommended approaches include:

7.8.1 All the examiners shall be made aware of the educational and pedagogical orientation of NOUN as an ODL institution. This can be carried out through meetings, seminars, workshops, or conference briefing. The faculties and departments shall ensure that this is done.

7.8.2 Developing robust assessment instruments (e.g. rubrics) to articulate what is to be examined as the basis of assessment, hence also minimizing variation across the markers.

7.8.3 Involving markers in the design of assessment tasks (examination papers), hence also achieving common understanding amongst markers on the educational and pedagogical basis of the assessment.

7.8.4 Preparing sample answers/submissions from past semesters for consideration and guide for all examiners involved in developing the marking scheme.

7.9 **Internal Moderation**

The Internal Moderator shall check if the examination paper is satisfactory with respect to:

- a. Rubrics (front cover): materials and instructions;
- b. Structure and balance of questions;
- c. Level and coverage;
- d. Mark allocation and marking scheme/model answers;
- e. Conformity with module content and specification.

7.10 **Review Meetings**

7.10.1 The departments shall hold Departmental Board meeting before and after each moderation exercise to prepare for the moderation exercise and to review the outcome of the exercise and make appropriate recommendations to improve the validity of the exercise.

7.10.2 Take minutes of the meetings, specifying the names of moderators, their ranks, disciplines, and courses moderated, among other information.

7.10.3 Send hard and soft copies of the minutes of the meeting to the Quality Assurance Directorate.

7.11 **Completion and Submission of Moderation Report Form**

7.11.1 The Heads of Department shall ensure that the Moderation Report Form is completed by the External Examiners.

7.11.2 The completed Moderation Report Form shall be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor.

Annexure

**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA
REPORT FORM– MODERATOR OF EXAMINATION PAPER**

Year: _____

Semester: _____

Course Code & Title: _____

Department: _____

Faculty: _____

Please indicate what most describe your observation(s) with the following standards ranges from 5 – 1:

- 5: Highly Agreeable**
- 4: Fairly Agreeable**
- 3: Agreeable**
- 2: Least Agreeable**
- 1: Not Agreeable**

S/N		Highly Agreeable	Fairly Agreeable	Agreeable	Least Agreeable	Not Agreeable
1	Most of the questions in this paper are newly formulated					
2	This question paper follows the course material					
3	Contents of questions are adequate for the entire course material					
4	The questions align with the learning outcomes.					
5	Marking Scheme is well prepared with					

S/N		Highly Agreeable	Fairly Agreeable	Agreeable	Least Agreeable	Not Agreeable
	rationally allocated marks					
6	The distribution of marks is acceptable in accordance with the content of the paper					
7	Questions were formed with proper wording and phrase which are unambiguous and understandable.					
8	The examination paper contains different types of questions such as direct, analytical, supportive opinion, case study etc.					

I declare that all the information given is true.

Name of Moderator:

Signature of Moderator:

Date:

Rank of Moderator:

Comments by the Head of Department:

Name of Head of Department:

Signature & Date:

8.0 Sanctions on Violating this Policy

8.1 A student who violates this policy would lose the right of claim.

8.2 Any staff that violates this policy may receive written warning, denial of three months' salary, suspension from duty that may last one year, being released from holding administrative position as may be decided by the University Management.

8.3 Adjunct staff or external moderators may forfeit claims or be blacklisted.

9.0 Policy Alignment

- 9.1 NOUN Open, Distance and eLearning Policy.
- 9.2 Policy on Programme and Course Deferment.
- 9.3 Policy on Examination Misconduct/Malpractices.
- 9.4 Policy on Remarking and Re-Computation of Students' Examination Scripts/scores

Team of Developers

1. Prof. Obhajajie Juliet Inegbedion
2. Mr. Ikechukwu Onyia