

THE IIUM STUDENT ASSESSMENT POLICY

2022

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) recognises that assessment is an integral component of effective teaching and learning. The quality of assessment is vital to the University's educational goal to nurture graduates who are balanced and harmonious (*Insan Sejahtera*) as stipulated in the *Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan* (National Education Philosophy), crafted on values-based holistic and integrated education for sustainable development (Education 2030). Assessment shapes the learning that will take place; it moulds what students will learn and how they will learn it. In a nutshell, assessment is a catalyst for progress and reform in educational practices.
- 1.2. An assessment policy—one that is clearly articulated and comprehensively defined—is an important document for the IIUM as it informs and guides kulliyah, students and stakeholders about the IIUM's approaches to assessment. It spells out in lucid and concrete terms how the University develops and uses tests, examinations, and other assessment tools in making decisions about student learning and capabilities. The policy, hence, enables the University to strategise, benchmark and set standards for identifying, implementing, monitoring and evaluating its assessment methods and approaches in a cohesive manner. A lucid statement of assessment policy serves to guide kulliyah, and all those interested in making a difference in student learning, in their assessment processes.
- 1.3. The Sejahtera Academic Framework (SAF) was endorsed in the Senate in 2020 as the University's overarching framework to provide transformative educational experience in a *jami'ah insaniah* environment. The four specific guiding principles of SAF are Flexibility, Empowerment, Innovation and Accountability. SAF also explicitly states that the pillars of learning (learning to know, to do, to live together, to be and to become) are to be part of the teaching and learning strategies in IIUM courses. As such, the student assessment policy should be revised to take the SAF framework into account so as to realize the University's aspirations.

2. APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

- 2.1 This policy is applicable to all IIUM staff, students and courses offered by the University via all teaching and learning modes, i.e., conventional, remote, micro-credential, modular, 2u2i, etc.

3. STATEMENT OF ASSESSMENT POLICY

- 3.1 The International Islamic University Malaysia takes the *amanah* for all academic qualifications that are awarded under its name. This *amanah* positions assessment as a means for students to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes that have been specified for their respective programmes and courses. Assessment also serves as a means for instructors to substantiate their professional obligation to satisfy content and performance standards.

- 3.2 This Policy applies to all types of assessment in the University's academic programmes. Underscored by a set of guiding principles, this policy covers multidimensional learning

processes, accounting for the commonality, diversity, and distinctiveness of learning outcomes across programmes. Regardless of the method of assessment, this policy is applicable in the development and use of the conventional tests, high-stakes written examinations, computer-based tests, and performance or alternative assessment. It is designed primarily for tests, examinations and performances that instructors construct and use in measuring, evaluating, and grading their students fairly and meaningfully.

3.3 This policy, however, is not intended for university-wide standardised testing, including the English Placement Test (EPT) and Arabic Placement Test (APT). These tests, in fact, should closely observe the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA, APA, NCME, 1999) and the revised Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education (JCTP, 2004). In addition, the policy does not cover professional licensure and certification, nor does it cover the psychometric assessment of students' personalities, attitudes, and aptitudes.

3.4 This Policy addresses the responsibilities of the key players. For the Policy to be implemented effectively, formal roles and responsibilities are distributed across the University, through the Deputy Rector in charge of academic affairs, the office in charge of quality assurance, heads of Kulliyahs and other entities offering academic programmes, Boards of Examiners, course coordinators, and individual instructors.

3.5 Students also have their part to play in the assessment process. They have rights that correspond to the University's *amanah*. Students also hold the *amanah* of ensuring that they are aware of, and comply with, the assessment requirements that apply to them, and of reporting any anomalies and problems that arise when the stipulated assessment requirements are not met.

4. DEFINITIONS AND TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

4.1 **Assessment** is the process through which the University certifies that a student has achieved the learning outcomes and academic standards for the programme he/she has undertaken. Assessment can take a range of forms, both invigilated and non-invigilated.

4.2 **Assessment for learning** or **formative assessment** occurs during and throughout instruction, and its primary aim is to determine whether a student has achieved sufficient mastery of specific concepts or skills.

4.3 **Assessment as learning** is the use of continual self-evaluation by students to monitor and reflect on their own learning, following which they make adjustments to obtain a deeper grasp of the subject matter under study. The goal of this assessment is to collect useful information about a student's performance or development, or to determine his/her interests in order to make decisions about his/her learning process.

4.4 **Assessment of learning** or **summative assessment** takes place at the conclusion of instruction. It is used primarily as a written test or final examination to certify students' achievement in particular courses. Summative assessment is least useful in helping students to perform error correction and make progressive improvement.

4.5 **Learning Outcomes** is a set of predetermined learning targets that define what a student will know and be able to do at the end of a course or programme. The targets, which would involve the learning of complex, real-life behaviours, tasks, and performance. It also includes aspects of knowledge and understanding, intellectual abilities, practical skills, attitudes, and generic competencies, which are applicable across the various domains of learning.

4.6 **Performance Assessment** is the measurement and evaluation of targeted learning behaviours or outcomes that cannot be directly assessed via traditional assessment methods,

i.e., time-constrained written tests or paper-and-pencil examinations. Performance test normally requires students to demonstrate the application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

5. PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

5.1 The primary purpose of assessment is to attain higher quality in student learning. In this respect, this policy aims to enable a balanced practice of the assessment of and assessment for learning in the University. While assessment *of* learning offers evidence of student achievement, which is crucial for institutional accountability and public consumption, assessment *for* learning gives students the opportunity to improve their mastery and achieve more, including mastering the desired generic competencies. Assessment should enable the University to audit and certify that a student has achieved the learning outcomes and academic standards for the grades and qualifications awarded to them. More importantly, assessment should serve as a tool to enhance the quality of teaching and learning taking place in university classrooms.

5.2 Based on the stated purpose, the University specifically expects its faculty's assessment practices to achieve the following:

- 5.2.1 provide a fair, reliable and valid basis for the assignment of grades or awards for students' work and performance;
- 5.2.2 promote students' mastery of concepts and skills by providing adequate modelling, practice, monitoring, and feedback on students' performance;
- 5.2.3 direct progressive development of complex learning outcomes, which include the attainment of generic competency, i.e., language competencies, communication, information literacy, research and inquiry, personal and intellectual autonomy, and the understanding of professional, social, moral, and Islamic values through the use of meaningful and authentic assessment tasks;
- 5.2.4 record and aggregate student achievements against the predetermined learning outcomes;
- 5.2.5 assist instructors in evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching;
- 5.2.6 facilitate the review and improve the quality of the curriculum, courses, and programmes; and
- 5.2.7 define and protect academic standards deemed necessary for the purpose of accountability.

6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following general principles should govern all assessment processes in the University.

6.1 Assessment is valid

Validity is the extent to which a test, examination or other assessment task measures what it is supposed to measure, namely the targeted learning outcomes. Valid assessment is standard-based and congruent with stipulated learning outcomes. It is based on predetermined and clearly articulated criteria and associated with specifically formulated standards of knowledge, skills, and competencies. Only then can the information derived from the assessment be used to make justifiable interpretations and inferences about student achievement. It is the responsibility of the test developer (i.e., course coordinator, instructor, and/or examiner) to establish and demonstrate the evidence of validity, in particular the content-related validity of specific examinations,

tests, and other assessment tasks. In order to uphold this principle, each kulliyah, center or department must, therefore, make it incumbent to carry out validation procedures and adhere to the accepted standards in its entire assessment process.

6.2 Assessment is reliable

Reliability means the degree to which scores that students have obtained from a test are free from error. Measurement errors are likely to originate from poorly constructed test questions, overly difficult and/or overly easy items, and a lack of clear and consistent processes and procedures for the setting, scoring, grading and moderation of students' responses, answers, and work. Therefore, well-documented standards, processes, and procedures are to be instituted in each kulliyah/center/ department in order to minimize the measurement errors.

6.3 Flexibility

Flexibility is one of the golden rules of assessment. Lecturers are empowered to run their programmes and assess their students as they see fit, subject to the fulfillment of standards of assessment. A flexible assessment is one that takes into consideration of the various needs of students who are to be assessed. For example, an assessor may opt for an online interview of a postgraduate or part-time student's mastery of the content knowledge and skills as specified in the learning outcomes to concretize *Rahmatan lil alamin*.

6.4 Assessment is fair

Fairness is the degree to which the assessment method meets students' rights, responsibilities, and expectations, which have been communicated to (and agreed upon by) them at the onset of the academic session. In the case of assessment other than written tests or examinations, the following criteria are to be adhered to in order to observe this principle.

- 6.4.1 Communication about the assessment is made explicit, regular and accessible to students.
- 6.4.2 Workload is reasonable, in terms of time on task and proportion of the final grade accounted for.
- 6.4.3 Opportunities are given to students to play a part in the selection of the assessment tasks.
- 6.4.4 Concrete, immediate, constructive, and informative feedback is used to enhance the fairness of the assessment.
- 6.4.5 Students' efforts to correct their errors are recognized and graded accordingly.
- 6.4.6 In non-routine novel problem-solving situations, there may be more than one single correct answer. In this case, instructors should be willing and committed to accommodate divergent, yet acceptable solutions to the problem.
- 6.4.7 Scoring rubrics are shared with students to allow them to monitor and self-evaluate their performance, thereby authenticating the fairness of the assessment.

6.5 Assessment is supported by professional collaboration

Quality assessment can only develop and progress in a positive environment of professional collegiality. It demands faculty's active involvement and commitment in reviewing the test specification, test questions, measuring instruments (the test paper) and scoring key as well as in setting the standards and cut-off scores. Nonetheless, a similar rigorous engagement of "experts," i.e., those who are well-versed in the subject matter, is needed in practicing other forms of assessment. In addition, a regular but not necessarily frequent, review by external experts would support the practice of quality assessment.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The processes and procedures involved in quality assessment require substantial contributions from many parties. The following list describes the distribution of roles and responsibilities of each party involved.

7.1 The University

The IIUM, through the Deputy Rector in charge of academic affairs, supported by the office in charge of quality assurance, has the responsibility to ensure that:

- a. assessment practices are valid, consistent, and fair across University programmes;
- b. assessment processes and procedures are monitored at the individual course level so that the assessment principles and standards are observed;
- c. resources are available to provide faculty with the access to information and expertise on the theory and practices of assessment;
- d. related documents and provisions, in particular the Student Academic Performance Evaluation Rules, Postgraduate students' rules and regulations, recommendations of the Boards of Studies, and Boards of Academic Review, are made available, and observed, reviewed and revised, when the need arises.

7.2 Kulliyah, Institute, Centre, and Department

Each Kulliyah, Institute, Centre, and Department through the Dean, Board of Examiners, and Board of Appeal are responsible for ensuring that:

- 7.2.1 the Assessment Policy and supplementary documents, including Student Academic Performance Evaluation Rules (SAPER), handouts, quality processes and procedures, and directives are made available to all faculty members;
- 7.2.2 newly hired academic staff are informed of, and given opportunities to be trained in the policy, practice, and procedures of assessment;
- 7.2.3 an assessment plan or blueprint for every degree programme, focusing on the relative importance of the learning outcomes derived from the mapping of the desired attributes of its graduates, is designed and reviewed periodically; the blueprint is used as the basis for developing and selecting assessment methods or tasks, and for allocating scores in each course;
- 7.2.4 Kulliyah-wide assessment criteria and performance standards, consistent with the University's Assessment Policy, are subjected to regular environmental scanning, benchmarking, gap analysis, faculty's consensus and documentation;
- 7.2.5 assessment events are coordinated in order to provide appropriate and reasonable workload across courses;
- 7.2.6 the Senate's endorsement for a significant redistribution of grades is sought, and statistically defensible methods are used when scores are scaled and combined;
- 7.2.7 in addition to the course outline, students are provided in advance a handout on assessment tasks and events, detailing out what is expected of them in each course as part of the course plan;
- 7.2.8 assessment practices, including alternative assessment practices for students with disabilities, are explicit, fair and consistent;

- 7.2.9 students are routinely involved in discussions of assessment practices in the Kulliyyah;
- 7.2.10 mechanisms and procedures to address students' grievances and appeals are instituted and made known to stakeholders.

7.3 Course Coordinators

The course coordinator must ensure that:

- 7.3.1 The University's assessment policy, practices and procedures are adhered to in the course(s) he/she is responsible for;
- 7.3.2 a regular review is conducted to assess whether his/her choice of assessment methods align with the objectives and learning outcomes of the course(s) taught;
- 7.3.3 the adopted assessment approach or method reflects a balanced use of written tests/examinations and alternative assessment;
- 7.3.4 detailed guidelines are given to students on all assessment tasks. These guidelines should specify the task expected of students, timelines, scoring rubrics, and the distribution of scores for the final grade. They should be collaboratively developed and shared by instructors who are teaching the same course;
- 7.3.5 the course outline and the assessment plan are distributed in the first week of the semester, providing room for negotiation and amendments;
- 7.3.6 the scores that students obtain from all assessment tasks are recorded as scheduled using the system specified by the University's Senate;
- 7.3.7 students are informed of the range of possible formats for any assessment task given to them;
- 7.3.8 all examiners/graders/scorers of a course are appropriately briefed, and the score or grade awarded for a piece of work be defended in terms of the course requirements and standards;
- 7.3.9 students are given the opportunity to view and discuss their progress and academic status prior to the end-of-semester examination.

7.4 Academic Staff

Individual members of the academic staff have the responsibility to ensure that they:

- 7.4.1 are familiar with the University's, Kulliyyah's, and department's policy on assessment;
- 7.4.2 clearly communicate to students the requirements for assessment; Such communication must be made in writing to students, in addition to the information provided on course outlines.
- 7.4.3 set questions or develop assignment items which assess the attainment of learning outcomes specified for the course. They should avoid including items which do not measure (a) the attainment of learning outcomes; and (b) topics that are not specifically covered in the course outlines.
- 7.4.4 comply with the submission procedures of scores and grades for examinations, assignments and other assessment items;

- 7.4.5 are allowed to review and revise the assessment criteria and tasks according to procedures set by the respective kulliyah;
- 7.4.6 employ alternative assessment forms to give students the opportunities to demonstrate their learning progress, elicit performance, receive feedback, identify and correct errors, and prompt continuous improvement. Different assessment tools may be used to measure students' attainment of learning outcomes. Instructors can use subjective tests, objective quizzes, term papers, and presentations, etc.;
- 7.4.7 make themselves available to students for consultation and feedback at reasonable times and durations;
- 7.4.8 do not discuss or disclose personal information, including results, about students to anyone who does not have the legitimate right and need to have access to the information;
- 7.4.9 contribute to discussions on student assessment.

7.5 Students

- 7.5.1 Students have the right to:
 - a. be treated fairly and consistently in all aspects of assessment policy and practices;
 - b. be informed of all aspects of assessment policy and practices in each course, including the criteria to be met and penalties for breaches;
 - c. the timely return of their work on specific assessment tasks, allowing for error correction;
 - d. information and feedback that can help them to self-evaluate, adjust and attune their own performance to meet the criteria for each course and to the performance of other students;
 - e. be informed of appeal processes.
- 7.5.2 Students have the responsibility to:
 - a. ensure that they are properly enrolled and that they observe disciplinary rules;
 - b. be aware of the rules of progression and requirements for graduation;
 - c. educate themselves on the University's policies on academic honesty, legitimate cooperation, plagiarism and cheating, and timely submission of work;
 - d. ensure that they understand the requirements for examinations and other assessment tasks;
 - e. ensure that the submitted assessment tasks are their own work, and that group efforts are clearly acknowledged;
 - f. be aware of the means for seeking assistance and advice on assessment, including appeals and dispute resolutions;
 - g. seek advice from the course authority if they believe that particular assessment tasks are not fair, both in terms of workload and proportion of allocated scores;
 - h. be aware that a major objective of assessment is to promote learning; and

- i. use assessment and the feedback received from assessment to develop strategies for learning and self-evaluation.

7.6 Central referral agency for assessment

7.6.1 Underscoring the importance of assessment, an agency serving as a referral centre for assessment is to be established. Currently, that centre is the IIUM Centre for Measurement, Evaluation, and Testing (i-MET) which was established in 2021. The Centre aims to leverage the potentials of assessment for the sejahtera and sustainable growth of the institution. Its raison d'être is in keeping with the **Tawhidic** worldview and the University's aspirations to humanize education.

7.6.2 i-MET's vision is to enable every person and every educational organization to perform better and achieve more through assessment. We believe that in order to improve, we must assess. Thus, we strive to facilitate individuals, communities, and institutions to assess and holistically improve growth, performance, and wellbeing in every corner of the world. Our strategy is to build good quality in-class services that will lead and initiate assessment programs that support sustainable development.

7.6.3 The main functions of the Centre are to:

- a. Provide technical expertise and support to all Kulliyahs/Centres/Divisions/Offices/Institutes/Mahallahs in their learning assessment policies and practices.
- b. Lead and support the mechanisms to assess, review, and suggest matters related to the institutional missions, goals, and outcomes, using ongoing research-based planning and evaluation, in collaboration with internal stakeholders.
- c. Calibrate the IIUM's assessment policies and practices in academic and non-academic domains against the reference qualities vis-a-vis the Sejahtera Academic Framework.
- d. Collate, identify, and share best practices in the monitoring, feedforward and feedback, reporting, and the improvement of internal processes.
- e. Collaborate with the University's CPD to provide in-house training in learning assessment to ensure valid, reliable, and fair assessment is conducted in the University's academic programmes.
- f. Serve as the certification and endorsement agency for the IIUM's assessment and testing programmes, particularly those that are of high stakes in nature.
- g. Provide assessment, testing, and measurement services and certified training in assessment for external agencies and institutions.

- h. Establish and execute a Board of Assessment for Islamic Education to cater to the needs of Islamic Education organizations locally and internationally.

8. REASONABLE ARRANGEMENTS

8.1 The University is committed to promoting the idea and practice of equal opportunity for all, eliminating any unlawful discrimination, and promoting positive attitudes towards all individuals.

8.2 The University is proactive in delivering the *Amanah* of reasonable arrangements. This means that the University does not wait to be approached by a student with physical or non-physical difficulties before considering how to deliver the *Amanah*. The learning environment shall be as inclusive as possible so that individual student interventions are the exception rather than the norm.

8.3 Students who cannot undertake or submit an assessment due to certain disabilities, valid documented reasons (such as illness or family tragedy), or religious commitment have the right to request reasonable arrangements

8.4 Reasonable arrangements may vary across students, depending on their specific needs, which may include but are not limited to flexible deadlines, make-up assignments, adjustments to lecture and tutorial attendance requirements, lecture recordings to facilitate access to missed lectures, adjustments to group work requirements, and deferred tests.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

9.1 A course instructor must not be responsible for assessment of a student with whom he/she has, or has had, a significant personal or other relationship which creates a conflict of interest.

9.2 Conflicts of interest must be declared to the chair of the BoE who must manage the process of assessment for the affected student.

10. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND HONESTY

10.1 IIUM Staff Disciplinary Rules 2015 requires all staff members to be honest, trustworthy and responsible. They must be equally fair and respectful towards each other. Academic integrity, therefore, is defined as commitment to the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility by all members of IIUM.

10.2 Honesty in learning, teaching and research begins with oneself and extends to others. In the quest for knowledge, students and faculty alike must be honest with themselves and with each other. Trust requires the faculty to set clear guidelines for assignments and for evaluating student work. It requires from the students that they prepare work that is honest and thoughtful. Fair and accurate evaluation is essential in the educational process. For students, important components of fairness are predictability, clear expectations, and a consistent and just response to dishonesty. Faculty members also have a right to expect fair treatment, not only from students but also from colleagues and their administration.

10.3 Students and faculty are also required to respect themselves and each other for extending their boundaries of knowledge, testing new skills, building upon success, and learning from failure. Students show respect by attending class, being on time, listening to other points of view, being prepared and contributing to discussions and performing to the best of their ability. Members of the faculty show respect by taking students' ideas seriously, providing full and honest feedback on their work and valuing their aspirations and goals. They also show respect for the work of others by acknowledging their intellectual debts through proper identification of

sources. Finally, staff and students are equally responsible for upholding the integrity of scholarship and research. To be responsible is to take action against wrongdoings without fear or favour. They should discourage and seek to prevent misconduct by others.

11. MAINTENANCE OF POLICY

The Office in Charge of academic quality assurance is responsible for ensuring that this policy is updated and improved based on the needs or requirements for any change or improvement at any needed time.

12. RELATED POLICIES, RULES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

- 1) Postgraduate Regulations
- 2) Sejahtera Academic Framework: Humanising Education for Rahmatan lil 'Alamin post-COVID-19 disruptions.
- 3) Student Academic and Performance Evaluation Regulations (SAPER)
- 4) The IIUM Constitution
- 5) The IIUM Disability Inclusion Policy
- 6) Policy on Flexible Academic Workload & Flexible Study Period for Students With Disabilities
- 7) IIUM Staff Disciplinary Rules 2015

Senate endorsement reference: Senate 492nd/ 24th September 2022