

**ASSESSMENT RULES
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
(MAY 2025)**

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This document gives the assessment rules that apply in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. These rules apply to all undergraduate and postgraduate modules with a home department in this faculty and to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes hosted by this faculty. This document, and the Faculty's assessment practices, are subject to the [Assessment Policy](#) of Stellenbosch University.

In case of queries not covered by the contents of this document, please contact the chairperson of the Academic Offering Committee and the Vice-Dean for Teaching and Learning for advice.

1.2 Purposes of assessment

As described in the Stellenbosch University [Assessment Policy](#), assessment serves one or more of the following purposes:

- **diagnostic purposes**, which evaluate the student's existing strengths, weaknesses, prior knowledge, and the like;
- **summative purposes**, which are typically indications of the progress and performance of a student;
- **formative purposes**, which serve the learning process primarily by offering students an opportunity to develop the requisite knowledge, usually incorporating learning-centred feedback.

The overarching goal of assessment is to foster learning, understood as the cumulative mastery of a subject field in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding.

1.3 Framework for effective assessment

Effective assessments clearly reflect and operationalise the following principles, in a form suited to the particular academic environment:

- Validity
- Relevance
- Reliability
- Educational impact
- Academic integrity
- Transparency
- Fairness

- Achievability
- Learning-centred feedback

For more on these principles, please refer to the most recent versions of the SU [Assessment Policy](#), the [Draft Interim SU Guidelines on Allowable AI Use and Academic Integrity in Assessment](#), and the FASS Student Guidelines on Academic Integrity.

1.4 Assessment schemes and minimum requirements

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences uses the following assessment schemes, as defined in the current version of the Stellenbosch University [Assessment Policy](#). For definitions of the different schemes and mark types, please see [the alignment document](#):

- **Semester default scheme** – for undergraduate semester modules
 - At least a Final Mark must be recorded
- **Year default scheme** – for undergraduate year modules
 - At least a Mid-Year Mark and a Final Mark must be recorded
- **Duly completed** – for modules that do not assign a final mark
- **Final mark only** – for postgraduate modules that do assign a final mark
- **Doctoral module** – for loading doctoral degree results
- Other assessment schemes may be allowed in exceptional circumstances, if approved by the Academic Offering Committee.

2 ALLOWABLE ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Staff leading the offering of a module choose an assessment arrangement that

- 2.1. Best suits the outcomes and pedagogical approach selected for the module.
- 2.2. Meets all the requirements of the Assessment Rules of the Faculty.
- 2.3. Meets all the requirements of the Stellenbosch University [Assessment Policy](#), including the following provisions:
 - 2.3.1 The assessment arrangements must provide for processes by which a student's work in a module is systematically assessed and weighed through consecutive opportunities during the semester or year using a variety of assessment methods, such

as assignments, tests, portfolios, orals, practical performance, laboratory investigations, seminars, tutorials and project reports.

- 2.3.2 The assessment arrangements must support effective assessment, as described in the Stellenbosch University Assessment Policy, being mindful of the criteria for effective assessment.
- 2.3.3 The assessment arrangements must provide for timeous feedback to students after formative and summative assessments during the lecturing period of the semester. The assessments and feedback should afford students the opportunity to advance their own learning and receive feedback on the extent to which they have mastered the module outcomes.
- 2.3.4 No single assessment opportunity may be the sole determination of a pass or fail, except if the Faculty's Assessment Rules expressly permit such an arrangement.
- 2.3.5 If students for any reason do not use an offered assessment opportunity (for example because of assessment timetable conflicts, illness, personal commitments, religious considerations or leave granted by the Registrar), it will still be considered to be an opportunity offered to that student.
- 2.3.6 Completing additional, optional or supplementary assessments may not reduce a student's final mark.

3 FINAL MARK CALCULATION

3.1 General Provisions

- 3.1.1 The final marks for modules are calculated and entered on SUNStudent by the module's home department or centre. Please refer to the [alignment document](#) for more information.
- 3.1.2 Environments are to use the final mark calculation indicated on the given module's Form B or, where there were updates to this calculation that were approved through the correct channels, the latest version of this calculation.
- 3.1.3 Students must be made aware at the start of a module of the exact formula(e) and manner by which their marks will be calculated.
- 3.1.4 New calculations for marks for a given module may only be applied after it has been approved by the Academic Offering Committee.
- 3.1.5 All marks are awarded out of 100.
- 3.1.6 If a student did not complete an assessment, no mark is recorded on SUNStudent for that assessment. The relevant remark field is used to indicate the reason for not recording a mark.

3.1.7 Final marks are to be handled using the following provisions:

3.1.7.1 Final marks are rounded to the nearest integer, with calculates marks midway between integers rounded up¹.

3.1.7.2 Rounding of marks should be done according to transparent considerations and processes.

3.1.8 If a student did not complete an assessment identified as compulsory for a given module, or in any other way did not meet the requirements in terms of assessments, including compulsory class attendance, the module will be considered as incomplete irrespective of the average mark obtained for remaining assessments. In such cases, no mark is entered, and the relevant remark field is used to indicate the reason for not entering a mark.

3.2 Weightings for final marks

3.2.1 For a semester module, no single assessment may contribute more than 60% to the Final Mark.

3.2.2 For a year module, no single assessment may contribute more than 30% to the Final Mark.

3.3 Provisions for modules using the former examination system

Modules with a major summative assessment at the end of the module (broadly similar to the former exam system) use the following guidelines, unless a different calculation has been approved as described in 3.1.4:

3.3.1. A Mark to Date (MTD) of at least 40% is required for access to the A2/A3 assessment.

3.3.2. The MTD and A2/A3 mark are combined in the ratio as described in 3.1.2 and 3.1.3, and subject to the limitations in 3.2.

3.3.3. If the mark in the final assessment (A2 or A3) is 50 or more, the student may not be awarded a Final Mark (FM) of less than 50.

3.3.4. If the Final Mark after the A2 assessment is equal to or greater than 40 and below 50, the student is given access to the A3 assessment (formerly known as the second exam opportunity). The mark awarded for the A3 assessment may not exceed 50, but if it is lower than the mark for the A2 assessment, the A2 mark stands.

3.3.5. If the Final Mark in the A2 assessment is less than 40, the student fails the module and does not gain access to the A3 assessment.

3.3.6. If a student has access to the A3 assessment but does not use the opportunity, the mark from the A2 assessment stands.

¹ Marks between 35 and 49.5 are no longer awarded in multiples of 5, as per the previous assessment rules

- 3.3.7. For a student who writes only the A3 assessment, the provision in 3.3.3. applies and there is no further opportunity to write another final assessment.

3.4 Provisions for A4 assessments

A4 assessments are not offered as a matter of course. In exceptional circumstances, an A4 assessment can be offered to replace an assessment that was deferred due to factors beyond the control of the environment. The marks from A4 assessments are included in the relevant calculation of the FM and other marks, as applicable.

4 USE OF AND ACCESS TO ASSESSMENTS

- 4.1. In modules where tests are included as a part of the assessment structure, there is only one opportunity to write the test assessment and this is the default opportunity. Students may not freely choose to write the supplementary test. Access to the supplementary test may be granted in accordance with the following provisions:
- 4.1.1. If a student misses an assessment due to medical reasons or a clash with a scheduled assessment in another module, the student is granted access to an additional assessment opportunity.
 - 4.1.2. If a student misses an assessment opportunity due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g. medical reasons, religious considerations, accidents), the home environment of the module may decide whether to grant access to a supplementary assessment opportunity based on the verification and approval of the reasons for missing the original opportunity.
- 4.2. In modules that use a major summative assessment as described in 3.3 above, and unless precluded in the module framework, students may decide whether they will write the first or the second opportunity as their first attempt. Students who do not write the A2 and find themselves unable to write the A3 for any reason whatsoever (illness, accident, etc.) will not be granted another assessment opportunity. Students are therefore strongly encouraged to make use of the first assessment opportunity (A2).
- 4.3. The decision to make use of an assessment is irreversible once a student has entered the venue for that assessment. A mark will be determined for that assessment and may be used in the calculation of the student's final mark. Even if a student becomes ill while writing an assessment, the student must complete the assessment session.
- 4.4. Final-year students who write an assessment in a module during the A3 period in November, regardless of the reason, cannot receive a qualification which requires that module during the graduation ceremonies in December of the same year. The earliest that the student can receive the qualification is in March or April of the following year.

5 DISCUSSING MARKED ANSWER SCRIPTS WITH STAFF

- 5.1. As a rule, marked assessments are handed back to students, unless the environment has a specific reason not to do so. Students may thus view and discuss their marked work with the lecturer concerned.
- 5.2. In environments where marked assessments, typically scripts from examinations or other major summative assessments, are not handed back to students, the following provisions apply for discussing marked scripts with the lecturer:
 - 5.2.1. The opportunity to discuss marked answer scripts with the lecturer(s) concerned is not an opportunity for the re-evaluation of the assessment.
 - 5.2.2. Students may only view their marked answer scripts in the presence of the lecturer concerned, or someone else approved by the chair, head, or director of the environment.
 - 5.2.3. The viewing and discussion of marked answer scripts may take place after the last day that has been set for the submission of final marks and with due allowance for any further arrangements which the environment concerned may have made with the approval of the relevant faculty board or centre management structure. Environments are allowed to discuss marked scripts with students at an earlier date if reasonably practicable.
 - 5.2.4. Any request for such discussion must be made within one month after the last day that has been set for the submission of final marks and according to any further arrangements which the department or centre concerned may have made with the approval of the relevant faculty board or centre management structure.

6 INFORMATION ON SUNLEARN AND IN MODULE FRAMEWORKS

- 6.1. The Faculty's assessment rules must be readily accessible to students and staff affected by the rules, for example by placing them on SUNLearn.
- 6.2. The manner in which the applicable assessment rules are implemented in each module shall be made known to the students at the start of the relevant semester or year by means of the module framework or study guide. This information includes:
 - 6.2.1. what subminima will be applied in the module, if applicable,
 - 6.2.2. how the final marks will be determined if final marks are awarded in the module or, if a duly completed module, what is required of students to complete successfully,
 - 6.2.3. what assessment period(s) will be used,
 - 6.2.4. which assessments are compulsory, and

- 6.2.5. if the module is a semester module, whether it will be completed in one term, and if so, in which term.

7 DEAN'S CONCESSION ASSESSMENTS

- 7.1. The internal regulations for Dean's Concession Assessments (DCAs) are published in Part 4 of the [Yearbook](#).
- 7.2. Modules exempt from DCAs

Department of Drama

Theatre Skills 378 and 388

Department of Music

Higher Certificate in Music

Orchestral Practice 191
Practical Music Study A (all modules)
Diploma (Practical Music)
General Music Studies 191
Music Education 371
Orchestral Practice (all modules)
Practical Music Study A (all modules)
Practical Music Study S 221 and 261

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Composition 379 and 479
Music Education 178
Music Technology 379 and 479
Orchestral Practice (all modules)
Practical Music Study A (all modules)
Practical Music Study E (all modules)
Practical Music Study S (all modules)
Repertoire Studies 389
Service Learning 496

Department of Visual Arts

All year modules are excluded from Dean's Concession Assessments. Only the semester modules of Elementary Photography and Supportive Techniques may be considered for a Dean's Concession Examination

Department of Modern and Foreign Languages

All modules are excluded from Dean's Concession Assessments.

8 OTHER FACULTY-SPECIFIC RULES

8.1 Duration of assessments

As a general rule, 60 minutes are allocated to each 50 marks in written assessments. However, the home environment of a module has the discretion to specify their own time allocation. The time allocations for assessments that make use of a time limit must be communicated clearly to students.

8.2 Recording and dissemination of marks

- 8.2.1 The Stellenbosch University Assessment Policy requires that environments hosting modules are responsible for recording, on SUNStudent, marks for all the students registered for the module. Departments should not communicate these marks to students in another way, to avoid the potential for contradictory information.
- 8.2.2 Assessment marks not loaded onto SUNStudent should be made known to students through SUNLearn. The SU Assessment Rules require that each student's marks should be made known only to that student.

8.3 Safekeeping of marked assessments

As a rule, marked assessments are handed back to students, whether on paper or electronically. In modules where this is not the case, lecturers should keep the marked assessments for a period of at least one semester after the assessments have taken place. Note that professional accreditation requirements and departmental external evaluations may require that a sample of marked assessments be kept on record for a longer period. Departments are to manage this internally to ensure compliance.

8.4 Copyright on question papers

All question papers for main summative assessments should normally include the following statement (with the year changed to the current) in the footer of the front page:

Copyright © [current year] Stellenbosch University. All rights reserved.