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# Assessment Rules

Approved by Faculty Board on 15 May 2020

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# **1 Introduction**

The assessment rules of the Engineering Faculty have been formulated according to the guidelines given in "Assessment Policy and Practices at Stellenbosch University", Revision: 2011. The Engineering Faculty accepts and subscribes to this policy.

This document describes assessment in the Engineering Faculty and describes in particular the actions taken to ensure that the assessment in the Faculty meets the needs and requirements of the policy. Further, it provides the basis for the training and sensitisation of lecturers to ensure that the graduates meet the minimum requirements. At the same time, lecturers must not have excessive expectations of students. This document therefore aims to ensure that assessment in the Engineering Faculty is **valid, reliable and justifiable**. This document must be read with the Rules for Internal and External Moderation of the Engineering Faculty.

## **2 Principles of Effective Assessment**

The Faculty strives to actively apply the following principles for effective assessment, as described in the institutional assessment policy, and to guide lecturers as assessors to be able to do so.

### **2.1 Validity**

The assessment measures, what it was intended to measure, and the deductions and actions that are based on the assessment results are appropriate and accurate.

### **2.2 Reliability**

The results of the assessment tasks or opportunities are repeatable in different contexts.

### **2.3 Academic integrity**

As far as possible, the necessary procedures are in existence to avoid, detect and deal with dishonesty. This implies that all those involved are fully informed of the Senate regulations in this regard.

### **2.4 Transparency**

Information on assessment is made known to the students. This includes information on the reasons for the assessment, when it will take place, the methods that will be used, the criteria according to which it will be measured, the manner in which the final mark will be calculated and any environment-specific appeal mechanisms, in addition to those contained in the Calendar Part 1 and Part 11.

### **2.5 Fairness**

Assessment systems are equitable in that all students are treated fairly, without prejudice and with the necessary assistance to overcome inability or handicaps.

## 2.6 Feasibility

The costs and practical implications of the assessment process are reasonable within the context and the purpose of the assessment.

## 2.7 Timely feedback

Lecturers provide timely feedback on formative, and where possible, summative assessment tasks. The feedback enables the students to identify the sections that have been completed satisfactorily and to clearly know which sections require further study.

## 3 Assessment Methods Applicable to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Modules in the Engineering Faculty

It is the aim of the Faculty to implement Flexible Assessment in all modules for which it is suitable, and that it would be the default method of assessment. The Faculty also uses Project Evaluation and Satisfactory Attendance where Flexible Assessment is not appropriate. The traditional Examination system is used in some modules that are also, or exclusively, used in programmes other than the Faculty's programmes.

It is important to note that in the Engineering Faculty all module frameworks<sup>1</sup> have to be approved before the start of the semester by the programme co-ordinator. The module framework specifies the details of how the assessment will be performed in the module and how each component of the assessment will contribute to the final mark. This includes the *a priori* identification of assessments in which subminima will apply.

### 3.1 Flexible Assessment

The Faculty's formulation entails the following:

#### 3.1.1 Main assessment opportunities

Three formal assessment opportunities are scheduled, that is the first main assessment opportunity (A1) in the period of the mid-semester test week, the second main assessment opportunity (A2) in the period of the first examinations and the third main assessment opportunity (A3) in the period of the second examinations.

Except for the Dean's Concession Examinations (refer to Section 8), no further assessment opportunities will be provided to replace A1, A2 or A3, irrespective of a student's circumstances.

Students are strongly encouraged to write both A1 and A2 because:

- A1 has important formative value, such as the feedback students obtain about their mastering of the work presented in the preceding term, before having to apply that knowledge in the following term;
- Students forego a supplementary assessment when not writing A1 or A2, which would result in these student failing the module if they are, for example, sick during A3;
- Little can be lost by writing A1 (versus much gained by writing A1) because a low A1 mark will not preclude access to A3; and

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<sup>1</sup> Sometimes referred to a "study guide"

- Final year students who write any A3 in the second semester will not be able to graduate in December of that year.

### 3.1.2 Other assessment opportunities

Further assessment opportunities are scheduled ad hoc, as required by the nature of the module (e.g. laboratory practicals, assignments and tutorial tests). These assessments are used to determine a "semester mark" (SM) and must, where possible, be done during the module's contact periods. The composition of the SM must be made known in the module framework at the start of the semester. The results of the first assessment included in the SM must be made known within the first five weeks of the semester.

Assignments and assessments associated with tutorials are compulsory unless stated otherwise in the module framework or these rules. To avoid the requirements to submit medical certificates or proof of leave approved by the Registrar, when typically 10 or more such assessments are given in a semester module, the following applies:

- A mark of 0 will be awarded when a student does not do any of these assessments and no excuses (whether for medical, sport or any other reason) will be considered; and
- Each student's two lowest marks for these assessments will be omitted from the calculation of the semester mark.

Submission of medical certificates or proof of leave approved by the Registrar:

- Are normally not required for formative assessments where no marks are awarded; but
- May be required for assessments during the semester where outcomes are assessed that are not assessed in A1, A2 or A3 (e.g. for laboratory practicals);
- Subject to reasonable measures being provided for students who cannot afford to obtain medical certificates.

### 3.1.3 Restrictions on contributions of assessments

#### 3.1.3.1 *Default restrictions*

The formulas in Section 3.1.5 use  $w_{sm}$ ,  $w_{A1}$  and  $w_{A2}$  to represent the weighting factors for the composition of the final mark (FM), determined as dictated by the nature of each module. The weighting factors that are going to be used must be given in the module framework.

In all cases:  $w_{sm} + w_{A1} + w_{A2} = 1$

$w_{sm}$ :

- $w_{sm} \leq 0.2$  if it is composed of formative assessments (typically in less controlled circumstances that do not ensure that students' own word is assessed)
- Any single assessment included in  $w_{sm}$  may make a contribution to FM of not more than 0.5.

$w_{A1}$ :

- For first semester modules of the first year:  $w_{A1} \leq 0.3$

- For second semester modules of the first year:  $w_{A1} \leq 0.35$
- For second and later years of study:  $0.25 \leq w_{A1} \leq \text{minimum}(0.4, w_{A2} - 5\%)$

$w_{A2}$ :

- $0.4 \leq w_{A2} \leq 0.6$

Lecturers are encouraged, when selecting  $w_{A1}$ , to keep in mind that in general A1 is written under considerable time pressure and that it is normally restricted to two hours. Together with this, particularly when  $w_{A1}$  exceeds 0.5, lecturers are encouraged to assess as much of the semester's work as is practical during A2.

Typical values for the weights are: [ $w_{sm} = 0.15$ ;  $w_{A1} = 0.35$ ;  $w_{A2} = 0.5$ ], [ $w_{sm} = 0.1$ ;  $w_{A1} = 0.4$ ;  $w_{A2} = 0.5$ ] and [ $w_{sm} = 0.1$ ;  $w_{A1} = 0.3$ ;  $w_{A2} = 0.6$ ].

### 3.1.3.2 Postgraduate modules offered in one block

For postgraduate modules that is offered in one contact block (typically one week for a 15-credit module), only a semester mark is used (i.e.  $w_{sm} = 1$ ;  $w_{A1} = 0$ ;  $w_{A2} = 0$ ) and the following restrictions apply:

- Some assignments may be given before the contact block, based on pre-reading and self-study. These assignments, for a 15 credit module, would typically require 0 to 30 hours of work and contribute 0% to 15% of the SM.
- Formative assessments during the contact block, using group and/or individual work, that contribute 20% to 30% of the SM.
- One or more assignments after the contact block. These assignments, for a 15-credit module, would typically require 60 to 90 hours of work and will contribute the remainder of the SM.

The total assessment time should be commensurate with the credits and contact time. For example, for a typical 15 credit module (with 10 notional hours per credit, as per SAQA and ECSA): if the module uses a contact block of one week, which requires 60 hours of work (contact and formative assessments), the assessments outside the block should require 90 hours in total of the student.

### 3.1.3.3 Postgraduate modules offered in two blocks

This section applies to postgraduate modules that use two contact blocks, each typically two or three days, separated by a few weeks. Two approaches are approved:

In the first approach, these modules use the approach given above for modules that use one block, but with some of the work there assigned to the post-block assignments, here allocated to assignments between the blocks.

In the second approach, the default restrictions to the contributions (Section 3.1.3.1) apply and the following approach is used:

- Optional: small assignments before the first contact block, based on pre-reading and self-study. These assignments, for a 15 credit module, would typically contribute less than 10% to the SM.

- Formative assessments during the contact blocks, using group and/or individual work, that contribute the remainder of the SM.
- One summative assessment (a test or a project-type assignment) that is completed at the start of the second block. This assessment will be considered to be A1.
- One summative assessment (a test or a project-type assignment) after the second block. This assessment will be considered to be A2.

### 3.1.4 Access to assessments opportunities

#### 3.1.4.1 *Access to A1 and other assessments during the semester*

All students registered for the module have access to A1. Writing A1 is strongly recommended (please refer to 3.1.1), but not compulsory.

Requirements for access to other assessments during the semester are given in the module framework.

#### 3.1.4.2 *Access to A2*

All students that meet all the subminima applicable to the semester's assessments (if any) have access to A2.

A2 is not compulsory, except for students who did not write A1. Students who are eligible to write A2 are allowed to choose not to write A2 and then automatically gain access to A3. Students are strongly encouraged to write A2 for the reasons given in Section 3.1.1.

#### 3.1.4.3 *Access to A3*

The notice to students that have access to A3 must be given by loading the appropriate code with the final marks on the central marks system (as described in Section 3.1.6.2).

The following students have access to A3:

- All students that wrote A2, but not A1;
- All students that wrote A1 and had access to A2, but did not write A2; and
- All students that wrote A1 and A2 and thereby obtained a final mark of  $FM < 50$ , unless affected by one of the exceptions below (to confirm: students who would have passed after A2, but who did not meet the subminimum on A2, may write A3 to meet the subminimum; also students with a final mark of less than 40 after A2 may write A3).

Exceptions to granting access:

- Students that would have passed the module, but was prevented by a subminimum that could not be met in A3 (for example a subminimum during the semester, such as a compulsory practical or a project);
- Exceptions stated in the module framework, after approval by the Programme Committee.

### 3.1.5 Final mark formula

#### 3.1.5.1 *General approach*

If a student enters the venue of one of the main assessments, he/she is deemed to have made use of that assessment opportunity and a mark will be assigned to the student for that opportunity.

In the following formulas  $w_{sm}$ ,  $w_{A1}$  and  $w_{A2}$  represent the weighting factors for the composition of the final mark (FM). Refer to Section 3.1.3 for restrictions on the weighting factors. SM, A1, A2 and A3 represent the respective marks (each out of 100) that were achieved for the semester mark and the three main assessments.

The approach for calculating the final mark is (the step-for-step procedures to implement the approach follow thereafter):

- Students who have not written at least two of the three main assessments (A1, A2 and A3) are awarded a final result of "Module Incomplete".
- Students must achieve at least 40 in either A2 or A3 to pass.
- For students who wrote A1 and A2, but not A3, the final mark before rounding is given by:  
 $FM = w_{sm} SM + w_{A1} A1 + w_{A2} A2$ , with  $w_{sm} + w_{A1} + w_{A2} = 1$ .
- For students who wrote A1 and A3, but not A2, the final mark before rounding is calculated using the above formula, except that A3 is used instead of A2. The weighting factors are not adjusted.
- For students who did not write A1, but wrote A2 and A3, the SM's weight is retained, while A2 and A3 are given the same weight in the final mark before rounding.
- For students who wrote A1, A2 and A3, A3 is used where it makes the most favourable contribution. FM may not exceed 50, but FM may not be reduced by taking A3 into account. This means that the three abovementioned final mark formulae (A1 with A2, A1 with A3 and A2 with A3) are applied and the highest result is used as final mark before rounding, except that FM is limited to 50 or less.

#### 3.1.5.2 *After A2 and before A3*

| When used                 | FMp formulas                               | FMp if (A2 ≥ 40) and all other subminima are met | FMp if any subminimum is not met |
|---------------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|
| A1 and A2 written         | $FMp1 = w_{sm} SM + w_{A1} A1 + w_{A2} A2$ | $FMp = FMp1$                                     | $FMp = \min(45, FMp1)$           |
| Neither A1 nor A2 written |  | no FM  | no FM                            |

Refer to Section 3.1.5.4 for rounding of FMp to determine FM.

Refer to Section 3.1.4.3 for decisions about access to A3.

Refer to Section 3.1.6 for the loading of marks.

### 3.1.5.3 After A3

| When used   | FMp formulas  | FMp if (A2 ≥ 40 or A3 ≥ 40) and all other subminima are met | FMp if any subminimum is not met      |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| A1, A2 and A3 written   | $\text{FMp1} = w_{sm} \text{SM} + w_{A1} A1 + w_{A2} A2$ $\text{FMp2} = w_{sm} \text{SM} + (1 - w_{sm})(A2 + A3)/2$ $\text{FMp3} = w_{sm} \text{SM} + w_{A1} A1 + w_{A2} A3$ $\text{FMpmx} = \max(\text{FMp1}, \text{FMp2}, \text{FMp3})$ | $\text{FMp} = \min(50, \text{FMpmx})^{**}$                  | $\text{FMp} = \min(45, \text{FMpmx})$ |
| A2 and A3 written, but not A1*                                      | $\text{FMp2} = w_{sm} \text{SM} + (1 - w_{sm})(A2 + A3)/2$  | $\text{FMp} = \text{FMp2}$                                  | $\text{FMp} = \min(45, \text{FMp2})$  |
| A1 and A3 written, but not A2*                                      | $\text{FMp3} = w_{sm} \text{SM} + w_{A1} A1 + w_{A2} A3$  | $\text{FMp} = \text{FMp3}$                                  | $\text{FMp} = \min(45, \text{FMp3})$  |
| A1 and A2 written, but not A3, even though student had access to A3 | FM calculated after A2 is retained  | FM calculated after A2 is retained                          | FM calculated after A2 is retained    |
| Fewer than two of A1, A2 and A3 written                             |   | no FM   | no FM                                 |

\* In a calculation, 0 can be assigned to the missing assessment and the FM can further be calculated as if the students have written all three main assessments.

\*\* Also for students who had to write A3 because they did not meet a subminimum on A2.

Refer to Section 3.1.5.4 for rounding of FMp to determine FM.

Refer to Section 3.1.6 for the loading of marks.

### 3.1.5.4 Rounding of FM

FMp is normally rounded as follows to determine FM:

| When used                                       | FM  |
|---|---|
| $\text{FMp}=74$                                 | Assessor(s) and internal moderator(s) discuss and award either $\text{FM}=75$ or $\text{FM}=73$ |
| $\text{FMp} \geq 50$ , but $\text{FMp} \neq 74$ | $\text{FM} = \text{FMp}$ , rounded to an integer  |
| $42.5 \leq \text{FMp} < 50$                     | $\text{FM} = 45$  |
| $40 \leq \text{FMp} < 42.5$                     | $\text{FM} = 40$  |
| $\text{FMp} < 40$                               | $\text{FM} = \text{minimum}(\text{FMp}, 35)$ , rounded to an integer                            |

### 3.1.6 Making marks known and loading of marks

Final marks may not be revealed directly to students, bursary companies, parents or other third parties by lecturers or departments, as is customary for all forms of assessment. Therefore the results of A2 and A3 are not made known to students.

#### 3.1.6.1 Before A2

- The marks achieved in A1 are normally made known, using SUNLearn or a similar means, within three weeks of the assessment.
- The semester mark (SM) must be made known to the students, using SUNLearn or a similar means, at least five days (excluding Sundays) before A2, but not necessarily before the last day on which class marks are made known.

- SM is not loaded on the central marks system.
- A1 is loaded on the central marks system as an early assessment mark.

### 3.1.6.2 After A2 and before A3

Please refer to Section 3.1.4.3 for determining access to A3, Section 3.1.5.2 for the calculation of the final mark (FM) and Section 3.1.7 for students' access to the marked scripts.

The marks of A2 are made known only for students that had not written A1, through SUNLearn or a similar way. A2's marks for other students are not made known to students<sup>2</sup>. (Recommendation: include a reference to this paragraph in the notice with A2's marks and a note that lecturers will not answer any enquiries about A2's marks).

Due date: The results below must be loaded and finalised on the central marks system, as soon as is reasonably possible, but not later than:

- preferably five, but not less than three, days (excluding Sundays and public holidays) before A3; and
- the last day by which final marks for the first examination opportunities have to be loaded.

The results must be marked as final on the mark system, after loading the marks and codes, so that students can have access to their results using the normal channels (e.g. through my.sun.ac.za). Note that students that have outstanding balances on their student accounts cannot see their final marks on the web portal, but they will be able to see whether they have access to A3.

The results are loaded by means of a CSV file, in which three columns are provided: student number, final mark and code number. The final marks and code numbers are determined as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> Since final marks may not be made known by departments

| When used  | Allowable FM (calculated according to 3.1.5.4) | Code number                                       | Comment on student's record       |
|--|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| Student passes after A2 (written both A1 and A2)   | $FM \geq 50$                                   | no code loaded; system creates code automatically | "Pass" or "Pass with distinction" |
| Student has $0 < FM \leq 45$ after A2 (written both A1 and A2) and granted access to A3        | $0 < FM \leq 45$                               | 78  | Further assessments allowed       |
| Student has $0 < FM \leq 45$ after A2 (written both A1 and A2) and does not have access to A3* | $0 < FM \leq 45^3$                             | 60  | Fail                              |
| Student did not write A1, but had access to and wrote A2                                       | 0 (indicates no FM loaded)                     | 78  | Further assessments allowed       |
| Student wrote A1 and had access to A2, but did not write A2, and has access to A3              | 0 (indicates no FM loaded)                     | 78  | Further assessments allowed       |
| Student does not have access to A3, and has written neither A1 nor A2                          | 0 (indicates no FM loaded)                     | 26  | Module incomplete                 |

\* For example, due to not meeting a subminimum during the semester, which cannot be met in A3

### 3.1.6.3 After A3

The marks of A3 are not made known to students. Please refer to Section 3.1.7 for students' access to the marked scripts.

The results below must be loaded on the central marks system, as soon as is reasonably possible, but not later than the last day by which final marks for the second examination opportunities have to be loaded.

The Faculty Administrator must be requested to open the marks list for the module. Only the results of students that had access to A3 must be loaded. The results are loaded by means of a CSV file, in which three columns are provided: student number, final mark and code number. The final marks and code numbers are determined as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> If a student with  $FM \leq 45$  is not granted access to A3 (due to the exceptions in Section 3.1.4.3), then his/her final mark as calculated using Section 3.1.5 is loaded, without reducing it further.

| When used   | Allowable FM (calculated according to 3.1.5.4) | Code number                                       | Comment on student's record       |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| Student passes after A3 (written at least two of A1, A2 and A3)               | $FM \geq 50$                                   | no code loaded; system creates code automatically | "Pass" or "Pass with distinction" |
| Student has $0 < FM \leq 45$ after A3 (written at least two of A1, A2 and A3) | $0 < FM \leq 45$                               | 60  | Fail                              |
| Student does not have a valid FM (written one or none of A1, A2 and A3)       | 0 (indicates no FM loaded)                     | 26  | Module incomplete                 |

After loading, the results are marked as final on the marks system. All final marks are, however, considered to be provisional until the day that final marks must be finalised (as shown in the University's almanac), since the marks are still subject to confirmation by the external moderator (in some cases) and a departmental marks meeting. If final marks are adjusted during external moderation, then changing the marks on the marks system must be arranged with the Faculty Administrator.

### 3.1.7 Access to and keeping of marked scripts

Students will normally receive back marked scripts for A1 when those marks are made known, unless A1 is subject to external moderation or the scripts must be kept for ECSA accreditation.

Access by students to the marked scripts of A2 and A3 are handled as for first and second examination scripts, respectively (refer to the section "Discussing Marked Answer Scripts with Members of the Teaching Staff during Exam Periods" in the Calendar Part 1). In addition to the arrangements given in the Calendar Part 1, the following default arrangements apply in the Engineering Faculty (lectures may deviate from these arrangements if prior approval was obtained from their departmental chairperson):

- Lecturers may, but are not required to, place the marks for A2 and A3 on SUNLearn after the last day that has been set for the submission of final marks.
- Students must inform the lecturer by the Wednesday of the first week of the semester of his/her intention to view his/her marked A2 or A3 script from the previous semester.
- One afternoon in the period from the first to the second Wednesday of the semester (both Wednesdays inclusive), may be designated and announced on SUNLearn (or a similar means) for students to see their marked A2 and A3 scripts of the previous semester.
- A question paper should be available for students to consult when they view their marked A2 or A3 script. No sample answers are provided for the assessments.
- Each student may only see his/her own marked script.
- Students are not allowed to photograph their marked scripts or the question paper when viewing their marked answers.

- Students may ask specific questions about their marked scripts to get a sense of where they went wrong, but lecturers are not to discuss the allocations of marks.

Marked scripts may have to be kept for ECSA accreditation. Otherwise, lecturers must keep the scripts for at least one semester after completion of the assessments, unless they were handed back to the students.

### 3.1.8 Subminima

When a student's marks in A2 and A3 are less than 40, then his/her FM must be 45 or less. In other words, a student must achieve at least 40 in either A2 or A3 to pass the module.

Further subminima, subject to the principles given in Section 2, may be applied in a module. These subminima include the achievement of ECSA graduate attributes that are assessed in the module. All the module-specific subminima (i.e. the subminima that are not specified in this document) must be given in the module framework of the particular module.

### 3.1.9 Default duration of assessments

The default durations of the main assessments, if SM's contribution to FM is 20% or less, are: A1: 2 hour, A2: 3 hour and A3: 3 hour. If SM's contribution is greater, then the duration of A1, A2 and A3 can vary between 1,5 and 3 hour per assessment, depending on the nature of the module and subject to the principles given in Section 2.

### 3.1.10 Work covered per assessment

A1 naturally covers the work done before the test week. A2 normally covers the work of the whole semester, but with the emphasis on the work done after the test week. A3 covers either the whole semester more or less evenly, or places greater emphasis on the work done after test week, depending on the nature of the module.

### 3.1.11 Prerequisites

A normal prerequisite is satisfied in Flexible Assessment if  $FM \geq 40$ . Pass-prerequisites are satisfied in Flexible Assessment if  $FM \geq 50$ .

### 3.1.12 Moderation

Any assessment that contributes 20% or more to the FM, as well as A1, A2 and A3, must be internally moderated. All assessments used to meet subminima, must be internally moderated. For external moderation, please refer to the Faculty's Rules for Internal and External Moderation.

### 3.1.13 Repeaters

Please refer to Section 12 of these rules.

### 3.1.14 Timetables

When A1, A2 and A3 are done in the test week or examination periods, their scheduling must be determined in the preceding year together with the normal test and examination time tables.

### 3.1.15 Assessments that comprise more than one paper

If a main assessment (A1, A2 or A3) comprises more than one question paper that is written in more than one time table slot, a student must complete all the question papers of the assessment before the student is awarded a mark for that assessment.

### 3.1.16 Deviations from the normal restrictions

The Programme Committee may consider and approve applications to deviate from restrictions in the above rules in a specific module, with motivations based on the principles of effective assessment (refer to Section 2). Any such deviation must be stated explicitly in the particular module framework.

### 3.1.17 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 © 2019 Stellenbosch University. All rights reserved

### 3.1.18 Applications for re-evaluation and recalculation of final marks

The requirements, due dates and procedures given in this regard in Part 1 of the Calendar for modules that use flexible assessment also apply in the Engineering Faculty. In addition, in the Engineering Faculty such applications will normally not be attended to before the final marks are released after A3. In other words, such applications will normally not be attended to before A3 was written.

## **3.2 Project Evaluation**

The Engineering Faculty's programmes have certain types of modules where the student's performance is largely determined by his/her ability to synthesise a coherent final product at the end of a substantial project. The assessment rules of the Engineering Faculty therefore include Project Evaluation.

The Project Evaluation assessment type is applied in modules such as the final year projects and advanced design. The University assessment policy cannot be applied directly in these modules, since they use a single assessment that contributes substantially more than 50% of the final mark. Typically in such modules the final mark is determined by a combination of a project report, oral presentations and poster presentations. The contribution of the individual components to the final mark in Project Evaluation is determined by the module's home department and is made known to the students in the module framework at the start of the semester. Only the final mark is loaded on the university marks system.

The main assessments of a module using Project Evaluation are subject to internal moderation. For external moderation, please refer to the Faculty's Rules for Internal and External Moderation.

## **3.3 Satisfactory Attendance**

In the Engineering Faculty Satisfactory Attendance assessment method is used in some modules that bear no credits, but that are required for awarding the degree. Examples of these modules are Vacation Training and Practical Workshop Training.

## **4 ECSA Graduate Attributes and ECSA Knowledge Areas**

The Engineering Council of SA (ECSA) previously used the term "Exit Level Outcomes or ELOs, for what is now referred to as Graduate Attributes (GAs).

### **4.1 GA Assessment Workshops**

Before the start of each semester, a workshop will be held in the Faculty about the assessment of GAs. Lecturing staff involved in the assessment of GAs are required to attend this workshop, so that consistent quality can be developed for GA assessments.

### **4.2 General subminima and final mark maxima associated with GAs**

A subminimum mark of 50 is required for all assessment elements (relevant questions in an assessment, project or assignment) in which the satisfaction of ECSA GAs are finally tested (for the particular module). Subminima may be required in specific assessments that test critical knowledge areas, as required by ECSA. A final mark of 45 or less will be allocated to a student if ECSA GAs are assessed in the module and the student has not satisfied one or more ECSA GAs.

### **4.3 Moderation of GA assessments**

According to the Faculty's Rules for Internal and External Moderation, all assessments of ECSA GAs must be externally moderated. In the case of Flexible Assessment, this means that, unless the relevant assessments during the semester are also externally moderated, ECSA GAs would normally only be tested in the second and third main assessment opportunities.

### **4.4 GA assessment rubrics**

Conventional rubrics or simplified rubrics (as described below) should normally be used to assess satisfaction of GAs, with the following provisions:

- a) Both types of rubric should typically provide for at least four levels of satisfying an outcome:
  - failing to satisfy the outcome,
  - marginally failing to satisfy the outcome,
  - marginally satisfying the outcome, and
  - satisfying the outcome.
- b) A marks scale may be included in the rubric (but it is not required) with a mark of less than 50% associated with any level not satisfying the GA.
- c) A conventional rubric should describe the performance associated with each of the levels of achievement.
- d) A simplified rubric should use the following structure:

|  |                                |  |                |
|--|--------------------------------|--|----------------|
| GAXx: The student must show that he/she can, at the level expected of a recent graduate: |                                |  |                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ...</li> <li>• ...</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>    |                                |  |                |
| Student fails to satisfy the above criteria, taken as a whole                            |                                | Student satisfies the above criteria, taken as a whole |                |
| Not satisfied (F)*   | Marginally not satisfied (FM)* | Marginally satisfied (PM)*                             | Satisfied (P)* |
| * Mark appropriate block on rubric attached to script or note abbreviation on script     |                                |  |                |

e) If more than one GA is assessed in a particular assessment:

- The rubric must have separate descriptions for each GA.
- If marks are associated with the rubric, the weighting of the GAs may differ to indicate the relative emphases in the particular module. These marks may be combined to determine an overall mark.
- As indicated above, if a student fails to satisfy any of the GAs assessed in a module, the student's final mark for the **module** must be 45 or less, after due consideration of the following paragraph.

f) When a marking schedule used for an assessment is closely aligned with the assessment criteria for an GA, the mark determined by the marking schedule can be used as an approximate indication of whether a student has satisfied the GA. When a student's mark is below 55% and above 45%, the examiners and moderators should apply their minds and decide whether the GA is marginally satisfied or not satisfied. The student's mark determined by the marking schedule should be adjusted, if necessary, so that a mark of 50 or more is awarded only if the GA is satisfied.

#### 4.5 GAs assessed in multiple assessment opportunities in one module

If a module assesses an GA in more than one assessment opportunity<sup>4</sup>, the module framework must specify how the different instances will be combined to determine whether a student has satisfied the GA. A general principle applied here is that a student must be given more than one assessment opportunity in the module to satisfy the GA. Typical alternative approaches are:

- Each student must satisfy the GA in particular assessment opportunities for that GA up to, and possibly including, A2. If a student has not satisfied the GA after completing A2, but would have otherwise passed the module, the student must have an opportunity to satisfy the GA in A3.
- Each student must demonstrate satisfying the GA in multiple assessments opportunities, considering the combination of assessments as a whole. If the student received feedback about his/her performance after each assessment opportunity and could improve in the later assessment opportunities, the student need not be given an opportunity to satisfy the GA in A3.

<sup>4</sup> Note that each of the assessment opportunities must be externally moderated

If A3 assesses any GAs, then all the GA assessments in A3 override all previous assessments for those GAs in that module, unless the module framework expressly gives a different arrangement. For example, if a student has in A1 satisfied a given GA, but not in A3 where the same GA is assessed, the student is deemed to have not satisfied the GA.

#### **4.6 GA assessment record keeping**

- a) The Faculty's standard module framework template includes a section where the assessment of GAs is detailed. In this section, under the question "What is Satisfactory Performance", only a reference to the conventional or simplified rubric should be given. The referenced rubric must form part of the module framework. The information in the rubric must not be changed or repeated in the section detailing GA assessments, to avoid giving conflicting information. In the self-study report prepared for accreditation visits, the customary table where the GA assessments are summarised, should duplicate the corresponding section of the module frameworks, retaining the reference to the rubrics. The rubrics should be appended to that table.
- b) Records must be kept that show that each student was individually assessed by the examiner(s). These records typically will be the assessment rubrics completed for each student or an GA assessment mark written on the front cover of the particular assessment.
- c) Records must be kept that show that the moderators assessed a stratified sample as prescribed in the Faculty's Moderation Rules, with particular attention to students near the threshold of acceptance. These records typically can be the moderator's comments noted on a marks sheet or written in green pen on the front cover of the students' assessments.
- d) The GA assessment result should be recorded in the module's marks sheet/table for each student for each GA separately. The record should allow the moderators to determine which students are near the threshold of satisfaction for each GA. If the simplified rubric is used for the GA assessment, the abbreviations given above (F, FM, PM, P) can be entered into the marks sheet.
- e) In situations when an earlier satisfied/not satisfied decision is reversed, the motivation for the reversal must be recorded on the marks sheet or with the particular student's rubric. Examples of these situations are in final year projects where a preliminary GA assessment may be changed after an oral exam, or where an internal/external moderator's decision differs from that recorded by the examiner.
- f) For accreditation purposes, the assessment product (e.g. script or report) that substantiates the GA assessment decision, must remain available. If a final year project, based on the report alone, would have failed an GA assessment, but passed based on an oral presentation, the student should be required to write an addendum summarising the significant elements of the oral presentation or revise the report.

### **5 Subminima and Opportunities to Improve**

Subminima can be required for certain aspects of a module's assessments (usually summative assessments) to pass a module, in accordance with the principles of Section 2. Typical motivations for subminima are:

- The satisfactory preparation for and attendance of a laboratory practical;
- Meeting an ECSA GA;
- Meeting a certain threshold peer evaluation in teamwork;
- Achieving a combined mark of at least 40 in the assessments of a significant part of a module, to ensure that students have the necessary knowledge for modules that follow on that one.

If a student did not meet any subminimum in a module, a final mark of 45 or less must be awarded to the student, except in the following cases: If a 40 mark was set for the sake of knowledge required for further modules (the fourth bullet above), the final marks for students' who did not meet the subminimum may be limited to 35 or less. The application of the subminima in the latter case is subject to the approval of the Departmental Chairperson of the module's home department.

If meeting a subminimum is determined by only one assessment (here called the "original assessment"), then the students who did not meet the subminimum, but otherwise would have passed the module, must be given an additional assessment opportunity to achieve the subminimum, except for the cases mentioned below. The additional assessment opportunity need not take the same format as the original assessment and can take the form of an oral examination, test or assignment, according to the prerogative of the lecturer responsible for the module. If a student misses the additional assessment opportunity offered to satisfy a subminimum (for whatever reason, be it illness or some other valid reason), then the student does not have the right to any further additional assessment opportunities.

A student has no right to additional assessment opportunities in the following cases: final year projects, design projects that represent more than 5 credits' work, laboratory practicals, group projects, peer evaluation in teamwork and assessments (typically assignments) that can be done over a period of three or more weeks.

The results obtained in the aforementioned additional assessment opportunities are usually not taken into account in the calculation of the final mark, except for meeting the subminimum.

If the original assessment was subject to external moderation, then the additional assessment must also be externally moderated. The additional assessment must always be internally moderated. If the relevant subminimum was set for an ECSA GA, then the external moderator must moderate the assessment of each student who passes the module after improving, and confirm the results in writing.

The subminima that will be applied in a module and what constitutes satisfactory performance, as well as the opportunities for improvement that will be given, must be explained in the relevant module framework and be made available to the students at the beginning of the semester.

## **6 Oral Examinations**

Oral examinations may be used when it is in accordance with the principles given in Section 2. At least two lecturers must be present (normally the examiner and internal moderator) in all oral examinations. If the particular assessment is subject to external moderation, then the

external moderator must be given the same opportunity to moderate the assessments that he/she would have had if the assessment was done in written form.

## **7 Assessments of Group or Team Work**

Developing students' ability to work in teams is an important part of the Faculty's undergraduate programmes. There are also related ECSA GAs that each student must demonstrate. Since an individual student's mark is influenced by a team's work, the measures in this section are normally applied. Exceptions to these measures must be decided in consultation with the Department Chairperson.

This section does not apply to assessments in which students work in teams, but still deliver individual assessment products (for example where students work together in laboratory practicals, but each student compiles his/her own practical report).

### **7.1 Team Allocation**

When the composition of the team forms part of the assessment (for example when assessing multidisciplinary teamwork) then the team allocation must be done by the module's lecturer. In other cases the lecturer may, at own discretion, allocate teams him/herself or allow the students to form their own teams.

Independently of how the team allocation was done, the lecturer retains the right to change the team allocation, among other reasons to cater for students who discontinue the module or register for the module after the team allocation was done.

The lecturer, in consultation with the module's internal moderator and/or Departmental Chairperson may in the course of the assignment in which the team is working, withdraw a student from a team because the student is not reasonably contributing to the team's work and functioning. Such a withdrawal would normally be considered after the student was warned at least once and given the opportunity to improve. The withdrawal may result in the student not being able to complete the assignment in question and failing the module.

### **7.2 Variable Team Sizes**

If the teams in a module are not all the same size (for example, due to the late registration or discontinuation of team members, or because the number of students in the module is not divisible by the team size), then the lecturer must reconsider the workload per student for those groups and, where necessary, make concessions to the teams involved in terms of the assignment or assessment criteria. Examples of concessions are to reduce the scope of the teams' work or the level of detail required in certain parts of the assignment.

### **7.3 Duties and Responsibilities of Students**

Please refer to the relevant section in the Faculty's "General Stipulations for Undergraduate Modules".

### **7.4 Peer Evaluation**

Modules where more than 25% of the final mark is determined by assessments done in teams, or where ECSA GAs are assessed through teamwork, the team members must all be given the opportunity evaluate the contribution of all team members (themselves included), by means of peer evaluation. The relevant lecturers may decide to use or ignore each

student's evaluation of him/herself. The individual team member's mark for the relevant assessment is then determined by combining the group's mark for the assignment in a meaningful way with the peer evaluation. For example if the peer evaluations of each group are normalised so that the average for each group is 100%, then the group's mark for the assessments is multiplied by the peer assessments to determine the marks of the individual students.

The peer evaluation must be conducted confidentially and the marks one team member gives to other team members must be kept confidential. In other words, the team members may not see each other's individual contributions.

The combined mark for each student's peer evaluation, that is the percentage or factor that will be used to determine the student's individual mark, should be announced in good time so that students can have the opportunity to lodge an appeal and the lecturer(s) can consider the appeal.

Unless an alternative arrangement has been approved by the Faculty Board, in the following cases each team must be given at least two appropriate opportunities during the project for peer evaluation, so that each student has an opportunity to improve if his/her contribution to the team initially was not satisfactory:

- If the peer evaluation is used to assess an exit level outcome;
- If there is a subminimum of 45 or higher on the particular assessments;
- If there is a subminimum on the peer assessment.

If a student initially received a poor peer evaluation, but on subsequent occasions performed better, then (at the discretion of lecturer) meeting the subminima may be mainly based on the last peer evaluation, but the calculation of the student's mark on all peer evaluations.

Students must be informed in the module framework or the assignment how the peer evaluation will be taken into account in the calculation of each student's individual mark.

Group members, also after they have appealed against a peer review, may not initiate discussions with group members about the buddy ratings that they have given each other.

## **7.5 Appeal Against and Moderation of Peer Evaluation**

Every student has the right to appeal against his/her peer evaluation within seven days of the date when the results of the peer evaluation are made known. If a student appeals against his/her peer evaluation, then least two lecturers will moderate the team's peer evaluations, as set out below.

The lecturers may moderate any of the peer evaluations (with or without an appeal), which may include that they limit marks to a certain range, that they disregard the evaluation that team members gave themselves, and/or that they obtain further information from students to decide whether a particular student's combined mark is justified. Obtaining further information may include asking the team to motivate their peer evaluations further, to conduct interviews with team members (preferably individually) and/or to consider in detail the minutes of the group's meetings.

Appeals from peer evaluations should be considered by two lecturers. If an appeal was lodged (whether subsequent adjustments were made or not), or if peer evaluations are otherwise adjusted during moderation, then the lecturers involved should record the procedure that was followed and the considerations that led to the adjustments being made (or not made), and that record must be kept.

## **7.6 External Moderation**

If the assessments in which peer evaluation were used, are subject to external moderation, then the following, in addition to the information in the module framework, must be submitted to the external moderator for his/her consideration:

- The peer evaluations entered by the students.
- The calculated peer evaluation result used to adjust individual students' marks.
- The records of the handling of any appeals and/or adjustments of the peer evaluations during the internal moderation process.

## **7.7 Deadlines for Submissions**

Students must be informed in the module framework or the assignment of the due dates and times for the team's assessment products.

Lecturers should take precautions that due dates do not fall within test week or recess periods, and preferably also not within three days after a recess period.

## **8 Closely Related PGDip (Eng) and MEng (Struct) Modules**

The Engineering Faculty and other faculties on occasion offer NQF-level 8 (7xx) modules for honours programmes and postgraduate diplomas, and NQF-level 9 (8xx) modules for masters' programmes in modes that where significant teaching and assessment elements are shared by the 7xx and 8xx modules.

The Faculty allows students to include such 8xx modules as part of their 180 credits towards an MEng (Struct), after completing closely related 7xx modules as part of a PGDip (Eng), subject to the restrictions given below. The students' programme's home department may impose further restrictions. The restrictions below do not apply to supplementary study modules in MEng (Research) programmes since the supplementary modules do not contribute to the 180 credits required for the MEng (Research).

The faculty-wide restrictions and arrangements are:

- g) At most 60 credits of the 180 credits in the MEng (Struct) may involve such closely related modules.
- h) At least 40% of the final mark of the particular 8xx module must be based on assessments that differ significantly from the closely related 7xx module. The relevant assessments must be demonstrably on NQF level 9. The assessments may be in the format of major tests and/or major assignments.
- i) Before students register for such 8xx modules, they require the permission of their home department to confirm such registration complies with the above requirements and any further restrictions imposed by the department.

- j) To receive credit for the 8xx modules as part of the 180 credits required for the MEng (Struct), students are required to register for the modules and pay the normal fees associated with them, irrespective of whether they had completed a closely related 7xx module.
- k) Students may apply for exemption from some of the 8xx modules' assessments. At the discretion of the lecturer involved, students may be granted such exemptions where the assessments completed in the 7xx modules were at an equivalent level to that required in the 8xx module. In accordance with above requirements, assessments that contribute at most 60% of the final mark may be exempted.

## 9 Dean's Concession Examination

In addition to the instructions given in Part 1 of the Calendar, the Engineering Faculty applies the following rules for dean's concession examinations (DCEs) in undergraduate programmes:

- a) If a final year student, after his/her last normally scheduled examination, requires only one module to be awarded his/her degree and during the final year had been awarded a final mark for the particular module, he/she can apply (through the Faculty Administrator) for a DCE in the particular module.
- b) All the DCEs in the Faculty are normally written on the Friday of the second week before the start of the first semester.
- c) Students are only admitted to a DCE if, to pass a module, they require aspects in the module that can be covered in a written or oral assessment. If a student has, for example, not completed compulsory practicals or did not meet a group work subminimum, they will not be able to pass the module using a DCE. Final year projects are not eligible for DCEs.
- d) To pass the particular module, a student must still achieve all the ECSA GAs that are assessed in the module.
- e) For examination modules, a student must have had a class mark of 40 or more and must have been awarded a final mark during the particular academic year to be considered for a DCE. In these situations, the DCE is equivalent to a normal examination and at least 50 in the DCE is required to pass the module.
- f) To pass a module that uses Flexible Assessment through a DCE (where the DCE has a nature similar to A3; in exceptional circumstance other types of assessments are allowed and then this section does not apply), the student must have, during the particular academic year achieved a mark of 40 in main assessment 2, main assessment 3 or the DCE, as well as meet one of the following two conditions:
  - The student's final mark before the DCE was 40 or more, and 50 or more was achieved in the DCE;
  - The student's final mark before the DCE was less than 40 and a new final mark of 50 or more was achieved, where the new final mark was calculated using the appropriate weighting formula (to combine the semester mark and two assessments)

in which the DCE mark was used together with the best of the previous main assessments.

- g) DCEs are normally not considered for project or assignment assessments.
- h) The new final mark after the DCE may not exceed 50. If a student does not pass the module after the DCE, his/her final mark remains unchanged.
- i) All DCEs are subject to internal moderation, in accordance with the University policy. The assessment of any ECSA GAs in a DCE must be externally moderated. If the DCE replaces an assessment that was externally moderated, then the DCE's question paper must also be externally moderated before the DCE and the scripts afterwards.
- j) The duration and character of the DCE should be similar to an examination question paper (for Examination modules), or the third main assessment (for Flexible Assessment modules). Alternatively, if the lecturers involved prefer it, the DCE may take the form of an oral assessment. At least two lecturers (normally the examiner and internal moderator) have to be present at the oral assessment. If the assessment is subject to external moderation, then the external must also observe the oral (it may be by telephone) and confirm his/her support for the result in writing or by email.

## **10 Responsibilities Regarding the Implementation of the Assessment Policy**

### **10.1 Responsibilities of the Student**

The student

- ensures that he/she is familiar with the rules and regulations given in the General (Part 1) Calendar;
- ensures that he/she is familiar with the provisions given in the module framework with respect to assessment in the specific module; and
- undertakes to give an honest and dutiful effort in the assessments.

### **10.2 Responsibilities of the Assessor (the lecturer)**

The assessor

- ensures that he/she is familiar with the rules and regulations given in the General (Part 1) Calendar;
- ensures that he/she is familiar with the provisions in these rules and any ancillary documents relevant for assessment in the specific context;
- makes a conscious effort to use the criteria for effective assessment in their own contexts;
- ensures that all information about how the assessments of the module will proceed, are explained in the module framework; and

- assumes responsibility, in collaboration with the Departmental Chair and the Programme Co-ordinator, for his/her own development and/or training in assessment skills.

### **10.3 Responsibilities of the Faculty**

The Engineering Faculty ensures, through the Programme Committee, that the requirements and provisions of these rules are interpreted and applied in accordance with the University's assessment policy and practices, and unique context of ECSA's prescriptions for assessment, as well as that they are realised in the assessment practices in the Faculty.

The Programme Committee of the Engineering Faculty is specifically responsible for

- the interpretation of the policy in terms of the requirements of the Faculty;
- the development and implementation of procedures for the promotion of effective practices related to assessment in the Faculty;
- the establishment of procedures and mechanisms to identify and resolve problems with the implementation of the assessment policy;
- ensuring that all categories of internal assessors receive appropriate training and/or development opportunities so that the requirements of the HEQC for assessment ability are satisfied.

### **10.4 Responsibilities of the Departmental Programme Coordinator**

The Departmental Programme Co-ordinator monitors the following aspects and takes action to follow up aspects that deserve attention:

- that assessment produces sufficient evidence that the outcomes of the programme are being achieved; and
- that appropriate assessment criteria and assessment methods are used.

The Departmental Programme Co-ordinator is the link between the Departmental Chairperson and departmental Management Committee, who assume overall responsibility for the programme(s) offered by the Department, and the Programme Committee of the Faculty.

### **10.5 Responsibilities of the Departmental Chair**

The Departmental Chair

- develops a monitoring system for the Department's assessment practices to ensure that they meet the requirements of the University's policy;
- identify procedures, mechanism and a learning support system to handle deviations from the University's assessment policy;
- monitors students' perceptions of the quality of their assessment by means of module and lecturer feedback, and develops a support system where the assessment is found to not meet a satisfactory standard; and

- ensures during appointments, as well as continuously, that lecturers involved in assessment of student learning have sufficient appropriate training and/or experience, specifically that at least one assessor in each module has good, relevant experience.

## **11 Prerequisites**

Corequisites, prerequisites and pass prerequisites are aimed at ensuring students have sufficient levels of prior knowledge to master a successive module. The University's general system of prerequisites is retained in these rules:

- Corequisite module: a student must have previously been registered for the module or be registered for it in parallel, irrespective of the performance in the module.
- Prerequisite module: in examination modules a class mark of at least 40 must be achieved, while in other modules a final mark of at least 40 must be achieved to meet a prerequisite.
- Pass prerequisite module: a final mark of at least 50 must be achieved in the module.

In some final year modules in the Faculty, admission to the final year or departmental approval is a prerequisite.

## **12 Concessions to repeaters**

In accordance with the section "Repeating a module" in Part 1 of the Calendar, in cases where a student repeats a module, the lecturer responsible for the module may grant exemption from some assessments to the student, if the module's home department allows such exemptions. If an exemption is granted to a student on this basis, then the lecturer may, subject to the module's home department's policy, choose one of the following methods to determine the student's class mark, semester mark and/or final mark:

- The mark that the student achieved in the relevant assessment at a previous occasion is used instead of the exempted assessment.
- The contribution that the particular assessment makes to the final mark is omitted and the composition of the final mark is adjusted accordingly.

Any exemption granted to a student, must be given in writing (e.g. on the customary form) to the student.