

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

SUBMISSION IDENTIFIERS:

Title	Additional procedures for independent moderation of all UKZN coursework modules
Author and position	For Teaching and Learning Strategy Group Prof Renuka Vithal (DVC: Teaching & Learning)

APPROVAL HISTORY

Structure consulted	Target date for discussion	Outcome
TLSG Feedback	7 June 2016/ 5 July 2016/	Reports considered
Additional Procedures	6 Sept 2016/ 4 Oct 2016	Inputs provided Supported
EDF (motivation for additional moderation procedures)	1 Sept 2016	Supported
Schools	Sept-Oct 2016	Inputs provided and amendments made
CAABs	11-19 Oct 2016	Supported
Senate	16 Nov 2016	Supported

SUBMISSION CONTENT

Proposal

To consider and support

Additional Procedures for Independent Moderation of all Coursework Modules

as an Annexure to "PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE EXAMINATION OF EXIT-LEVEL COURSEWORK MODULES"

to facilitate consistent university-wide implementation of all clauses of General Academic Rule 19 External examination and moderation:

“(a) Except with the permission of Senate, all modules shall be subject to internal examination and independent moderation.”

(b) Except with the permission of Senate, all exit-level modules shall additionally be subject to external examination after any supplementary examinations are completed.”

(c) The portion of the total assessment subject to independent moderation or external examination, in terms of (a) or (b) above, shall be at least 50%.”

Motivation

The implementation of consistent independent moderation procedures as set out in GR19 will assist in assuring quality and consistency in the delivery and outcomes of all modules across the University. This is especially important in the case of common modules taught by multiple staff and common modules taught on multiple campuses. This matter has arisen from a concern forwarded to TLSG from the CAAB of the College of Agriculture Engineering and Science related to different curricula and assessments used in teaching the same module on different campuses with vastly different outcomes in student performance. A preliminary investigation of this issue by College Deans: T&L in their respective Colleges shows this to be a challenge that is more wide spread than was expected.

The document on "PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE EXAMINATION OF EXIT-LEVEL COURSEWORK MODULES", recently approved by Senate and effective from January 2016, already spells out both independent moderation and external examination principles and procedures. Hence, these additional moderation procedures, clarifies these further and addresses gaps to facilitate and ensure university-wide implementation.

Some Schools and Colleges already engage module moderation practices. Therefore, these additional independent moderation procedures regularises common good practices and contributes to quality assurance and enhancement across the system by ensuring they are applied more consistently.

For example, moderation (and external examination) procedures that all examination papers and assessments should reflect the names and affiliations of examiner(s), moderators and external examiners (where applicable) for each module, which is currently a practice implemented in some schools, is hereby extended across all Schools and Colleges as a quality practice.

These additional independent moderation procedures, which complement those stipulated for external examinations, will contribute to independent moderator reports being produced and reflected upon (in much the same way as external examiners reports for exit-level modules are reviewed) and ensure standards are maintained in a cycle of continuous improvement.

Financial implications

N/A

Attachment

1. Annexure to "PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE EXAMINATION OF EXIT-LEVEL COURSEWORK MODULES":
Additional Procedures for Independent Moderation of all Coursework Modules"
2. PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE EXAMINATION OF EXIT-LEVEL COURSEWORK MODULES

**Annexure to PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE
EXAMINATION OF EXIT-LEVEL COURSEWORK MODULES
Additional Procedures for Independent Moderation of all
Coursework Modules**

Purpose: To ensure implementation of all clauses of Academic General Rule 19 External examination and moderation:

“(a) Except with the permission of Senate, all modules shall be subject to internal examination and independent moderation.”

(b) Except with the permission of Senate, all exit-level modules shall additionally be subject to external examination after any supplementary examinations are completed.”

(c) The portion of the total assessment subject to independent moderation or external examination, in terms of (a) or (b) above, shall be at least 50%.”

1. All modules shall be subject to internal moderation after the final examination, and after the supplementary examination; and shall be completed before external examination of all exit-level modules.
2. An efficient administration system for independent moderation of all modules shall be operational in all Schools to ensure independent moderation procedures are timeously and efficiently followed.
3. One independent moderator shall be formally appointed for each single module to assure quality, standards and consistency, (irrespective of the module being offered on different campuses, by different academics or different schools).
4. Independent moderators shall serve for a period of three years to ensure some continuity, but also to allow for diversity of input and for fair and equitable opportunity to serve as moderator by all academics.
5. The internal examiner or the co-ordinating examiner shall recommend independent moderators for approval to the respective Academic Leaders and shall do so before the module is taught.
6. The names of approved internal examiners, independent moderators and external examiners (where applicable) shall appear on all module-related examinations, assessments and materials such as module outlines.
7. Independent moderation procedures shall follow the procedures stipulated for external examination.
8. Implementation responsibilities for independent moderation and moderators, including reporting responsibilities, shall follow those stipulated for external examination and examiners at Discipline/Programme, School, and College levels.

end



**PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES
FOR THE EXAMINATION OF EXIT-LEVEL COURSEWORK MODULES**

Name:	Principles and Procedures for the Examination of Exit-Level Coursework Modules	
Reference Number: (supplied by the Office of the Registrar)		
Originator/Author: (name and position)	Prof R Vithal (DVC: Teaching and Learning) Prof S Essack (Dean: Teaching & Learning, College of Health Sciences)	
Custodians: (position/office)	College Deans (Teaching and Learning) College Deans (Research)	
Approved by:	Structure: Senate	Date:
Effective date:	2016	
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Implementation responsibility:	School Teaching and Learning Committees; School Research & Higher Degrees Committees; School Boards	
Implementation procedures approved by:	Structure: Senate	Date:
Monitored by:	College Academic Affairs Boards	

PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE EXAMINATION OF EXIT-LEVEL COURSEWORK MODULES

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PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE EXAMINATION OF EXIT-LEVEL COURSEWORK MODULES

1. Purpose

The Principles and Procedures for the Examination of Exit-Level Modules assures the quality of assessment practices through the moderation and examination of undergraduate and postgraduate exit-level coursework modules by independent peer academics who are external to the University. Through external examinations, the examination itself, related procedures and their outcomes are benchmarked externally, to promote assessment best practices and innovations.

2. Introduction and Background

The need for principles and procedures for the external examination of exit-level modules was identified following a review of examiners' reports received by Schools. The report, which analysed examiners reports from all Schools, was tabled at Senate in November 2014 and contained a recommendation that such a document be developed. This was approved by Senate (12 November 2014).

These Principles and Procedures for the Examination of Exit-Level Modules give effect to the Policy for Assessment in assuring the quality of assessment practices at the University by:

- the external examination of all exit-level coursework modules to maintain nationally and internationally benchmarked standards of UKZN programmes qualifications, and,
- ensuring that Schools and Colleges consistently implement the principles and Procedures across all taught undergraduate and postgraduate exit-level modules to continuously enhance quality teaching and learning.

It should also be noted that the external examination processes of modules were amended when a new sessional dates structure was introduced in 2009. These were also reviewed by Quality Promotions and Assurance in 2010 (see the report "*Evaluation*

of the new sessional dates structure at UKZN", Senate 3 November 2010). The main change was that the supplementary examinations were brought forward closer to the main examinations and served as a rewrite examination. This led to exit-level modules being both internally moderated by an independent internal moderator after the main exam and externally examined only after the supplementary examinations to assure overall quality of the assessments.

3. Definitions

3.1 Assessment: The evaluation and grading of work, supervised or unsupervised, carried out by a student in satisfying the requirements of a module (General Academic Rules: Definitions of Terms).

3.2 Coursework modules refer to the taught components of all coursework degrees specified in the curriculum and do not include the dissertation or project modules (General Academic Rules: Definitions of Terms).

3.3 Examination means a formal assessment, conducted within an officially designated examination session, usually invigilated, and bound by time constraints (General Academic Rules: Definitions of Terms).

3.4 Exit-level module means a module at the highest level required by the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) for a qualification (General Academic Rules: Definitions of Terms).

3.5 External examination means examination by a person, external to the university, who has not been involved with teaching including supervision at the University during the previous three (3) years (General Academic Rules: Definitions of Terms). The **external examiner** is an independent academic in the same/cognate discipline that has the relevant expert knowledge or specialization in the module content and pedagogy, to independently assure the quality of assessments as aligned to the module outcomes, exit level programme outcomes and assessment criteria and methods. S/he is formally

appointed as the external examiner, and is external to the University either at a national or international level.

3.6 Internal examination means examination by a person or persons involved with the teaching of the relevant module in that semester or, in the case of postgraduate qualifications, is a member of the University academic staff including persons who hold honorary appointments in the University other than the supervisor(s) (General Academic Rules: Definitions of Terms). The **internal examiner** is the academic responsible for teaching on and undertaking the formative and continuous/summative assessments for the module allocated to him/her according to the Teaching Workload Framework. A module may have more than one teacher and hence examiner.

3.7 Independent moderation means examination by a person, internal or external to the university, who has not been involved with the teaching of the relevant module in that semester (General Academic Rules: Definitions of Terms). **Moderator** is an independent academic in the same/cognate discipline that has the relevant expert knowledge or specialization in the module content and pedagogy to independently assure the quality of assessments as aligned to the module outcomes, exit level programme outcomes and assessment criteria and methods. S/he is formally appointed as the moderator, has not been involved in teaching on the module and is usually internal to the University.

4. Scope

The Principles and Procedures for the Examination of Exit-Level Modules are applicable to all taught exit-level coursework undergraduate and postgraduate modules, i.e. all final year undergraduate modules and all taught Postgraduate Diploma, Honours and Masters modules taken at the highest level required by the programme (see Definitions).

These principles and procedures for the examination of exit-level coursework modules should be read and applied in conjunction with the Policy on Teaching & Learning, the Policy on Assessment and General Academic Rule 19 "External Examination and

Moderation". In addition the Quality Promotions and Assurance report on the "Evaluation of the new sessional dates structure at UKZN" together with its appendices on the examination and moderation processes, which was supported by Senate on 3 November 2010, have been integrated into these principles and procedures.

The research project or dissertation component of qualifications is subject to the principles and procedures for examination of dissertations and theses as articulated by the relevant postgraduate and research policies.

5. Principles

- 5.1 All exit-level undergraduate and postgraduate coursework modules (as defined in the General Academic Rules) shall be internally moderated and externally examined (GR 19b).
- 5.2 For all exit-level modules at least 50% of the total module assessment shall be externally examined or independently moderated (GR 19c).
- 5.3 The independent moderation/external examination has two distinct aspects:- the moderation of the examination paper/assessment task in relation to the module content learning outcomes and assessment criteria prior to these being finalized; and after the exam to assess whether marking has been fair, accurate, consistent and whether the module learning outcomes are demonstrated.
- 5.4 External examiners with necessary and sufficient independence and academic standing shall be appointed upon meeting the following eligibility criteria.
External examiners:
 - 5.4.1 are academic peers who hold a qualification at least one level above the level of module being examined ;
 - 5.4.2 are normally members of national or international higher education institutions or equivalent;
 - 5.4.3 have expert knowledge and/or specialization in the same or cognate discipline;
 - 5.4.4 have not been involved in teaching or supervising at the University in the preceding 3 years (see Definitions).

- 5.5 External examiners shall be appointed for a maximum period of three years to ensure some continuity, but also to allow for diversity of input through the appointment of external examiners from different institutions.
- 5.6 Equity criteria shall be considered for all appointments of external examiners.
- 5.7 An efficient administration system for external examinations shall be operational in all Schools to ensure all external examination procedures are timeously and efficiently followed.
- 5.8 External examiners shall receive and examine all relevant documentation related to the examination, student scripts, results and module information in order to provide a holistic report once after the supplementary examinations.
- 5.9 External examiners' and moderators' reports shall be reviewed by line managers immediately after each examination is completed; and cumulatively reviewed at least biannually by the School Board. Appropriate intervention/action shall be taken where indicated by external examiners to improve teaching, learning and assessment of the module/programme.
- 5.10 External examinations shall ensure validity of examinations by confirming that an assessment assesses what it claims to assess.
- 5.11 There shall be good inter-examiner reliability between the internal examiner, moderator and external examiner (i.e. the same results when marking the same work on different occasions).
- 5.12 Transparency in assessment results produced shall be promoted by the internal examiner, moderator and external examiners' reports being openly and robustly discussed at School Examination Board meetings and other appropriate School and College structures.

6. Procedures

- 6.1 **All exit level modules must have a formally appointed internal examiner, internal moderator and external examiner¹.**

¹ For clinical examinations in the Health Sciences, there must be an internal examiner, an academic/clinician involved with student supervision a moderator and an external examiner.

- 6.2 External examinations must be pre-determined, planned and communicated at the beginning of the module; and examiners must be appointed before the module is offered.
- 6.3 Moderators and external examiners must be provided with the examination papers/assessment tasks, marking memoranda/model answers, and mark sheets together with the module outline/guideline/template, including learning outcomes and assessment criteria and any course pack/materials (as appropriate). External examiners must receive documentation for both the main and supplementary examination.
- 6.4 Moderators and external examiners must in respect of the examination paper /assessment tasks (including portfolios):
- 6.4.1 be satisfied that the examination questions paper(s)/assessment tasks as a whole are reflective of the summative evaluation as stipulated in the module / programme outcomes and that it constitutes a representative assessment of the field covered by the module or the content which has been agreed to for purposes of the examination; and must recommend changes/adjustments where necessary;
 - 6.4.2 assess the standard of examination papers/questions/assessment tasks and confirm that the time and mark allocations are appropriate; and
 - 6.4.3 return the examined question paper(s)/assessment tasks, signed and marked "Private and Confidential".
- 6.5 **Moderators and external examiners must in respect of the student scripts:**
- 6.5.1 **moderate/examine all scripts if less than 20; for 21-200 scripts, moderate/examine at least 15 scripts, or 15% of scripts (whichever is greater), and moderate/examine 10% of scripts for numbers exceeding 200;**
 - 6.5.2 **moderate/examine a representative sample (across the range of marks), including borderline, highest and lowest marks;**
 - 6.5.3 **be satisfied with regard to the fairness, accuracy and consistency of the marking by the internal examiner(s) (and by moderators in the case of external examiners);**

- 6.5.4 confirm whether the marks awarded are a fair reflection of the students' performance;
 - 6.5.5 critically review those cases specifically requested by the internal examiner(s), and submit a report on student scripts and marks found to be of concern, as appropriate;
 - 6.5.6 return the externally examined scripts, marks sheet(s) completed and signed, together with the confidential report, within seven working days of having received the scripts; and
 - 6.5.7 report any anticipated delay in examining scripts, through illness or other causes, to the internal examiner /Academic Leader as soon as possible.
- 6.6 Moderators and external examiners must submit a confidential report in the format (as per each College approved template) required by the University; to specifically comment on cases where there are differences of more than 10% between the total marks awarded by the examiners in each paper; and report on any other matter that s/he may wish to draw to the attention of the University in relation to the quality of the examinations, or the module generally.
- 6.7 External examiners must submit a claim for the honorarium and expenses incurred, on the prescribed claim form to the Manager: School Operations.

7. Implementation Responsibilities

7.1 Discipline/Programme Level

- 7.1.1 The internal examiner or the coordinating examiner² must recommend external examiners of exit-level modules and at least one alternate together with their CVs and acceptance notes to serve in this capacity to the respective Academic Leader before the module is taught.
- 7.1.2 Academic Leaders Research approve Masters Coursework Exit-level modules; and Academic Leaders Teaching and Learning approve all other exit-level modules.

² Where a module is taught by more than one academic, the academic who has undertaken most of the teaching of the module or the one appointed as the coordinating examiner by the Academic Leader will be responsible for all processes related to internal examination.

- 7.1.3 The Academic Leader who approves the external examiners recommended by the internal examiner, tables the list of approved examiners at the respective School Teaching and Learning/Research and Higher Degrees Committee for noting.
- 7.1.4 Once appointed, the internal examiner (or coordinating examiner) must:
- 7.1.4.1 compile a folder with the examination question paper(s) /assessment tasks, the marking memorandum/model answer of both the main and supplementary exam together with the module outline/guideline/template, learning outcome, assessment criteria and any course pack/materials (as appropriate) and forward to the moderator and external examiner(s) timeously in order to meet University deadlines for submission of examination papers;
 - 7.1.4.2 ensure the scripts are marked within the prescribed time period; prepare and retain copies of mark sheets for the Discipline having verified accuracy of mark capture before moderation; and, after internal moderation of the main exam, ensure moderated marks are accurately captured on SMS before the module is closed;
 - 7.1.4.3 send or arrange to send, within seven working (7) days of the writing of the supplementary examinations, the marked scripts of both the main and supplementary exams to the external examiner together with all relevant documentation;
 - 7.1.4.4 receive all externally examined examination scripts, results, reports and documentation from external examiners and moderators;
 - 7.1.4.5 consider, incorporate and/or discuss all recommendations/adjustments proposed by the external examiner, with the line manager.

7.2 School Level

- 7.2.1 The School Teaching and Learning/Research and Higher Degrees Committee notes all external examiners' appointments and reports to ensure adherence to policy, principles and procedures;
- 7.2.2 Once approved and noted, the School is responsible for all logistics of sending documents to and receiving documents from the external examiner;

- 7.2.3 The Academic Leader: Teaching and Learning /Research must review all appointments of external examiners and examiners reports biannually and produce a report for the School Board;
- 7.2.4 The School Board must consider external examiner reports biannually and ensure appropriate intervention/action is taken where indicated

7.3 College Level

- 7.3.1 The College Dean: Teaching and Learning /Research must review all external examination reports of exit-level modules tabled at School Boards biannually and produce a report for the College.
- 7.3.2 The College Academic Affairs Board must consider consolidated exit-level module external examination report biannually as a standing agenda item.

7.4 University Level

The Teaching and Learning Strategy Group must review all College exit-level module external examination reports and produce a report for Senate tri-annually.