

eAssessment Guidelines to Faculties and COLL during COVID-19

1. Assessment

The attached SENEX submission to convert Examination-based Courses to Continuous Assessment Courses refers. This submission was approved at a Special SENEX meeting on 26th May 2020 and should be implemented with immediate effect. Students should be informed on how the assessment will be administered.

2. Plagiarism and Deduction of Marks

Students should be informed that marks will be deducted if they do not adhere to the rules of the University according to Rule AC3.2.

All assignments should be submitted through Turnitin, the similarity software that is integrated into the MOODLE Learning Management System. If plagiarism is detected, marks should be deducted as follows:

% Similarity Detected	FCI	FNRSS	% Marks Deduction
0 – 20	10% - PhD 15% - Masters 20% - Other	10% - Honours and above 15% - Third Year 20% - First & Second Year	0
20 – 40			10
40 – 60			25
60 – 100			100

*** Please note that the % shown above is an average % for all Faculties and should be used as a Guideline.**

Assignments found with a similarity report above 20%, will not be allowed to apply for a remark or a re-check of marks. For students who fall into the 60-100% similarities group, Rule AC3.2 will apply, and the misconduct procedure will start.

Kindly note the difference between similarity and plagiarism.

- The Turnitin software detects the similarity and assists staff and students with academic integrity. It should be used as follow:
 - Pay attention to the repository setting. It should be set to “no repository” to avoid self-plagiarism. Please note that the submitted work is compared with existing information in the database and other work that is available on the internet, such as electronic journals, websites, and internet resources.
- Turnitin should not be seen as a system that detects plagiarism, but it generates a similarity report. It identifies text matches and therefore guides staff and students to pay attention to certain areas. A high text match does not indicate plagiarism, but rather a match with existing content in the database. A low-level match, on the other hand, might be plagiarised work, which Turnitin could not detect, because it is from a source that cannot be accessed or not available in the database.
 - Set the error margin not to detect references.
 - Use it as a guide and open the report to look at the similarity before assessing the work of students.

- Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own and by failing to include quotations or give the appropriate citation by not adequately acknowledging an author of a source (NUST Policy on Plagiarism, 2020).
- Lecturers are strongly encouraged to assess if the detected similarities are actually plagiarised materials. If they found that the materials are plagiarised, then they should take action as indicated in Rule AC3.2.

3. Assessment Submission

All assessments (assignments, projects and activities) should be submitted on the Learning Management System (LMS), MOODLE, to ensure that it goes through the Turnitin software to check for similarity. Assessments should be typed and submitted in MS Word or PDF format. Please note that students should not submit an assignment as a JPG or any other image format, because Turnitin cannot read images.

4. Number of Assessments

SENEX at its Special meeting on 26th May 2020 approved the request to convert exam-based courses to continuous assessment courses and to reduce the number of assessments for continuous assessment courses as follow:

- a. exam-based courses are converted to continuous diversified assessment courses;
- b. the number of assessments for both existing continuous assessment courses and converted exam-based courses to continuous assessment courses are reduced from a minimum of four (4) assessments as per current regulation to three (3) assessments to ensure a consistent and equal number of assessments for all students; and
- c. the maximum number of continuous assessments are restricted to only three (3) for courses without any assessment administered by the time of the mid-term semester break to ensure successful and timely completion for such courses within the approved Revised Academic Calendar during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further note that 50% of the weight of the assessments should be conducted under controlled conditions. The 50% can be different assessments, for example: two tests, but it should be conducted under controlled conditions. These conditions should be similar to those under which the institutional examinations are conducted. Controlled conditions include the following:

- Timed tests on the MOODLE Platform;
- Structured questions that students answer on paper using a cam scanner and upload it after the test within 15 minutes; and/or
- Using software that block/restrict the use of any applications on a student's device.

5. Supplementary Assessments for Semester 1

A minimum of three assessments is set for this semester and it is up to the discretion of the lecturer for the make-up and supplementary assessment according to these eAssessment Guidelines. It is important that there is consistency within a Faculty and its respective Departments, and that these Guidelines are adhered to by all lecturing staff. This should be communicated to part-time staff as well.

Please note the following distinction between the make-up and supplementary assessment:

- Students, who have missed one or more of the written (test) assessments, will be allowed access to the make-up assessment. The make-up assessment mark will replace the missed test mark. In the case of more than one missed test, the make-up assessment mark will replace the missed test mark which carries the highest weight.

- Students, who have missed an assignment even with the grace period allowed with a valid reason, will be allowed an additional assignment.
- Students, who have done all assessments and did not obtain the final mark of 50% to pass the course, will be allowed access to the supplementary assessment. The mark for the supplementary assessment will replace the written (test) assessment mark which carries the highest weight. However, the final mark may not be more than 50% in the course for such a student.

6. Moderation of Final Assessment

Kindly ensure that 50% of the weighting of the assessments that will be conducted under controlled conditions should be moderated according to the NUST Examinations Procedures Guidelines. These Guidelines stipulate that:

A minimum of 20 scripts, or 10% of the total, whichever is the greater, must be sent for moderation.

Please ensure that:

- The assessments that will count 50% of the weighting must be moderated before the students do the assessment(s). Please include the memorandum as well for moderation.
- A Moderators Report should be completed and sent together with the assessment and memorandum (marking guide) to the Department.
- A Moderators Report should accompany the moderated scripts as well, once it is completed.

7. Time Allocation for Online Assessments & Types of Assessments

- Kindly ensure that enough time is provided to students to complete the online assessments.
- Use a variety of assessments to assess the students during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example:
 - a. Quizzes
 - b. Multiple choice
 - c. Short answer
 - d. Essay
 - e. Project
 - f. Portfolio
 - g. Presentation
 - h. Paper
 - i. Case studies

Please note that marks should not be awarded for online class attendance.

Students should not be denied the opportunity to submit an assessment if the student was unable to attend a virtual class/online class through MsTeams/Zoom.

All virtual/online classes should be recorded and availed to students after the class in preparation for their assessments. All avenues and possible media should be used to assist and support students, such as email, SMS, WhatsApp messages, Microsoft Teams, or Zoom.

Kindly use the above Guidelines to avoid confusion. Should you need any further assistance and/or clarity, please do contact your relevant Associate Dean: Teaching and Learning or the Centre for Open and Lifelong Learning (COLL): Deputy Director.