



SABARAGAMUWA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

Policy Title – Policy on Alternative Assessments of Undergraduate Program, SUSL

Policy Number –

Effective Date –

Revised Dates –

Approving Authority – The Council, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

Administrative Responsibility –Registrar (Examination), Heads of Departments, Deans of the Faculties, Faculty Boards, Vice Chancellor, Senate, Council

Overview

Current global pandemic situation of Covid 19 has imposed a severe negative impact on higher education by closing universities for long time and discontinuing the academic programmes. In order to overcome this issue, the country is now adapting to the new normal situation by using various alternative measures and it is required to apply the same kind of alternative measures in the higher education sector as well to re activate the teaching and learning process. As a result, instead of the face to face (physical) teaching learning process, online teaching and learning practices have been successfully adopted to the system to have an uninterrupted university education. In order to continue the academic activities in this manner, it is utmost important to introduce an alternative assessment method also to evaluate the students to enable them to complete the academic programmes on time. Considering the fact that the gathering of large number of students at a time for a written examination is impossible due to the present pandemic situation, the online assessment system has been identified as the best alternative measure to be adopted to assure the continues functioning of the higher education system.. The objective of this policy is to introduce the online assessment system to the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka.

Purpose

Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka wishes to enact this policy in line with the guidelines given by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in order to continue the academic activities without interruption and without much delay due to the Covid 19 pandemic. This policy assures the smooth functioning of university academic programmes by implementing an online student evaluation system to replace the existing paper examination method.

Scope

This policy shall apply to all undergraduate courses (in all faculties), offered by the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, which are evaluated by any form of online assessment method/s.

Legislative context:

This policy is supported by the Commission Circular No 11/2020; guidelines for conducting alternative assessments in Universities and HEIs.

Definitions

- a. Assessment - any processes that appraise an individual's knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills
- b. Assignment - any form of assessment other than examinations
- c. Examiner - the member of the academic staff who is responsible for the mode of Assessment and the grades to be granted in a Course
- d. ILOs- Intended learning out comes
- e. Online assessment- use of internet bases tools for assessment
- f. Quality - The term 'quality' implies the highest standards and relevance in excellence in undergraduate and post graduate degree programmes to strengthen the ranking at national and global scale
- g. Take-home Examination - an examination that is to be written by students outside of a regular examination setting
- h. UGC- University Grants Commission
- i. University – Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

Policy statement

1. Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka ensures all study programs and courses to integrate with online assessment methods to evaluate undergraduates.

2. Different online methods can be used to evaluate a particular course as decided by the particular department, subsequently by the faculty board and the Senate. For individual subject, multiple methods of online assessment can be used to ensure proper evaluation of the student. There should be more than one method for each course evaluation. Type of alternative assessment to be introduced for a particular course should cover both the summative and formative assessments.
3. Such methods can be case studies, essays, extensive oral examination (viva Voce), multi-choice questions, structured questions, open book examination, writing a review or a short communication on a particular topic, creating a podcast, creating a poster or infographic, programming (code and video), preparing questionnaires, presentations (video presentations), narrated PowerPoint presentations, projects, timed online exams, take home examinations, student portfolios, quizzes, mini projects, team based assessments, time-restricted oral presentations, developing blogs by individual students and groups, discussion forums, and etc.
4. Selected online assessment methods should meet the learning outcomes as expected in approved curriculum and all forms of Assessment shall be conducted in such a manner as to preserve academic integrity.
5. When deciding on the Online Assessment methods, it is important to consider the intended learning outcomes (ILOs). But in case it is impossible to assess said ILOs online due to its complexity it is necessary to revisit them and simplify the ILOs by disintegrating to sub ILOs which can be assessed online.
6. The Faculty Board and the senate can decide the weightages given for the assessment components. There is a possibility of increasing the marks allocated for continuous assessment up to 60 %. Assign appropriate weightage for individual assessments based on the course and the assessment method should be valid, reliable, fair and feasibility/practicable.
7. It is necessary to prepare online assessment plan for each course. Assessment schedule should be checked by scrutiny board for several aspects such as validity, reliability, fairness and practicability.
8. Students should be informed clearly on the changes in the assessment criteria well in advanced. It is necessary to make them aware on assessment methods, criteria for grading at the beginning of the course; first week itself to avoid any unnecessary consequences. Further they should be well informed about the examination schedule, model, duration, types of questions and number of questions as well.
9. Students should be given sufficient time for adjustment to the new evaluation method and clear comprehensive instructions on all aspects of the operation (such as file formats and the number of attempts allowed) and completion of the online assessment.

- 10.** While maintaining the standard or the quality of the assessment, the students should be treated fairly.
- 11.** It is necessary to ensure that the students are provided with sufficient time to complete their written Assignments prior to the commencement of the final online examinations.
- 12.** In case of assignment base assessments the penalties approved by the Faculty Board and Senate for late submitted assignments must be stated clearly and communicated well to the students.
- 13.** Student must sign and agreed to an academic integrity declaration of the University to ensure that the submitted online assessments are his/her own work and not communicated with any person or organization before the submission. If it is confirmed as a plagiarized / copied task, products of commercial writing services there will be academic penalty for the student, treating as an exam offence.
- 14.** If the student is unwilling to take part the online assessment method, the faculty may provide the student to defer the assessments until the immediate next semester or academic year without academic penalty as decided by the respective Faculty Board and the Senate.
- 15.** There should be provision for holding an alternative exam if the student could not be complete the examination due to justifiable reason/s. Reasonable adjustments should be made to accommodate students with special needs such as connectivity and accessibility.
- 16.** Students should be well aware on the procedure and any contact person in case of technical difficulties during the online examination.
- 17.** The staff should properly be aware on available on line assessment methods and facilities, rules and regulations, sound assessment practices to be used.
- 18.** Examination can be conducted via different methods, preferably through Zoom. But in case of failures in the decided method, there should be some alternatives available and it is necessary to inform students on this alternative methods in case of failures of selected method. In such situation it is necessary to keep some time period to resolve the technical issues without harming the examination procedures.
- 19.** Records of the examination should be kept secured wherever possible. Evaluations can be done as an individual (single examiner) or as a group of examiners depend on the type of evaluation according to the decision taken by the relevant authorities (Faculty Board and the Senate).
- 20.** Faculties may develop a policy pertaining to the online assessments methods for individual faculty in line with the university online assessment policy and the Commission Circular No 11/2020; guidelines for conducting alternative assessments in in Universities HEIs.

- 21.** Faculties should take the responsibility of maintaining the quality assurance (QA) of the online assessment of learning.
- 22.** On Senate and Governing Council approval of this policy, the policy will be added to the university policy data base and makes it available for the reference of students, academics and for other relevant parties.
- 23.** Regular review of the policy is necessary in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at faculty and institutional level and amendments should be done as required.

Supporting Documents:

- a. Commission Circular No 11/2020; guidelines for conducting Alternative Assessments in in Universities HEIs.
- b. Evaluation and Assessment policy document for online teaching (2020) - Document prepared by Department of Computing and information systems, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka.
- c. Curriculum

Responsibility: Academic Departments, Faculties and Faculty Boards of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

Promulgation:

- i. This policy will be circulated as a printed document among all the faculties and will be available in faculty websites
- ii. Will appear in the QA (Quality Assurance) section of the university Website
- iii. Will appear in the University Web site
- iv. Will be available in the Examination Branch
- v. Will be circulated among students

Implementation:

This policy (Alternative Assessment) will be implemented by each Faculty, selecting the best suitable criteria of assessments for individual courses offered by the Faculty with the recommendation of the respective Faculty boards and the approval of the University Senate.

**March 2021,
Centre for Quality Assurance,
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka.**