



**The Mico University College**  
DO IT WITH THY MIGHT

# ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT POLICY

EFFECTIVE: JAN 2019

1a Marescaux Road  
Kingston 5, Jamaica  
[themico.edu.jm/policies](http://themico.edu.jm/policies)

The Mico University College

**ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT POLICY**

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## CHANGE HISTORY

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*For more information about policy development, consult the Policy Formulation and Management Policy on The Mico website at [themico.edu.jm/policies](http://themico.edu.jm/policies).*

## PLEASE NOTE

This document was developed to provide students, staff and other stakeholders with the policy position of The Mico University College and guidance on operations within the institution. Every care was taken to cover all facets within the scope of the policy and eliminate errors. Any comments, queries and suggestions may be sent - using your official email address of The Mico - to the manager of the Office of Accountability listed in the front table on the previous page of this document.

The Mico University College reserves the right to alter, amend or modify sections of this policy document in response to institutional or national needs, and is committed to doing so on a regular basis. Any amendments that are to take effect before the release of the next edition of this policy will be communicated through The Mico's email system using email addresses with [themico.edu.jm](http://themico.edu.jm) domain in addition to any other appropriate means.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As part of its teaching and learning activities, the institution will ensure that its assessment processes determine the extent to which students have adequately mastered elements of the Course / Programme, at the requisite standards, and hence allow them to perform to the best of their abilities, to support their learning and academic development. With a high proportion of our programmes being in teacher training, assessment practices in the institution seek to exemplify and model the assessment practices that students are expected to employ when teaching.

Assessment is the systematic process of appraising a student's work – coursework or examination (written, practical or oral) – using empirical data to determine the student's performance against specific standards, attainment of learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria.

The types of Assessment are:

- i) *Diagnostic*. This assesses a student's strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills prior to instruction. It provides a baseline from which to work.
- ii) *Formative*. This assesses a student's performance during instruction, normally done regularly throughout the instruction period. It has a developmental purpose and therefore gives constructive and instructive feedback to the student that can be used to improve performance within the same course. It does not necessarily carry a grade, except as a commonly understood measure of attainment as part of the feedback to the student.
- iii) *Summative*. This assesses a student's performance at the end of the instruction period and therefore contributes to the final grade to provide a measure of student achievement in relation to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- iv) *Norm-referenced*. This compares a student's performance against that of other students. Also called rank-based assessment.
- v) *Criterion-referenced*. This measures a student's performance against a specific, measurable set of standards or objectives.
- vi) *Mastery-based grading*. Students assessed for competencies in a particular set of skills, not receiving a precise numeric grade (such as a percentage) but is said to have attained a particular level, e.g. Beginning, Emerging, Developing, Approaching, Proficient, Advanced. Also called standards-based.
- vii) *Interim/Benchmark Assessment*. This evaluates student performance at periodic intervals, frequently at the end of a grading period. Can usually predict student performance on end-of-semester summative assessments.

## 2. PURPOSE

The Academic Assessment Policy provides a comprehensive statement of the principles and processes that govern the design and management of student academic assessment within the University College. The policy will also provide a framework and guidelines for the assessment processes to:

- encourage, motivate and involve students in extensive learning;



- provide a fair and reliable measure of students' performance, knowledge, competencies and skills against the learning outcomes and discipline pedagogy/andragogy;
- help students to develop, through timely and constructive feedback; and
- give stakeholders confidence that a student has achieved the necessary standard, giving a reliable and consistent basis for their award.

### 3. SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all academic and learning support staff, including those involved in the design, approval and review of courses; and shall also apply to all undergraduate and graduate courses, offered by the University College, which have a duration of more than six (6) weeks. The assessment principles may be modified for courses with a duration of less than six (6) weeks. This policy shall apply to all courses, regardless of the nature of the assessment types or the manner of determining final grades.

### 4. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy:

- i) **Assessment brief:** Guidance provided for students on how to complete a specific item of assessed, to include information about the nature of the task, the format for presentation, and assessment criteria, and, if used, the marking.
- ii) **Assessment criteria:** Conditions reflecting the learning outcomes of the module/course that are required to successfully complete an assessment item. These may be generic in nature or may reflect the specific assessment item set and are commonly organised into rubrics or mark schemes.
- iii) **Assessment item:** A single, discrete piece of assessed work, e.g. an essay, project, field report, or examination, which may be divided into parts that are completed at different times. Assessment items should be valid, reliable and authentic:
  - **validity** relates to the need to ensure that the assessment task measures student attainment of the intended learning outcomes
  - **reliability** relates to the need to ensure that the assessment is accurate in what it measures and is repeatable
  - **authenticity** relates to the design of assessments that require students to demonstrate skills and capabilities that represent problems and situations likely to be encountered in the 'real' world.
- iv) **Coursework item:** A piece of work assigned to a student as part of a course of study, other than examination, normally completed ahead of the final examination period for the semester.
- v) **Course Team (Setting):** Lecturers that:
  - facilitate the same course to different groups of students'
  - scrutinize and approve assessment items before they are assigned and ensure that the marking of those items are standardised;



- assure the appropriate standards for modules/courses.
- vi) **Course** A series of instruction on a particular subject that can be effectively assessed. Each course has a unique title and alphanumeric sequence by which it is identified.
- vii) **Evaluation** The process of making judgement based on criteria and evidence.
- viii) **Examinations Board** A committee convened and chaired by the Dean of Faculty; other members include the Asst. Registrar – Examinations, Asst. Registrar – Admissions and Registration, Heads of Departments for the programmes for which the board is convened, to:
- review students’ profile at the end of the academic year and make decisions regarding progression;
  - confirm eligibility for awards on the basis of accumulated credit and that students nominated for the award meet the award-specific requirements and recommend to the Academic Board the appropriate award be granted.
- ix) **Examiner (First)** Faculty/lecturer (including adjunct staff) who is responsible for the mode of assessment and the grades to be granted in a course.
- x) **Faculty** A group of academic departments concerned with a major division of study / knowledge. In this policy the School of Continuing Studies and the Graduate School of Education are regarded as Faculties.
- Where the term begins with a lower case “f” or where the context dictates, the term denotes academic staff.
- xi) **Grade descriptors:** Explanation in broad terms the typical performance required to achieve a particular band of marks or degree class, and are linked to assessment criteria. The University College publishes generic grade descriptors for undergraduate and postgraduate work to be used by course teams as a reference point or benchmark in establishing assessment criteria.
- xii) **Grading system:** A system used to measure student attainment against established standards that may also be used to rank students’ performance.
- Grading systems used at The Mico may be numeric (e.g. percentage), alpha/letter (A to E), pass/fail (especially for zero-credit modules) or standards-based/competency-based (mastery grading).
- xiii) **Lecturer or faculty** A member of the academic staff responsible for a course (including the delivery and the assessment of students taking the course). In this regard, “faculty” is written with lower case “f” to denote academic staff.
- xiv) **Marking scheme:** A detailed framework for assigning marks, where a specific number of marks is given to individual components of the assessment.
- xv) **Moderation:** Process to assure assessment criteria, and thus academic standards, have been applied consistently and that assessment outcomes are fair and reliable. Summative assessment is subject to internal and external moderation:
- Internal moderation:** a process of professional engagement by University College staff to demonstrate that the grades awarded are reliable and consistent to ensure



parity of standards; normally carried out through blind or non-blind double marking on a sample basis.

**External moderation:** a process of objective engagement by experienced academic peers, independent of the University (external examiners), to ensure that the level of achievement of students reflects the required academic standards and is comparable to similar programmes nationally.

- xvi) **Official Examination Period:** The examination period identified and scheduled on the University College's calendar.
- xvii) **Reassessment:** Assessment items required to retrieve an initial failure in an examination, course work item or other summative assessment.
- xviii) **Test:** A product that measures a particular behaviour or set of objectives. The conditions of the test ensure that the product or process assessed is entirely representative of the student's own work and does not utilise unauthorised external or supplementary assistance.
- While the University College uses a variety of tests to examine students' performance, its assessment process are more than tests. The assessment of students, are interpreted to construct the student's profile and to aid in the student's development.
- xix) **Verification:** The process used to ensure the form and content of assessment tasks and associated briefs are appropriate, fair and valid, reflecting the learning outcomes and presenting an appropriate level of challenge in terms of academic standards.

## 5. POLICY STATEMENT

Assessment is an integral part of courses and programmes of The Mico. Items and protocols of assessment must be meaningful, developmental and transferrable so that the student is able to learn from the experience, develop higher order skills and apply principles learnt to similar and non-similar situations. Course assessments are to be aligned with the learning outcomes of the course.

Assessment at The Mico must be fair, manageable with reasonable rigour, valid, and reliable and the process of grading must be specific, transparent and open for criticism, not residing exclusively in a single examiner or assessor. Communication with faculty and students regarding assessment protocols is to be clear, unambiguous and timely. The results of assessment activities may impact students' progression through a programme and must also be used to evaluate and modify, as necessary, the process and practices of the assessment used.

Students' conduct in assessment activities is to comply with standard industry practices and protocols and with The Mico's Academic Integrity Policy.





## 6. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

### 6.1. Course Design to Include Assessment

In designing or modifying any course, learning outcomes and assessment tasks, procedures etc. shall be taken into account. The assessment tasks, processes, etc. shall be aligned with the learning outcomes, whether the assessments are formative or summative. The course design or review shall be in accordance with the institution's policies and regulations and accepted at the Faculty Board, and approved at the Academic Board before implementation

### 6.2. Right to Fair Assessment

The evaluation of a student's performance in a course shall be fair and reasonable and shall reflect the content of the Course delivered, to this end the following shall apply –

- i) For a student to be assessed he/she must be registered in the course.
- ii) For a student to take the end-of-semester examination, he/she must –
  - be registered in the course,
  - be able to produce a valid student identification before and during the examinations,
  - fulfil any course requirements, for taking the examination.
- iii) There shall be more than one assessment piece for each course
- iv) Students registering for courses during the Add/Drop period shall not be penalized for missed assessments
- v) Normally, participation will not exceed 10% of the final grade. If participation (which may include attendance) is to exceed 10%, Faculty must include a clear rubric in the course outline for the student
- vi) In courses where failure to complete a specific assignment or activity, or failure to achieve a passing grade for that assignment or activity would prevent the student from passing the course, this stipulation must be stated clearly in the course outline.

### 6.3. Assessment and Feedback Principles

**6.3.1. Assessment shall be an integral part of the curriculum design process, underpinning holistic and authentic learning experiences at module and course levels.**

The Assessment process shall:

- i) Be consistent and promote student engagement and motivation;
- ii) Be authentic and sustainable and relevant
- iii) Support students' development and shall encourage learner autonomy



- iv) Be valid and reliable and ensure alignment with the intended learning outcomes, the learning activities and the level of study;
- v) Ensure that module assessment methods allow for summative assessment of each intended learning outcome.

**6.3.2. Assessment and feedback shall be organized to develop students' learning and hence shall:**

- i) Allow the student to partner with Lecturer in the learning, assessment and feedback process through dialogue about these processes;
- ii) Be made accessible, explicit and transparent for students;
- iii) Allow for appropriate use of peer and self-assessment strategies to support students in making judgments about their own and others' work;
- iv) Allow students the opportunities to discuss their assessments and feedback with the lecturer.
- v) Ensure effective feedback which must be accessible, constructive and timely.
- vi) Allow students to provide original work.

**6.3.3. There shall be a range and choice of assessment opportunities at module and course level to facilitate students' capabilities and to evidence learning outcomes and hence the assessment processes shall:**

- i) Be equitable, acknowledging that every student learns differently;
- ii) Provide flexibility, through a diversity of assessment methods, coordinated at a course level, and shall remove barriers to achievement and hence promote inclusivity;
- iii) Provide opportunities for students to consolidate and master their skills.

**6.3.4. Formative assessment, feedback and related learning processes shall provide opportunities for students to prepare for summative assessment items, hence assessment and feedback entails:**

- i) **Assessment as learning:**
  - The assessment process shall enable students to learn about themselves as learners, reflecting on their learning experiences. This is particularly valuable when learning is authentic and when dialogue emerges from formative stages of the assessment process;
- ii) **Assessment for learning:**
  - The assessment process shall engage students in valuable and positive learning;



iii) **Assessment of learning:**

- The assessment experience shall provide a balance of formative (developmental) and summative (formal) opportunities;
- Formative and summative assessments shall be scheduled in a reasonable and balanced manner ensuring assessment is manageable for students and staff;
- Assessment shall provide a valid and reliable representation of student achievement;
- An annual assessment calendar shall provide an overview of the differing assessment types and weighting.

## 6.4. Assessment Scheduling and Loading

### 6.4.1. Approval of Assessment

Each course lecturer, or the Course Coordinator where there are multiple groups of the same course in the same semester, shall submit the proposed assessment items for the current offering of the course for approval, using the requisite Approval of Assessment Form. Submissions are through the Head of Department to the Dean of Faculty.

All assessments proposed shall be consistent with the assessment structure stated in the course outline and items used shall be aligned with the descriptions on the Approval of Assessment Form.

### 6.4.2. Summative Assessment Items with their Requirements

Each module/unit of a course shall specify the summative assessment items, together with any specific requirements for passing the module/unit (e.g. requirement to obtain a pass grade in each assessment item) in the module/unit specification, as set out below. The assessment details for each module/unit shall be approved by the Dean of Faculty, on the recommendation of the Head of Department.

**Table 1** *Summative Assessment Plans for Head of Department's Approval*

Assessment item	Indicative word or time length	Weighting	Learning outcomes to be assessed

### 6.4.3. Weighting of Assessment Items

In determining the assessment for a module/unit, consideration shall be given to assessment design and weighting in accordance with the weighting guidelines provided in Appendix I. This guidance aims to ensure some equivalence of the assessment weighting across different modules and courses.



#### **6.4.4. Timing of Formal Examinations**

Where courses utilise end-of-course/module/unit formal examinations as a part of their assessment strategies, such examinations shall take place as scheduled during the examination period at the end of the semester, or at any other scheduled time in the academic year as published by the Office of the Registrar.

#### **6.4.5. Notification of Form of Assessment**

The student at the start of the semester shall be provided with information regarding the means of assessment to be used, which shall include:

- i) The number, and forms of items
- ii) The weighting accorded to each item
- iii) Whether the assessment is subject to text-matching
- iv) A statement on Academic Conduct

#### **6.4.6. Arrangements for Assessments**

The arrangements for the organisation and management of any assessments (whether in-class or not) must ensure the assessment shall be conducted with rigour, probity and fairness and with due regard to security and hence:

- i) the preparation and verification of test papers/activities or any other associated assessment piece must have the requisite security at all stages
- ii) the recording results must be accurate, timely and secure
- iii) the determination of the pass mark, e.g. in the case of multiple choice tests, must be disseminated to students.

Suitable arrangements shall also be made for students who are unable to be assessed at the scheduled time, but who have valid documentation indicating that for physical, religious, or have any other mitigating circumstances are unable to be assessed at the scheduled time.

## **7. APPLICATION**

### **7.1. Assessment Level**

Assessment methods shall be directly related to programme and course learning outcomes. However, as the student progresses through the programme, the methodology shall increasingly elicit upper level skills, including cognitive skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, decision making and creative thinking.



## 7.2. Word Count

Students shall be given a clear indication of the maximum length of any piece of written assessment, the amount of work expected, and therefore how much detail would be required and the time they should allot to the piece of work.

- i) Assessment briefs must state the maximum word count, but there will be a +10% margin, beyond which nothing will be marked.
- ii) The word count shall normally refer to everything in the main body of the text [Everything before the main text i.e. abstract, acknowledgements, contents, executive summaries etc. and after i.e. references, appendices etc. shall not be included in the word count limit]. If there is an exception to this approach, it should be clearly stated in the brief and explained in full.
- iii) There shall be no penalty for exceeding the word count, save and except that work exceeding the limit by more than 10% will not be marked and hence may have an impact on the overall grade.

## 7.3. Academic Referencing

The focus of academic referencing at the undergraduate level shall be the students' understanding and application of the principles of referencing.

- i) The primary focus of teaching and marking with regard to referencing at undergraduate level will be on pedagogic principles:
  - understanding when and why to cite and reference
  - consistency of referencing style throughout the assignment
  - ability to trace citations
- ii) To achieve this consistency, all undergraduate students will be directed to use the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines (the edition adopted by the University College).

## 7.4. Language of Assessment

- i) All assessments contributing to a Mico University College award will be conducted in the language of English, except in the case of awards or modules in modern foreign languages.
- ii) Dictionaries will not be permitted in formal examinations.

## 7.5. Formative Assessment

- i) All courses should have an assessment strategy that includes provision for formative assessments, and all modules/units/course elements should include opportunities for formative assessment.
- ii) Formative assessments do not carry a grade; it is used to improve the learning of students. Formative assessment may include peer-assessment and self-assessment as well as tutor-assessment while the module is in progress.



- iii) Early formative assessment feedback from Faculty is especially important when students are new to the conventions of higher education. All students should be involved in formal formative assessments within the first four to six weeks of semester one of the first year.
- iv) Staff should provide timely feedback on formative assessments, well in advance of summative assessment deadlines.

## 7.6. Feedback to Students and Return of Student Assessments

- i) Effective and timely feedback (i.e. commentary on performance identifying strengths and ways to improve with an emphasis student learning for future assessments) shall be given to students for all formative and summative assessments, including examinations.
- ii) Timely feedback means that students should have feedback on one assignment before they submit the next assignment, and feedback on summative assignments should be provided electronically within 20 working days.
- iii) In addition to the written or oral feedback provided to individual students on their work, other types of feedback include, but are not limited to:
  - model answers
  - generic written or oral feedback, e.g. assessor's or examiner's report
  - peer feedback
  - discussion of exemplars.
- iv) Where appropriate, feedback may be given in advance of the return of individual assessment items to students, to ensure students receive speedy feedback whilst assessments are still fresh in their minds.
- v) Feedback to students on their assessments should:
  - promote learning, and enable students to improve their performance in subsequent assessments, by indicating areas for improvement and/or setting specific targets or goals for improvement;
  - be clearly linked to learning outcomes and assessment criteria;
  - provide the student with an understanding of the way in which their grade was derived and their relative success in meeting the learning outcomes;
  - be provided orally, in writing or electronically (where applicable)
- vi) The details of all assessment items should be included in course/module outlines, together with the deadline for submission and the date by which students will be able to access feedback and/or collect the marked assessment item.
- vii) In normal circumstances assessment items should be marked, internally moderated, and returned to students with personalized feedback within twenty (20) working days of the date of submission. Where, for valid reasons, this cannot be achieved, the affected students should be advised of the delay and the revised date of return.
- viii) Staff shall enter grades for marked assessment items onto the student record system as soon as possible after the work for the whole group has been marked. All grades for assessment items remain provisional until confirmed by the Examination Board and approved by the Academic Board for final examinations.

- ix) Feedback on performance in examinations should be provided for students. This may take the form of generic feedback to a student group, e.g. in the form of an 'examiner's report' on each question. Additionally and/or alternatively students may be offered the opportunity to discuss their examination scripts and receive personal feedback. All students are entitled to see their marked examination script; however, this remains the property of the University College. The arrangements for providing feedback on examinations should also be specified in the course/module outline.

Students will only be able to view the original script within a controlled environment. The student may submit a request to the Registrar (within 14 days of receipt of the grade) to:

- see his/her exam script(s); the script is then prepared and provided to the student in a controlled space at a schedule time and date (The controlled space may accommodate more than one student at a time).
- discuss and talk through their exam script with an appropriate member of staff.

### **7.7. Assessment Briefs and Assessment Criteria**

Students must be provided with written guidelines of any assignment / assessment, describing the nature of the task, the format for presentation and the criteria (see below).

- i) Assessment briefs should include:
- an explanation of how the particular item of assessment relates to the learning outcomes and skills requirements of the module
  - any specific constraints or requirements, e.g. word limits, and the need for good academic practice, e.g. referencing of sources
  - assessment criteria/rubric – the basis upon which the quality of a student's work will be graded
  - details of any rubric/marking scheme and/or grade descriptors
  - submission procedures and deadlines, and the consequences of late, incomplete or non-submission.
- ii) Assessment criteria can be specified at different levels: for example criteria can be set for each individual item of assessment, for each type of assessment (e.g. essays, laboratory reports, presentations), for each module, or they can be set at the level of the discipline (although in such cases it is usual to establish specific criteria for individual assessments also). It is important that assessment criteria be consistent within the course.
- iii) Assessment criteria shall be benchmarked to the University College's grade descriptors as at Grade Descriptors for the B.Ed. / B.Sc. Programme(s).
- iv) Assessment criteria should be subject to internal verification by a second examiner or other suitably qualified and experienced faculty in order to assure academic standards.
- v) Assessment criteria should be discussed with students, and feedback to students on their assessments should be informed by assessment criteria.
- vi) Formally, it is the responsibility of the Faculty Board to ensure internal scrutiny and verification of all summative items of assessment (examination papers and coursework assignments, including reassessment items), including specific assessment criteria, before publication to students. The Faculty Board may delegate this task to the course/subject team.

- vii) Internally verified assessment items and related assessment criteria (together, where appropriate, with assessment briefs) to include all examination papers must be provided to the external examiner for comment. The mark schemes/grids and/or model answers shall also be provided to the External Examiner

### **7.8. Anonymous Marking**

Wherever possible and practical the anonymity of students in the marking process should be maintained. Anonymous marking is a system whereby the student's identity is not made known to the internal/external examiner at the time of marking. Its purpose is to protect students and markers against the possibility of bias, whether conscious or unconscious. A student's assessed work should be identified only by the student's identification number.

- i) Anonymity must be retained until the grade for the assessment (which remains provisional until confirmed by the Examination Board) has been formally recorded on the student management system and approved by the Dean of the Faculty. (The Dean should only approve after confirmation from the Examination Board).
- ii) It is recognized that certain forms of assessment cannot be marked anonymously as it is impossible for the students not to identify themselves; this is especially true for in class assignments / assessments, orals and practicals.

### **7.9. In-Course Assessment**

For students to be properly assessed, students are required to meet the deadlines for submission of an in-course assignment. If there are extenuating circumstances preventing the submission of the assignment on the due date, the student may write to the lecturer applying for a deferred assessment, that is, an assessment provided by the Lecturer on the basis of documented legitimate reasons that the student could not complete a Course requirement by its due date; hence:

- i) students who fail to submit an assessment piece without valid documentation shall receive a failing grade;
- ii) students who fail to submit an assessment piece by the due date, but within three weeks, will be assessed, but will not be able to receive a grade higher than a passing grade regardless of the quality of work; if the quality of the work is poor the student will receive a failing grade;
- iii) students who have already submitted an assessment piece cannot subsequently request for the assessment to be deferred;
- iv) Students are required to submit all the requisite assignment pieces to be awarded a grade for the Course.

### **7.10. Incomplete**

The assessment process may be interrupted if a student is unable to complete a portion of the course requirements because of illness or other serious problem, which can be substantiated by way of documents, although the student had been working well throughout the semester. In this circumstance the student may request an "Incomplete" in the course. The request should be directed to the Lecturer. An "Incomplete" grade is intended to be an interim course grade and shall be valid only for one year. The student must make the necessary arrangements to complete the course during that time. If the student fails to complete within the prescribed time, the "Incomplete" will change to a failing grade.



### 7.11. Examinations

Formal Examinations are normally scheduled at the end of each semester. The administration of the examinations is guided by the University College's Examinations Regulations, therefore:

- i) faculty and students are required to familiarize themselves with the University College's policies and regulations on the conduct of examinations;
- ii) all written examinations, other than take-home examinations, shall be invigilated by the lecturer or suitable designate or by an individual appointed by the University College through the Examinations Department;
- iii) the use of computers and other equipment, tools or aids, electronic or other, during the course of an examination is prohibited unless expressly permitted by the lecturer/department/Faculty, and where the use of these materials are permitted in the course of an examination, students shall comply with all restrictions imposed on such use;
- iv) all examination questions are confidential and shall be returned to the Chief Invigilator unless otherwise determined and instructed by the lecturer/department/Faculty; and
- v) an appropriate format of the examination paper, provided by the Examinations Department, shall be used to ensure the security of the paper.

### 7.12. Verification, Standardisation and Moderation of Marking

Verification, standardisation and moderation are employed to ensure that academic standards are appropriate and consistent across course/subject teams, and reflect agreed assessment policies and assessment criteria, and that the assessment outcomes for students are fair and reliable.

- i) **Verification:**
  - a) Purpose: to ensure that the form and content of assessment tasks and briefs are appropriate, fair and valid in terms of standards, and will effectively assess the achievement of the specified learning outcomes, presenting an appropriate level of challenge to students.
  - b) When/how applied: Assignment tasks and briefs must be verified before being given to students. The verification of briefs should ensure that
    - The assignment task is consistent with other modules at the same level in the same discipline,
    - the learning outcomes will be fully addressed by the task and
    - the assessment criteria and grade descriptors reflect the learning outcomes and the level of the assessment.
- ii) **Standardisation:**
  - a) Definition: Process used to ensure all members of the course or module teaching team have a common understanding of the marking standards and conventions, and feedback protocols.
  - b) Purpose: to ensure that all members of the course team are familiar with, and have a common understanding of, the marking standards and conventions in relation to the provision of feedback.

- c) When/how applied: Standardisation may be achieved by establishing agreed criteria, and either:
- have the assessors prior to marking the students' assignment, independently mark a sample of a student's work, then compare and discuss the outcomes [may be used for new or revised assessment items, new markers etc.]; or
  - have the assessors meet and together mark the student's scripts (table marking).

iii) **Moderation of Marking:**

- a) Blind double marking: where two separate assessors each independently assess a piece of student work, assigning a mark and providing comments to justify the marks in relation to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Both examiners shall record their marks and comments separately, and then compare marks and resolve differences to produce an agreed mark and feedback.

Blind double marking shall normally be carried out as a universal exercise, that is, every piece of student work shall be considered by two assessors, where the work is an Independent Study/Project or a Dissertation of 30 credits.

- b) Non-blind marking: where an assessor marks a piece of student work, assigning a mark and providing comments to justify the mark, and then a second assessor also assigns a mark and provides comments, having seen the marks and comments of the first assessor. An agreed mark and feedback is provided for the student. Non-blind marking shall normally be carried out as a universal exercise, used to confirm the pass/fail boundary, and may be appropriate in the case of new staff members, or new and innovative assignments, or where as a result of initial moderation, a re-mark of the whole set of assignments is required.

iv) **Internal Moderation**

Internal moderation is to ensure that academic standards are appropriate and consistent across course groups and that feedback reflects agreed assessment policies and assessment criteria, and therefore the assessment outcomes for students are fair and reliable.

The moderator (2<sup>nd</sup> marker) confirms (or not) the grades awarded by the first marker and the quality of the feedback with respect to the course / University College's protocols and expectations. Moderation is normally carried out on a sample basis, in order to corroborate the accuracy of the marking standards and quality of feedback applied by the first marker. It is the most usual form of moderation activity, and should be used for all assessments where other forms of moderation do not apply.

Internal standardisation and moderation of marking (Minimum Requirements)

- a) All assessment tasks must be verified internally before being published to students.
- b) All course teams shall have a published statement of standardisation and moderation procedures as an appendix to any documents containing the student course outlines. This statement should:
- inform students, external examiners and others about the arrangements for assuring the validity and reliability of marking and grading decisions, and the quality of

feedback, as related to different types of assessment, e.g. written assignments, formal examinations, presentations, group work, etc.

- specify how differences between markers are to be resolved (e.g. discussion between the two markers, resort to a third marker). In the case of sample double marking, normally the process will confirm the appropriateness of the standard of marking; however, where this is not confirmed, the policy must provide for the review of the student work and/or the marks of the whole cohort.
- specify the method for recording whether a piece of work has been moderated and what the outcome was; a form is provided for this (see Appendix 2)

Where a course is taught across different sites or through different partnerships, the course management team, led by the Course Coordinator, must specify in the formal statement the arrangements for assuring standards across the sites or partnerships.

- c) Minimum requirements apply to the internal moderation of all summative student assessments that receive a grade or are marked as pass/fail.
- Standardisation exercises must take place on an annual basis where modules are delivered across different sites and for large teaching teams.
  - Specific arrangements to double mark assessments, first marked by new faculty, must be put in place.
  - Where there are multiple markers for a defined assessment, a standardisation exercise must be undertaken before marking begins to ensure consistency among markers.
  - All theses, projects and dissertations must be blind double marked, as directed by the Faculty Board.
  - All assessments falling into the pass/fail boundary (all grade E and a sample of grade D) must be non-blind double marked.
  - 'Fails' must be sampled through non-blind marking.
- d) A sample of assessments deemed to have passed, drawn from across all grade bands including the highest graded assessment, must be moderated as follows:
- The minimum number of pieces of work of a pass standard to be moderated (i.e. those used to verify the upper side of the pass/fail boundary, plus the sample of work of a pass standard) should be 10% of the total work submitted that is of a pass standard as follows:

**Table 2** Sample Size for Moderation of Coursework

<b>Number of pieces of work of a pass standard</b>	<b>Minimum sample size for moderation (excluding failed work)</b>
< 7	All pieces of work
7 – 69	7 pieces of work across all grade bands including work in the highest category.
70 – 199	10% of work across all grade bands including work in the highest category.
200 or more	20 pieces of work across all grade bands including work in the highest category.



- e) Internal moderation should be completed within the 20 working days assessment feedback period and before provisional marks are made available to the students. External moderation can take place after this.
- f) Assessed work and feedback shall not be given to students prior to the completion of the internal moderation process.
- g) Assessed work, feedback and provisional marks **may be returned to students prior to external moderation being completed**. All marks are subject to confirmation by the relevant Exam Board. The “*subject to confirmation by the Exam Board*” status of marks must be made clear to students.

v) **External Moderation**

External moderation is conducted by an External Examiner to ensure that academic standards are appropriate and consistent and are benchmarked across similar institutions.

The External Examiner shall review and comment on the structure and content of the assessment tasks as well as on student performance, using the External Examiner’s Report for which a template is provided. The External Examiner is engaged by way of contract.

External moderation of marking (Minimum Requirements)

- a) Assessment relating to years 1 and 2 of the 4-year undergraduate programme are not subject to the external moderation process (save and except for the practical areas).
- b) Assessment relating to years 3 and 4 of the 4-year undergraduate programme are subject to external moderation, where courses have been selected by the Faculty Board for such examination.
- c) In order to carry out their responsibilities for external moderation, in addition to the sample of student work, external examiners must be provided with:
  - course outlines
  - examination papers and/or assessment briefs
  - assessment criteria and rubric, together with the provisional statistical profile of marks for the modules/units for which they are responsible
  - mark scheme and grade sheet
- d) External examiners are not expected to arbitrate in the event of disagreement between first and second markers, and are not expected to change marks for individual items of student work.
- e) Sample size to External Examiners shall be as indicated in Table 2 above, with appropriate adjustment to ensure that the sample provided is not the same as that which has been internally moderated, except in the case of small cohorts.

The sample should include all assessment pieces – i.e. written exam scripts / in-course tests, coursework pieces, practical work (where applicable), and should cover student work across all grade bands and students’ work in the highest and fail categories. In the case of small cohorts, all the students’ work should be provided to the External Examiner.



- f) Where student work is provided to External Examiners in electronic format, and such format necessitates that they External Examiner has access to all pieces of work. The External Examiner may select the sample for moderation, in accordance with the guidelines of this policy. The External Examiner shall use the grade sheet listing all students and provisional grades to identify the pieces for the sample.
- g) The External Examiner is expected to use the sample to ensure that marking standards are appropriate, feedback is of appropriate quality and internal moderation has been effective. The sample provided should not be the same as that which has been internally moderated, except in the case of small cohorts. Records of internal moderation activity should also be provided.
- h) Where a course or module is delivered at more than one site, the External Examiner should be provided with the provisional statistical profile of marks for each site of delivery, so that they are able to comment on the marking and student achievement standards for each delivery site. If the provisional profile of marks indicates significant discrepancies, then the External Examiner and/or the Examinations Board may require a review or re-marking to be carried out.

### **7.13. Use of Tests other than Achievement Tests**

The University College may use tests other than achievement tests to inform the award of certification for any student. The Examinations Board shall review these tests as applicable to confirm the award.

### **7.14. Confirmation of Assessment Outcomes and Reassessment**

- i) The Examinations Board shall review each student's profile of results, confirm progression or award recommendations and, if appropriate, the award classification. Boards of Examiners meet normally at the end of the academic year.
- ii) Reassessment decisions may only be taken by an Examinations Board.
- iii) Work set for reassessment can be made available to the student before a Examinations Board meeting has confirmed grades; however students should be reminded that grades are provisional until confirmed, and therefore a provisional 'fail' grade can be turned into a 'pass' grade or vice versa by the Examinations Board.
- iv) Students should be given guidance about the completion of reassessments alongside undertaking study for new modules.
- v) Grades relating to reassessed work are not normally confirmed at the same meeting of the Examinations Board as the original work, but at the next appropriate meeting of the Board. Where exceptions to this are necessary, such as courses involving professional placements when the reassessment must take place immediately after the original assessment, either the Examinations Board should be convened or Chair's action should be taken and approved at the next meeting.



### 7.15. Theses and Projects

The credit weighting of a thesis or project at the Masters Level is usually higher than the normal Masters course. Some specific rules regarding the submission of the final assessments (normally the report) apply to these modules/assessments.

- i) Final assessments for the Theses and/or Project modules have a standard deadline for submission, as specified in the University College's calendar.
- ii) Students with mitigating circumstances have the facility to request an extension to the submission deadline for their Theses or Project final assessment through the Dean of the Graduate School.
- iii) Final assessments for all Theses and/or Project modules will be submitted electronically via Turnitin. Two bound copies of the final version of the thesis shall be submitted in print/hard copy.

### 7.16. Ownership and Archiving of Students' Assessed Work

- i) Students hold the intellectual property inherent in all work produced for assessments, but the material produced by students for assessment (essays, projects, examination scripts, dissertations, artworks, digital data storage device, etc.) is the property of the University College, and may be retained pending confirmation of marks awarded by Examination Boards, possible appeals and quality audits. With the exception of examination scripts, the University College will generally make assessed work available for collection and/or endeavour to return to students assessed work whenever a student explicitly requests this. Arrangements for returning assessed work to students are the responsibility of individual faculty.
- ii) Academic Departments shall maintain an archive of samples of marked student work that is representative of the range of assessment tasks and grades awarded in the courses they offer, for the purposes of quality audit, staff induction and development, and monitoring and benchmarking of standards. The sample shall be periodically updated at least every three years.
- iii) Assessed coursework that has not been collected by the student, and does not form part of the archived samples, will be retained by the University College for six months after the relevant Examinations Board meeting, after which time it will be confidentially disposed of. Arrangements for the disposal of such work shall be the responsibility of the institution.

## 8. RESPONSIBILITIES

### 8.1. The University College

The University College shall ensure that its assessment protocols meet the requisite standards, and hence shall:

- i) provide staff development workshops in all aspects of academic assessment;
- ii) provide the necessary resources and an ICT system to support the assessment processes;
- iii) appoint appropriately qualified External Examiners, who shall be provided with the necessary information on the assessment procedures and mechanisms of the institution, and who shall be required to provide meaningful reports;
- iv) record and store assessment data on the Student Management System (SMS);
- v) ensure that the academic regulations and the assessment policy are accessible and regularly updated; and
- vi) monitor the implementation of the assessment policy across the University College.

### 8.2. The Lecturers/Faculty

The lecturers/faculty shall ensure the rigour of assessment, and that students are adequately tested but not overly burdened with assessment. To this end, faculty shall:

- i) Ensure that assessment:
  - is a fundamental part of all programmes, giving students a clear opportunity to demonstrate general and specific subject skills, knowledge and understanding, in accordance with stated learning outcomes and relevant to future employment;
  - is reliable, inclusive, and authentic and designed to minimise the use of modified assessment and the over-assessment of learning outcomes;
  - is valid, and aligned to clear and realistic learning outcomes;
  - is scheduled to spread formative and summative assessment deadlines across the semester and programme;
  - items are marked fairly, using the published rubric and grading criteria, and appropriately second-marked, where applicable; and
  - items are marked anonymously, except for practicals and formative assessment items, or unless the institution allows for an exemption.
- ii) Ensure that students:
  - are informed about academic misconduct;



- have the opportunity to take part in pre-assessment activities, guidance and support to help them understand what assessment is and how it works;
- are given clear and transparent assessment guidelines and briefs, including rubric(s) for each assessment, with clear information on how feedback will be provided;
- are given the opportunity to use originality checking software and where possible to submit their work online, to become aware of and so avoid plagiarism; and
- receive constructive personal, group or general feedback and provisional marks as soon as possible, and within a maximum of 20 working days for all assessment, and will be told of any reason for a delay and in such circumstances advised of a revised date.

### **8.3. The Head of Department/Dean**

The Head of Department/Dean shall:

- i) ensure that at the start of the semester, have the necessary template of the courses required for the semester, along with the course outlines for each course, with assessment information;
- ii) require, review and approve, respectively, the Approval of Assessment Forms from each lecturer for each course that is facilitated in a particular semester; and
- iii) conduct regular reviews of assessment practices, quality of staff feedback and external examiners, and invite students to comment on how assessment is provided.

### **8.4. The Student**

The Student shall:

- i) engage with 'feed-forward' and feedback in formative and summative assessments and where suggestions are made for improvement, put in place the suggestions;
- ii) familiarize themselves with what is required to complete specific assignments in each course;
- iii) complete all assignments within the established timelines, to demonstrate academic achievements and professional standards where appropriate;
- iv) meet the professional and ethical standards appropriate to the subject;
- v) report to the Lecturer any medical or other problems that would require adjustments modification to assessments at the start of the semester/academic year or, as soon as possible and where necessary report to the Registrar in writing, to determine accommodations;
- vi) report to the Examinations Unit any conflict that may exist their examination schedule;
- vii) familiarize themselves and comply with University College's academic regulations and policies, including those on academic integrity, research and assessment offences; and
- viii) wherever possible, use originality checking software, such as Turnitin, before submitting their work.





## 9. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- a) [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- b) [Academic Research Policy](#)
- c) Approval of Assessment Form
- d) [Examinations Regulations for Diplomas and First Degrees](#)
- e) External Examiner's Report Template
- f) [External Examiners Policy](#)
- g) Practicum Policy

## 10. THE MICO STANDARDS

- Quality Assurance
- Design and Management of Academic Programmes
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification
- Research and Innovation



## 11.APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Guidance on Module Summative Assessment Loadings

Assessment type	Indicative weighting Courses < 30 hours	Indicative weighting 45-hour courses
<b>Examinations</b>		
2 – 2½ hour formal examination		100%
1 – 1½ hour formal examination or test	100%	40/50%
<b>Essays/Reports</b>		
1,500 - 2,000 words written assignment	75/100%	60/70%
1,000 - 1,500 words written assignment	50/60%	40/50%
<b>Research Paper/Journals</b>		
50,000 words/12 week reflective	100%	100%
<b>Laboratory/practical reports</b>		
12 week equivalent Laboratory/practical report file	100%	50%
6 week equivalent Laboratory/practical report file		25/30%
<b>Oral presentations</b>		
15-20 minute individual oral/poster presentation and written summary/account/research	100%	50%
10-15 minute individual oral/poster presentation	40/50%	25/30%
<b>Group presentations</b>		
Group presentation + report or poster	50%	30%



Appendix II: Form for Internal Standardisation and Moderation of Marking



The Mico University College

Moderation Report

Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Module : \_\_\_\_\_

Course Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Assessment No./Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Semester: \_\_\_\_\_

Date standardisation completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date moderation completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Marking and Moderation team		Moderation was undertaken as follows:
Name	Signature	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Blind double marking <input type="checkbox"/> Non-blind double marking <input type="checkbox"/> All assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of Assessment: State percentage _____

Statistical Analysis

Number of assignments marked:			Number moderated:				
Breakdown of marks (% if sample is over 20)							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

**Appendix III: Grade Descriptors for the B.Ed. / B.Sc. Programme(s)**

Score	Grade	Grade Point	Description	Class of Award / GPA
90 – 100	A+	4.00	Excellent	First Class Honours 3.50 – 4.00
80 – 89	A	3.50	Very Good	
75 – 79	A-	3.25	Good (Post Graduate Programme Pass)	Upper Second 3.00 – 3.49
70 – 74	B+	3.00		
65 – 69	B	2.75	Fairly Good	Lower Second 2.50 – 2.99
60 – 64	B-	2.50		
55 – 59	C+	2.25		Pass 2.00 – 2.49
50 – 54	C	2.00		
40 – 49	D	1.50	Fail: Must re-sit/re-submit	
0 – 39	E	00	Fail: Must re-do Course	