Online Assessment Policy

University of Ruhuna

The policy document was approved at the 433rd Council meeting held on 16th of March 2023 with the recommendation of the 376th Senate meeting held on 25th of January 2023 and the 01/2023 meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Quality Assurance held on 03rd of January 2023.

Policy Name: Policy on Online Assessment, University of Ruhuna

Effective date:

Responsible Party: Centre for Quality Assurance, University of Ruhuna

1. Introduction

Online teaching and assessment havegained renewed interest during last two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Compared to online teaching, online assessment is much more challenging. Both conventional examinations and online assessments havetheir own advantages and disadvantages to teachers, students, and administrators.Online formative assessments are considered effective in identifying weak students and preventing them from failing at summative assessments. Use of online assessments for summative assessments is also becoming popular with the introduction of remote proctoring tools. Online assessments can make distance and continuing education more flexible and accessible.

University of Ruhuna (UoR) accepts online assessments and is committed to provide institutional support through policy initiatives, provision of resources, staff trainings, and promoting staff to incorporate them when and where appropriate.

This document presents the UoR Policy on Online Assessment.

Principles

In this policy document, the term "online assessment"is used to identify the use of internet and intranet in assessment activities such as design and delivery of assessments, recording responses, marking, reporting, and storing data. Online assessments conducted by UoRshould be accurate, confidential, fair, reliable, and secure. They should also bein line with the University regulations, accepted good practices, and quality standards.

Applicability and Scope

This policy document is applicable to all "online assessments", either formative or summative. Students may take such assessments from within or outside the University, using either students' digital devices or those owned by theUniversity."Online assessments" can be synchronous or asynchronous in nature. On the recommendations of the Chief Examiner and the Advisory Committee on Online Assessments (ACOA), the Faculty Board shall approve the details of the assessments including the place of sitting and devices to be used.

2. Responsibilities and Procedures for Implementation

3.1. Responsibility

In compliance with the principles and policies outlined in this document, all staff involved in "online assessments"of UoRis expected touse themafter a careful analysis on its appropriateness for the purpose and conform to basic requirements such as validity, reliability, repeatability, etc.The policy document recommends regular trainingon online assessments and updatingforall staff and students involved in online assessments.

The candidates are expected to behave with integrity and to be fair to themselves as well as to their colleagues when taking "online assessments" by keeping to the specific standards.

3.2 Procedural considerations

3.2.1. Considerations on deciding online assessments

3.2.1.1. Examiners shall refer the relevant Course Unit/Module Information Sheet and clearly identify which ILOs could be assessed and,to which level and each of such ILOs could be assessed using online assessment tools/strategies available.

3.2.1.2. In each Faculty, there shall be a Faculty Board-appointed committee to adapt, advise, regulate and oversee the orderly conduct of online assessments within the principles outlined in this policy document. The committee shallbe named as the "Advisory Committee on Online Assessments (ACOA)" and shall include followingmembers of the faculty.The Faculty Board shall appoint a suitable Chairperson from among the members of the Committee for a period of three years.

a. One senior academic staff member from each Department.

b. Deputy Registrar/Senior Assistant Registrar/Assistant Registrar (shall be the convener of meetings)

c. Chairperson and the Secretary of the Academic Committee or equivalent body

d. Deputy senior student counsellor

e. Two academic or academic support staff members with expertise in IT (proctoring equipment and software/internet/networking/LMS, etc.).

f. Any other member/s as decided by the Faculty Board.

3.2.1.3. Remote proctoring and software usage shall not be compulsory for all "online assessments", in particular, for formative assessments.

Remote proctoring and software shall be authorized by the Faculty Board and shall be approved by the Senate. The ACOA shall recommend it to the Faculty Board.

3.2.1.4. UoR promotesthe use of approved remote proctoring done by human and/or software. The proctoring mechanism shall include following features.

- Each candidateor a group of candidates shall be monitored/recordedusing screen recording.
- Examiner(s) should be able to detect any suspicious behaviours that candidates engage in during the examination.
- Unless permitted (during open book examination, for example), candidates shall be prohibitedto search online and/or contact any third party.
- The examiner(s) shouldauthenticate and confirm the identity of the candidateand, prevent frauds and malpractices in examinations.
- Data shall be stored on LMS or on any other secure computer(s), to which only chief-examiner and/or other assigned examiners shall have access to.

3.2.1.5. Online formative assessments are encouraged to supplement the efforts of faculties in identifying weak students.

3.2.1.6. The faculty must address any technical difficulties that candidates may face while engaging in "online assessments" and take appropriatemeasurespromptly to overcome them, as much as possible.

3.2.1.7. An online assessment session, of which a candidate writes answers accessing LMS or any such online tools, shall not last more than 90 minutes at a stretch. There shall be at least a 15 minute break between two online assessment sessions.The candidate must submit the work done before the break. A candidate shall not engage in online assessment activities formore than 180 minutes (excluding breaks) within a day.

3.2.1.8. Without compromising the academic standards, appropriate adjustments shall be arranged for differently abled-students, to provide such students with an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and competency.

3.2.1.9. Guidelines stated in the Examination Manual and recommended best practices in conducting examinations must be followed in online assessments, as appropriate.

3.2.1.10. The chief-examiner of the online assessment shall make and familiarize with all necessary arrangements, at least 5 working days prior to the scheduled date of online

assessments.TheFaculty ACOA shall be consulted by the chief-examiner for clarification on any unresolved matter(s) regarding assessment procedures.

3.2.1.11. University policies on plagiarism and copy right are applicable to online assessments. Any approved faculty level rules and regulations specific to "online assessment" procedures shall be used for secure handling of examinations.

3.2.1.12. Mock examinations prior to real online assessments and addressing feedback from all parties concerned are recommended.

3.2.2. Conduct of examination

3.2.3.1. General guidelines given for supervisors, invigilators, and hall staff at conventional examinations must be followed, as applicable to online assessments.

3.2.3.2. There shall be a mechanism to address urgent queriesby candidates during the examination.

3.2.3.3. At the end of the assessment, the examiner shall confirm the submissions received and address any discrepancies immediately.

3.2.3.4. All digital records and/or paper-based answer scriptsof "online assessments" shall be saved securely following the Examination Manual.

4. Examination offenses

4.1. Any irregularities, frauds, malpractices, or offenses committed by any party involved in "online assessments" shall be dealtwith as for conventional examinations.

5. Grievance mechanism

5.1. Grievances/complaints with regard to "online assessments" shall be addressed through the approved mechanisms and procedures of the university.

6. Focal points for amendments

Suggestions for the amendments to this policy document shall be submitted to the Centre for Quality Assurance through Internal Quality Assurance Unit.

Revised on March 2022