STUDENT EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES FOR THE ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS FRAMEWORK/V01/MAY 2020

1. **INTRODUCTION**

2. **DEFINITIONS**

3. **PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE**

4. **ALTERNATIVE SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK MANAGEMENT**

4.1   Eligibility – NQF 5 – 8
4.2   Eligibility – NQF 9
4.3   Conducive assessment environment conditions
4.4   The format of a take-home, open-book assessment
4.5   The open-book philosophy
4.6   Technical guidelines, support and general rules
4.7   Moderation strategy
4.8   Examination dates and timetabling
4.9   Communication with Examinations Department
4.10   Management of the breach of alternative assessment rules
4.11   The supplementary and/or aegrotat assessment
4.12   Incommunicado
4.13   The viewing and re-marking of scripts
4.14   Marking and resulting

5. **APPEALS**

6. **VALIDITY OF ALTERNATIVE SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the Alternative Assessment Strategy Framework of REGENT Business School (see REGENT BUSINESS SCHOOL ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK, MAY 2020/V01), is to provide for the assessment structures, the strategy and practices for fair, valid, reliable, and accountable assessment. These structures, strategy and practices are directed by, and evaluated according to a clear set of principles governing assessment. The strategy and structures are supported by clearly documented quality-assured processes that enhance credible and trustworthy assessment, resulting and certification.

In response to the current crisis brought on by COVID-19, REGENT Business School has designed an approach that guides the conduct of assessments in the current circumstances,

necessitating adjustments to the current system. These adjustments take the form of a "take-home examination" which is essentially positioned in the open-book assessment philosophy.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 'Authentic assessment' involves a range of assessment techniques that seek to make use of "real-life" scenarios for assessment, for example case studies;
- 'Open-book assessment' refers to an assessment where the student can use study material, the internet (where appropriate), or other resources, while writing the examination. This is because the assessment is about applying knowledge and problem-solving, not about the repetition of facts.
- 'Summative assessment' are "high-stakes", end of module/end of year assessments, based on the learning outcomes for the module/programme, and which enable a student to progress in/exit from, the programme;
- Take-home examination is an assessment that students do at home within a certain amount of time. Such assessments are rigorously moderated and quality assured.

3. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to orientate REGENT Business School staff, students and other stakeholders to an approach that makes use of take-home examinations. The Alternative Summative Assessment Framework has been conceptualised in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in an effort to protect our staff and students and to provide additional support to students to successfully conclude their programmes.

The guidelines address the following elements:
- Eligibility
- Conducive assessment environment conditions
- The format of a take-home, open-book assessment
- The open-book philosophy
- Technical guidelines, support and general rules
- Moderation strategy
- Examination dates and timetabling
- Communication with Examinations Department
- Management of the breach of alternative assessment rules
- The supplementary and/or aegrotat assessment approach
- Incommunicado
- The viewing and re-marking of scripts
- Marking and resulting

4. ALTERNATIVE SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK MANAGEMENT

4.1 Eligibility: NQF 5 to 8 programmes

Criteria for eligibility to sit for the examination/assessment apply as usual. Please refer to the RBS Handbook.

As a general reminder, to be eligible to write an examination for modules on NQF 5 - 8, a student must have fulfilled the following requirements:

- <u>Completed</u> the compulsory assignment(s) for that module.
- Obtained a sub-minimum of 30% for the semester module assignment in order to write the examination.
- For annual modules which require two assignments, a student is also required to obtain an average of 30%.

Furthermore, promotion remains dependent on students' attainment of a sub-minimum of a total of 40 % in the summative assessment (examination paper/alternative assessment) to successfully complete the module/exit the programme.

For NQF levels 5 to 8, the final mark is calculated according to a 40/60% weighting (40% for the assignments; 60% for the summative assessment) .

A final mark of at least 50 % must be achieved to successfully complete the module/exit the programme.

4.2 Eligibility: NQF 9 programmes (inclusive of the MBA programme)

Criteria for eligibility to sit for the examination/assessment apply as usual. Please refer to the RBS Handbook.

As a general reminder, to be eligible to write an examination for modules on NQF 9, a student must have fulfilled the following requirements:

- Obtained a sub-minimum of 40% for the assignment in order to sit for the examination/alternative assessment;
- Achieved a sub minimum of 40% in the summative examination/alternative assessment;
- Obtained an overall mark of 50% in order to successfully complete a module/exit the programme.

4.3   Conducive assessment environment conditions

Due to the fact that assessment is conducted in the form of a "take-home" examination/assessment, students must ensure that they have a conducive environment for taking the assessment. This may include taking leave for examination/assessment days. The personalised examination timetable may be used to obtain permission from workplaces, where necessary.

The following guidelines apply:

4.3.1   Prior to the assessment, students are advised to ensure that:
- they sit in an environment that is quiet, safe and secure
- the room has sufficient lighting and ventilation
- the work area is comfortable, neat and tidy
- resources are ready for use during the examination, including books, handbooks, articles and/or other relevant texts and resources
- personal resources are available, including refreshments and/or pharmaceutical remedies that may be required
- assessment guidelines, instructions and contact details of support staff are on hand to assist with down- and uploading of papers
- internet access is stable and secure to down- and upload papers (the student portal has been zero-rated for students with Cell-C and MTN. Other students must ensure that they have sufficient data for down- and uploading)
- assessment/examination instructions and rules and personal details must be filled out prior to starting the assessment.

4.3.2   During the assessment, students must ensure that:
- they save their work regularly
- only recognised resources are used and that they are referenced, as appropriate
- examination/assessment instructions are closely followed
- examination/assessment rules are adhered to, including completing and submitting the declaration that the work that they are submitting, is their own

Students' cellular phones should be charged and available during the assessment. This is so that moderators can undertake moderator spot checks to ensure that students are taking the examination and that they are doing their own work.

4.3.3   After the assessment, students must ensure that:
- they have completed all the questions in the paper
- the correct document has been uploaded within the prescribed timeframe provided.

4.4   The format of a take-home, open-book assessment

In general, the take-home examination will consist of different parts that seek to assess **content knowledge**, **understanding, application** and **problem-solving** (examination/assessments will differ according to the discipline and the programme level).

The principles guiding the setting and marking of the assessment are based on the following:
- the learning outcomes of the module/exit level outcomes of the programme;
- the REGENT Business School Employability Key Performance Indicators (skills);
- the required complexity levels in terms of the Bloom's Taxonomy; and
- the appropriate National Qualification Framework (NQF) level of the programme as per the level descriptors.

4.5 The open-book philosophy

As noted earlier, 'open-book assessment' refers to an assessment where the student can use study material, the internet (where appropriate), or other resources while writing the examination. This is because the assessment is about applying knowledge and problem-solving, not about the repetition of facts. Resources include the module guide, text books and recommended reading for the module, and where required, internet sources.

To answer the paper, the student will be expected to have a good understanding of the theories and constructs of the module and application of the knowledge. Students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to utilise the content of the module in new and unique ways. Insights and solving problems, not the extent to which students can remember facts, are the key elements of the assessment.

NOTE: AN OPEN-BOOK EXAMINATION IS NOT AN 'EASY' OPTION – ALL STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PREPARE VERY WELL FOR THE ASSESSMENT.

4.6 Technical guidelines, support and general rules

In terms of the technical aspects of take-home, open-book examinations, the following guidelines and rules apply:

4.6.1   The portal will be opened at prescribed times as indicated in the personalised examination timetable issued to each student. There will be a morning and afternoon session every day.

4.6.2   The morning session starts at 8h00*; the afternoon session starts at 13h30* (*End-times depend on the papers. In general, 2 hours have been added to all papers to accommodate the unusual circumstances).

4.6.3   At the given time, students will be required to download the assessments, in a similar manner to downloading assignments. Papers are completed off-line. Dedicated IT support will be on standby where students struggle to down- and upload papers.

4.6.4   In exceptional circumstances, where the student is unable to download/upload the paper, a dedicated email address has been made available for troubleshooting and support.

4.6.5   Assessment/examination rules are included in each paper, including a declaration of authenticity. This is followed by the students' personal details, as required.

4.6.6   Students must access the portal with their normal log-in details.

4.6.7   Upload completed paper within the prescribed time.

4.6.8   Only typed papers will be accepted. Special arrangements will be made for papers where mathematical formulae are required.

4.7   Moderation strategy

Moderation is a process applied to summative assessment to ensure fairness, consistency and the integrity of examinations/assessments. While take-home, open-book assessments are considered valid, reliable and fair, the risk of misconduct is greater than during an invigilated examination.

For this reason, the moderation strategy for take-home, open-book examinations involve:
- random spot checks during and after assessment – moderators will call students during and after the assessment to verify that the student completed the assessment without assistance and that they have submitted their own work - STUDENTS MUST ENSURE THAT CELLULAR PHONES ARE CHARGED AND ON HAND WHEN THE EXAMINATION IS UNDERWAY
- a random selection of papers will be submitted through Turn-it-in to discourage plagiarism (including auto-plagiarism)
- rigorous evaluation of results, including comparative analyses of results from past examinations

The adoption of stringent moderation is in the interest of each and every student. It also ensures credibility in respect of results and certification. Misconduct and breach of examination/assessment rules will lead to disciplinary action. All transgressions should be reported immediately.

4.8 Examination dates and timetabling

Formal summative assessment in the June/July examination cycle will start on 17 June 2020; and on 9 Nov 2020 for the November examination cycle. Assessment will be conducted as far as possible as indicated in formal publications such as academic and assessment calendars.

Students will receive personalised timetables with all information related to their particular modules contained in the personalised timetable.

4.9 Communication with Examinations Department

REGENT Business School is committed to ensuring a successful academic semester and supporting our students' needs under these circumstances. To this end, RBS will send out a detailed guideline on how to access the take-home assessment via the student portal one (1) week prior to the examinations.

Note: the examination department will prioritise all queries related to take-home assessment during the scheduled assessment period.

In the event of any problem experienced, students will have access to the following options for help and support:

- Report a system problem - on the system
- Live Chat
- Email: exams@regent.ac.za

In addition, IT support will be readily available at all times to ensure query resolution.

4.10 Management of the breach of alternative assessment rules/misconduct

Summative assessment and/or examination misconduct is seen to be any action or attempted action that result in an unfair and dishonest academic advantage for oneself, or an academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community. Such actions include behaviours such as 'cheating, plagiarism, altering academic documents

or transcripts, gaining access to materials before they are intended to be available, and helping a friend to gain an unfair academic advantage'[1].

'Cheating' is a form of misconduct considered to be fraudulent, deceitful, or dishonest in regards to an academic assignment, for example by 'using, or attempting to use materials, or assisting others in using materials, that are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment'[2].

Examples of assessment and/or examination misconduct include:
- Copying or attempting to copy from others
- Helping other with answers with another person during an examination/assessment
- Pre-programming devices to contain answers for the assessment
- Use of unauthorized materials, pre-prepared answers, written notes, or concealed information
- Asking others to do an assessment on their behalf
- Submitting the same assignment for more than assessment
- Collaborating with others on an assessment where teamwork is not an explicit requirement
- Sitting for an examination/assessment for another person or asking someone to take an examination for them.

'Plagiarism' refers to academic theft of another person's ideas and work when the student does not acknowledge the use of such intellectual material.

Examples of plagiarism include:
- Copying of passages from works of others without acknowledgment of the original author
- Use of the views, opinions, or insights of another person as their own
- Paraphrasing of another person's characteristic or original phraseology, metaphor, or other literary device without acknowledgment
- Self-plagiarism.

4.11 Supplementary and/or aegrotat assessment

Eligible students may sit for a supplementary assessment. Current rules and procedures apply. Likewise, where students are unable to sit for the June 2020/November 2020 assessment due to ill health or other relevant reasons, they may apply for an aegrotat examination. The

---

[1] https://sa.berkeley.edu/conduct/integrity/definition
[2] As above

decision regarding supplementary/aegrotat examinations will be decided through established frameworks. Please refer to the RBS Handbook.

4.12 Incommunicado

Where clashes occur in the examination/assessment timetable, students may apply for an aegrotat examination. All the normal rules, procedures and frameworks apply.

4.13 The viewing and re-marking of scripts

In keeping with social distancing rules under COVID-19 conditions, students will not be allowed to view scripts after the assessment. Instead, students will be put into contact with the relevant tutor for additional support, as appropriate.
Students may request a re-mark of scripts as per established application processes and frameworks. Please refer to the RBS Handbook.

4.14   Marking and resulting

Marking and resulting are according to the established institutional assessments and moderation frameworks, and are subject to the normal governance structures, for example the Examination Board.

5. APPEALS

5.1 Appeals policy

The institutional appeals policy is available for all assessment-related complaints and grievances. Formal complaints must be made in writing on the Complaints Form [RBS EX 8.3.1] and addressed to the Dean.

The Appeals Committee will consider the following matters in respect of assessment:
- Fairness of the assessment
- Justness of the assessment process, including just assessment rules
- Openness and transparency in terms of the requirements
- Misconduct and breaches of assessment rules
- Confidentiality of personal data and results
- Promptness of processing of results

Appeals are heard according to the established institutional frameworks, and are subject to the normal governance structures, for example the Appeals Committee.

6. VALIDITY OF ALTERNATIVE SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

REGENT Business School (RBS) is in communication with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in respect of a variety of higher education activities, including activities that respond to the COVID-19 crisis. The Department is responsible for making regulations in respect of COVID-19 in line with the announcements of the President of the Republic. As a responsible Higher Education Institution, RBS supports the DHET and complies with its regulations.

RBS is also in communication with the Council on Higher Education (CHE) in terms of the Alternative Summative Assessment Strategy. RBS has shared its Strategy and its supporting policies and procedures, with the Council. Further, it has aligned its processes and procedures to the minimum criteria for accreditation as established by the CHE. In particular, RBS ensured that it met the requirements for criterion 6, namely '*Student assessment policies and procedures: The different modes of delivery of the programme have appropriate policies and procedures for internal assessment; internal and external moderation; monitoring of student progress; explicitness, validity and reliability of assessment practices; recording of assessment results; settling of disputes; the rigour and security of the assessment system*'.