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NISHTAR MEDICAL UNIVERSITY, MULTAN

GUIDELINES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION:

Assessment of student learning is a key aspect of quality assurance and it is one of the most important measures to show the achievement of learning outcomes. Hence, it is crucial that appropriate assessment methods and mechanisms are in place. Assessment must ensure sufficient interactions and engagement for group dynamics while supporting a holistic online ecosystem. Assessment activities should leverage the functionality and availability of learning technologies. The methods of student assessment must be clear, consistent, effective, reliable and in line with current practices. They must clearly measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Qualifications are awarded based on the achievement of learning outcomes which are measured through well designed assessment instruments (COPPA ODL, 2019).

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to define an online assessment and examination mechanism. It is mandatory for all faculty members that they have read and fully understand this policy and convey this policy to students. Also, make sure that students are fully aware of this policy before the commencement of online examinations.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all the students and faculty members of Nishtar Medical University, Multan.

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NISHTAR MEDICAL UNIVERSITY, MULTAN

ONLINE EXAMINATION & ASSESSMENT POLICY

For NMU Students & Faculty Members

POLICY STATEMENT:

Nishtar Medical University is certain about the quality of its academic programs and methods of assessment. Due to pandemic the mode to conduct classes and assessment is online, thus to ensure transparency policy is formed.

1. Online Examination & Assessment Guidelines for Students

1.1 Student Eligibility and Online Readiness

- i. Students are advised to check their portal regularly for updates. They shall be intimated of the approved date of commencement of exams via email by the college administration.
- ii. The students must clear all dues and fulfill all other requirements such as the QEC surveys, etc. prior to appearing for exams.
- iii. It is the responsibility of students to be aware of the scheduled time for the online assessment to be conducted.
- iv. Ensure stable connectivity (preferably wired connection) and perform speed test before the online assessment.
- v. Students should use their NMU email account for official correspondence as other personal emails IDs are not allowed and not operational for all correspondence with University.
- vi. For the familiarity of an online examination environment, all students are required to participate in mock examinations held online a week prior to the date of commencement of examinations. The date and time of the mock exam shall be intimated to them via email.
- vii. In case of being disconnected: Capture screen of the problem that was encountered and share with your teacher immediately, before the online assessment ends.
- viii. If the assessment is carried out at home, ensure a quiet, closed space and prevent any form of distractions.

1.2 Examination Dates and Times

The respective colleges/departments will create the examination timetable and inform the Students via email. Also, the college/department will make sure that it is available on the student portal and college/department website.

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1.3 Special Examination Requirements

- i. Students who have a disability and/or medical condition and who may require special examination arrangements must ensure that they have to inform the Director Student Affairs as soon as possible.
- ii. A special arrangement can be made for students who don't have computer access. Respective colleges/departments can make arrangements for limited students in their computer labs.
- iii. For any correspondence, students must use NMU email ID and have their enrollment number in the subject line.

1.4 Academic Misconduct

- i. Students must ensure that they are familiar with the content of the examination policy and guideline.
- ii. Academic misconduct in online examinations or class tests can include (but is not restricted to) the following prohibited activities:
 - Plagiarism
 - Fake identity
 - Co-operating with any other unauthorized person when completing the exam
- iii. Students must ensure they are ready for their online exam well before the time.
- iv. Students should access their online exam through the student portal.
- v. Student's must review the details provided to them related to examination to ensure they are aware of the timings allocated to them.
- vi. The date and time of when the student started the exam, their computer screen and the IP address will be recorded in the system.

1.5 Beginning the Examination

Students are advised to ensure they are aware of the exam timings throughout each exam. Carefully read the examination guidelines provided by the colleges/department well before the commencement of examination.

1.6 Completion of Examination

- i. Students must answer their examination questions in accordance with the instructions of the examination paper.

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- ii. Ensure all answers have been submitted.

1.7 Conduct during the Examination

- i. Students are required to comply with all instructions outlined to them.
- ii. Any student who believes that an error has been made in the content of an examination question should report this after their exam sitting to the Examinations Officer and DSA. The concern will be noted and reported to the college/department setting the paper; however, no amendments or clarifications may be made during the examination and candidates are instructed to complete the examination question as far as they are able with the information provided.
- iii. Communication of examination paper content with other candidates is forbidden before, during and after the examination.

1.8 Absence from Examinations

- i. The student must report absence from an examination due to illness or other circumstances by submitting a Certificate of Absence to examination department, DSA and respective head of the program as soon as the candidate is able to do so, preferably before the examination is due to take place and, in any case, no later than 3 days after the examination.
- ii. The student must contact the principal / chairperson in order to request alternative arrangements or resist examination, which are at the discretion of the college/department.
- iii. The student is required to notify the examination department, DSA and respective head of the program, if there is a problem submitting a Self-Certificate.
- iv. In the case of any long-term illness or impairment, the student is recommended to contact DSA for advice and support.

2. Online Examination & Assessment Guidelines for Faculty

- 2.1 The assessment of all courses will be carried out online. These assessments include:
 - oral assessment (viva),
 - formative assessment, and
 - Summative assessment.
- 2.2 For online assessment, faculties are encouraged to use the e-Learning platform. All online assessments that faculty want to carry out has to be approved by the respective Dean.

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2.3 Online assessment can vary in types. Types of online assessment can be found in

Appendix A1.

- 2.4 Faculties are encouraged to carry out online alternative assessment as a form of summative assessment.
- 2.5 All the procedures in preparing online assessments must follow the standard procedures and other relevant requirements.
- 2.6 For online take home open-book tests, faculties are to take into consideration students' accessibility as well as the time taken for the online take home test.
- 2.7 Oral assessment has to be carried out based on the procedures shown in **Appendix A5.1** For Undergraduate Programs and **Appendix A5.2** for Postgraduate Programs.
- 2.8 The examination department must be informed two weeks prior to the commencement of assessment.

Appendix

A1. Online Learning Assessment Recommendations

Online assessments can be in the form of traditional online assessments and alternative online assessments. Traditional online assessment includes online final examination, online quizzes, or online tests. Alternative online assessments include assessment that is performance-based and authentic (based on real-world), consists of meaningful tasks, real world application and higher order level of thinking. It normally involves human judgment in scoring. Table 1 gives some examples of traditional online assessment and alternative online assessment.

Both traditional and alternative online assessments can be implemented based on either real-time online interaction between the instructor and learners (online synchronous assessments) or one that does not involve live sessions (online asynchronous assessments).

Online assessment can be used to assess learning for either formative or summative assessment. An advantage of online assessment is the opportunity for using multiple content formats such as video, audio, animation and other alternative formats.

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Table1.

Examples of traditional online assessment and alternative online assessment.

Online Assessment Type		Methods	Tools
Traditional online Assessment			
Mode	Synchronous	Final Examination Test Quiz	
	Asynchronous	Takehome Final Exam Takehome Quiz Takehome Test	
Alternative Online Assessment			
Mode	Synchronous	Presentation Debate Demonstration Simulation/Animation	Google Meet Zoom Social Media (Facebook Live)
	Asynchronous	Portfolio Demonstration Evidence-based assessment Simulation/Animation Article Review Case Study Project Studio Work	Video E-Portfolio Assignment/Forum Social Media Email WhatsApp Discussion Forum
		Laboratory Work	

A2. Designing Online Assessment

Best practices in designing traditional assessment methods can also be applied to online assessments. The following lists ten principles for good online assessment design (Walker, 2007).

- 2.9 Online assessment should be aligned with the curriculum and relevant to the course learning outcomes.
- 2.10 Online assessment instructions and question wordings should be clear, concise and free from ambiguity.
- 2.11 Timely and meaningful feedback should be provided.
- 2.12 Marking schemes should be fair, transparent, weighted appropriately and clearly communicated

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to students.

- 2.13 Online assessment tasks should be designed with accessibility in mind. Provision for 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate students with special needs should be considered as should appropriate alternatives should potential adjustments prove inadequate.
- 2.14 Where appropriate, online assessment tasks should incorporate a range of question types in order to assess the breadth and depth of student knowledge.
- 2.15 Online assessments incorporating objective questions should include suitable and relevant distracters to minimize the potential for guessing.
- 2.16 Online assessment approaches should be guided by the level at which the student is studying.
- 2.17 Careful consideration should be made in relation to the time (stage) at which online assessment tasks are employed during a student's course of study and also to the realistic time frame in which students could be expected to complete the task.
- 2.18 Online assessments should not test a student's information technology skills or their adeptness at using a specific online assessment tool unless that is the explicit purpose of the assessment.

A3. Preparation Before Conducting Online Assessment

Conducting online assessment is a challenging process; it needs to be ensured that academic quality is not sacrificed and security is not compromised. Care must also be taken to deal with students who fear poor performance in the online assessment environment. Alternative assessments are encouraged where students must be tested on the concepts rather than regurgitating materials making it easy to copy from textbooks. The underpinning principles of online assessment or traditional assessment are the same. The difference is in the mode of implementation where online assessment is conducted via online. Either formative or summative assessment can be conducted through online assessment as long as the objectivity, validity and reliability of the assessment is guaranteed. A crucial part in preparing the online assessment is that the assessment method must be aligned with the learning outcomes. Below are some guidelines in conducting online assessment.

A4. Selection of Assessment Method

Instructors need to identify suitable assessment strategies which are easier to monitor online than in a face-to-face classroom. Strategies for the selection of assessment for online delivery include:

i. Timed/open-book tests.

To minimize read-as-you-go test-taking, reduce the amount of time students have to take the test so that only those students familiar with the material can answer the questions in the time allotted. Alternatively, replace selected response tests (such as multiple choice and true/false items) with

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short-answer or essay questions that require students to apply textbook facts to novel scenarios or the use of multiple content formats such as the use of video or audio.

ii. **Timed/closed-book test with shuffled/randomized test questions.**

Instructors must prepare a large test bank and shuffle the questions providing each student with a similar (but not identical) assessment. NMU examination software has both shuffling and randomization capabilities.

iii. **Frequent low-stakes tests.**

This includes short quizzes or self-check activities using multiple choice questions or true/false questions. With an online assessment, guessing can be reduced by requiring an explanation. A quiz can be just 10-15 questions long to provide sufficient information for feedback.

iv. **Oral presentation assessment.**

Assignments that require students to speak, or present are hard to fake. Students can present by uploading self-recorded video or using video conferencing.

v. **Performance assessment.**

Assignments that students need to write a report such as a case study, project report and article review can be checked by the faculty using plagiarism software such as Turnitin.

vi. **Peer-Review.**

Asking students to review their classmates' work (and grading them on their reviews) can help motivate best efforts as well as help students learn from each other. It encourages a deeper approach to learning involving critical reflections.

vii. **Group Projects.**

Well-designed group projects help students master both course content and team working skills.

It is important to ensure that all the assessment methods have valid assessment tools. For performance-based, rubric, checklist or rating scales are more appropriate while for test, quiz and exam, answer schemes are required.

A5. ORAL ASSESSMENT

Oral assessment deals with any assessment based on the spoken word, including vivas, oral presentations, and a host of other forms of assessment.

Oral assessments offer instructors the opportunity to assess the structure and content of a presentation as well as students' capacity to answer any subsequent probing questions.

Oral presentations are often used in a formative capacity but they can also be used as summative

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Assessments such as PhD Defense, Final Year Project for Undergraduate Program and Master Project Presentation for Master taught course program.

Assessment can be exclusively oral, or, as is frequently the case, can be combined with other modes of communication, depending on the nature of the assessment task. What makes the assessment 'oral' is that at least part of the assessment, and part of what counts towards a student's mark or grade, depends on what the student communicates by word of mouth.

A5.1 Suggestion for Procedures for Undergraduate Oral Assessments

In implementing oral assessment, these six dimensions must be considered:

- i. Knowing what to assess
- ii. Means of interactions
- iii. Structure of the session
- iv. Validity and reliability of instrument and session
- v. Fairness
- vi. Grading

For oral assessments such as Final Year Project Presentation, the following procedures are suggested:

- i. Students have to prepare a pre-recorded video. Upload to Google Drive (or as recommended by College/Department).
- ii. Students share the video link with a panel of evaluators.
- iii. Students have to share the presentation slides with the panel of evaluators (through email).
- iv. Panel of evaluators will evaluate the submitted videos offline.
- v. The College/Department has to arrange a session for a live online session. This session is only for Question and Answer between the panel of evaluators and the student.

For oral assessment such as Final Year Project Presentation that uses simulation, the following procedures are suggested:

- i. Students' progress reports are to be submitted through Turnitin.
- ii. Logbooks are to be scanned and sent to the Principal/Chairperson via email.
- iii. Students have to prepare a pre-recorded video presentation and submit before the deadline set by the College/Department.



- iv. The College/Department has to arrange a session for an offline/live online session. This session is only for Question and Answer between the panel of evaluators and the student.

A5.2 Procedures for Oral Assessment for Postgraduate Studies

Procedures to Implement Oral Examination for Doctor of Philosophy Program, Master of Philosophy/Science Program and Master Project Presentation during COVID-19 Pandemic

Following are the requirements for conducting an online viva voce session

- i. Video conferencing/Online platforms may be used in open viva voce examinations where the candidate/examiners face travel restrictions during Covid-19. Candidate here refers to local and international students. The telephone conferencing is not permitted for the conduct of viva.
- ii. Faculties/Schools must ensure that videoconferencing/online platforms are the most appropriate course of action, and that the interests of all parties are fully considered. Parties here refer to Dean/Principal/Chairperson, Director Postgraduate Studies (PGS), examiners and students. If any of the parties involved disagree with the use of videoconferencing/online platforms for their oral examination arrangement, the oral examination shall be postponed.
- iii. A consent form must be filled up as evidence of agreement.
- iv. The candidate must be present in the respective college/department for the open defense. In the case of travel restriction, it is permissible to have the student alone at one location.
- v. It is important that appropriate arrangements should be made to maintain the integrity, confidentiality and credibility of the examination process.
- vi. The Director, PGS will act as a focal person and chair the viva session. The director will be responsible for all necessary notifications and arrangements for open defense. The concerned Dean reserves the right to cancel/change any viva session.
- vii. It is the responsibility of the candidate, where they have been given permission for an online oral examination to secure appropriate premises with proper video conferencing facilities.
- viii. All parties must be visible during the examination, and the candidate must be visible at all times during the examination.
- ix. The Director is responsible to make sure no other unauthorized persons present with the candidate and ascertain that the candidate and examiners have provided appropriate evidence of their true identity prior starting the session.
- x. If communication is broken during the examination and a connection cannot be reestablished, examination must be terminated and rescheduled.
- xi. If communication is broken during the examination and a connection cannot be reestablished, the

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Director with consultation with the examiners must decide how much of the viva voce examination was completed at the point the connection was lost and what, therefore, should be covered in the re-scheduled viva examination.

- xii. If communication is broken towards the end of an examination, and examiners can jointly agree that further examination would not change their decision, the viva may be concluded and the candidate notified of the examiners' joint recommendation. This should be detailed in the Director's report and account should be made of any content that was potentially missed after the break in communication.
- xiii. The Director will submit a report on viva voce and technical performance of the facilities to the concerned Dean and Controller of Examination at the end of viva voce.

Frequently asked questions on online assessments/examinations

- a. What is an Online Assessment/Examination?
- b. How will I get the exam paper?
- c. What will I need to be able to take my online assessment?
- d. Am I allowed to refer to my course books, notes, or any other materials? What does it mean if my exam has word limits?
- e. Can I freeze my semester because of the impact of Covid-19?
- f. My exam is now online, can I use any textbooks while completing the exam?
- g. My exam is now online, what equipment, packages and applications will I need?
- h. My exam is now online, so can I now type all my answers?
- i. What do I do if I can't figure out how to submit my online assessment online?
- j. Will there be training materials for how to undertake a timed online assessment available online?
- k. If there is a problem with an examination paper, how will I get in touch with the examiner? What should I do if I have a question about the paper?
- l. I am a student from a previous batch; can I sit for my exam online?
- m. How will you ensure the integrity of the online assessments and stop cheating? What if I have a problem uploading my answers?
- n. I cannot find any quiet place to do my online assessment. Can I come to college/department for online assessment?
- o. What if I am anxious about the online assessment or I feel isolated. Where can I get support?

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- p. How do I deal with the impact of social distancing on my wellbeing?
- q. What if I am anxious about the impact of Covid-19?
- r. Am I going to graduate later than I expected as a result of the impact of Covid-19? What if I missed my online assessment due to unavoidable circumstances?
- s. What if I get disconnected in the middle of my examination?
- t. What do I do if I'm unable to do an exam during the allowed time, or my performance is impacted by exceptional circumstances?
- u. What evidence do I need to reappear in the examination in case I missed my assessment? My question has not been answered. Who should I contact?

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