POLICY

ASSESSMENT

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ACRONYMS

AEC	Academic Executive Committee
AVC	Academic Verification and Certification
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EXCO	Executive Committee
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
ICLD	Institute for Curriculum and Learning Development
KCQ	Knowledge Check Quiz
MCQ	Multiple choice questions
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
NQF	National Qualification Framework
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
WIL	Work-Integrated Learning
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework

1. PREAMBLE

MANCOSA, as an online supported distance education provider acknowledges that assessment constitutes a core element in its commitment to academic excellence, offering academic programmes that have international recognition as well as national legitimacy, credibility and well-understood academic, professional and career-orientated outcomes.

Assessment and assessment practices at MANCOSA are guided by the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as stipulated in the National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa (South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), December 2014),), as well as the Council on Higher Education's (CHE) Policies on the Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and Assessment in Higher Education (August 2016) and the Criteria for Programme Accreditation (CHE, November 2004, Revised 2012). Additionally, the policy on assessment at MANCOSA has sought to align to the stipulations outlined in the CHE's 2021 *Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) for Higher Education in South Africa.*

The Assessment Policy is one of the principal ways in which MANCOSA ensures that the quality and standard of learning outcomes of programmes and graduate attributes are upheld consistently across all programmes. The acceptance of an integrated approach to learning, teaching and assessment, as well as the use of outcomes and a programme - based approach to education serves as a point of departure for this policy.

The principles, definitions and interpretations in this document are based on conceptual frameworks developed by South African statutory bodies, namely, SAQA and the CHE (including its Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Assessment Policy is to provide a framework for establishing valid, reliable and fit-for-purpose assessment procedures and practices at MANCOSA. The objective is to:

2.1 Establish a clear conceptual framework which includes regulations, guidelines and procedures for an integrated, coherent, constructive assessment strategy that effectively supports the achievement of intended learning outcomes and graduate characteristics in all academic programmes at MANCOSA;

2.2 Ensure the alignment of assessment practices for academic programmes in accordance with the national higher education legislative and policy environment;

2.3 Ensure that assessment is an integrated process within the student learning experience.

Definition of Assessment

Assessment is defined by the CHE as “the systematic evaluation of a student’s ability to demonstrate the achievement of the learning goals intended in a curriculum” (Policies on the Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and Assessment in Higher Education, August 2016).

Assessment constitutes a crucial academic process in education, encompassing both learning and evaluation, where evidence of student performance is collected and evaluated against pre-determined criteria to make a professional judgement about whether the learning required for specific outcomes has taken place. The purpose of assessment is to identify the level of knowledge and/or skill acquired by the student, which helps in making decisions related to their academic progress. Assessment can take many forms, including a variety of tasks, outputs or competencies used to compare students’ performance against the set assessment criteria and outcomes, and may also involve evaluating student performance during work-integrated learning activities, if relevant.

The focus of Assessment in education is to:

- Improve the quality of the students' learning experience by focusing on the significant knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that are required for success in their chosen field. This is achieved by providing motivation to work through the material through assessment tasks and feedback, and by concentrating on the ability to transfer knowledge to new contexts and to apply knowledge to specific contexts.
- Provide accurate indicators of current competence or potential in relation to desired outcomes. This enables academics to make appropriate decisions regarding placement, diagnostic, and other forms of support that may be required by students.
- Make judgements related to competence and progression or qualification. This involves evaluating the performance of students against pre-determined criteria and making decisions about their progress and readiness to move on to the next level of study or to receive a qualification.

Assessment is a means of identifying student misunderstandings of study material so that teaching or tutorial support can be modified accordingly. MANCOSA also uses the assessment data as part of a wider 360-degree self-evaluation system to inform decision making, identifying at-risk modules, completion rates for modules, teaching standards, etc.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all areas of assessment, across all programmes offered at MANCOSA. An assessment provides an accountable basis for credit and eventual certification of students in relation to outcomes of qualifications.

Assessments strategies are inclusive of but not limited to:

- Final and Supplementary Online Summative Assessments;
- Orals
- Capstone Projects
- WIL
- Formative Assessments;
    - Knowledge Check Quiz
    - Case study
    - Projects

4. PRINCIPLES

It is important for academics to have a clear understanding of the various methods available to assess students in a manner which is relevant to the specific subject matter on which they are being assessed, to ensure effectiveness in higher education. The principles of assessment outlined below are well-established, and institutionally embedded as part of MANCOSA's commitment to academic excellence. Assessing student learning reflects academic integrity and aligns with MANCOSA's Code of Ethics, which includes the rights of students.

The following principles apply:

a) Assessments are coherently designed considering the level descriptors of the NQF as an integral part of the learning process. This ensures internal alignment and coherence of a programme in terms of the purpose and learning content and its modules, learning outcomes, assessment criteria, assessment opportunities and strategies.

b) Assessment processes are reliable, valid, transparent and fair, and the tasks feasible (practicable) in relation to available institutional resources, facilities, equipment and time.

c) Assessment is comprised of both formative and summative assessments and is conducted on a continuous basis throughout the learning experience, and the purpose of the assessment and related assessment criteria are clearly communicated to students.

d) Assessment includes a wide range of approaches, methods (including integrated assessment) and across platforms (including online), that are fit for purpose and followed by constructive feedback to students to support their learning.

e) Assessment practices are based on established good practice and contemporary research and are aligned with the assessment practices and procedures required or suggested by the relevant statutory bodies.

f) Assessments are fit-for-purpose in relation to MANCOSA's student profile and expectations.

g) Quality assurance is integral to assessments across platforms and is the responsibility of the academic departments.

5. CONDITIONS FOR ASSESSMENT

As assessment is a structured process in which evidence is gathered to make judgements about an individual's performance in relation to agreed and defined criteria, as well as being central to the recognition of achievement and the provision of credible certification, the following pertain:

a) Fairness requires that a student be not hindered or disadvantaged when it comes to being treated equally and in an unbiased manner, and that appeal mechanisms are available to all students.
b) Transparency, on which confidence in the assessment system rests, requires that all parties (students, examiners, moderators, markers etc.) understand the system and have the assurance that it is well planned, works in practice and is properly regulated.
c) Reliability requires consistency in that the same judgements are made in equivalent or similar contexts in terms of standards, available assessment information, marks, etc.
d) Authenticity refers to the degree to which academic work, such as formative and summative assessments reflect the knowledge, skills, and efforts of the individual student, ensuring a true representation of their academic capabilities.
e) Validity requires that assessment processes and instruments assess what they set out to assess in respect of clearly stated outcomes. Validity requires appropriate types of evidence by means of a suitable method of assessment.
f) Clarity of meaning in the expression of the requirements against which student performance is measured is integral to student success, as well as a built-in mechanism to avoid examiner/moderator deviation, inconsistency and error.
g) Assessment in an outcomes-based education system emphasises the assessment of outputs and end products that are expressed as competences in the outcomes and assessment criteria.

Validity

The assessment must be valid or 'fit-for-purpose'; that is, it must measure predetermined outcomes, using appropriate assessment methods for the subject matter, mode of academic delivery, and student profile.
Important aspects of validity include:

- Face validity: The assessment should be perceived to be fair, giving students a reasonable opportunity to show what they know and what they have mastered. For example, any suggestion of bias that may be to the detriment of some would reduce face validity for students (e.g., gender or ethnic bias). It should not advantage or disadvantage any student.
- Tuition and assessment are equitable when they consider the instructional context and the special background of students (e.g. prior knowledge, cultural experience, language proficiency, cognitive style and interests). In supported distance education these characteristics can only be broadly determined based on the student profile for individual modules.

- Content validity: Assessment should be appropriate for the stated outcomes of the module and should cover the knowledge (ideas and skills) adequately. Assessment should focus on testing mastery of important knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and not on peripheral details.
- Construct validity: This refers to the extent to which assessment succeeds in measuring and evaluating the abilities (theoretical or practical 'constructs') that it intends to assess.

Reliability

Assessment should be reliable or consistent; that is, it should produce the same results when:

- Students are assessed across time for the same knowledge, skills, attitudes and values using a variety of methods.
- Different markers assess the same piece of work.

The amount of work assessed should be sufficient in proportion to the comprehensiveness of the study package.
Value judgements (such as passing or failing marks) should be as objective as possible. There should be academic and administrative quality control before, during and after the assessment. If a student's mark differs significantly depending on who marked the assessment, then the assessment is deemed not to be reliable. Guidance provided to examiners for marking must also be transparent and defensible.

Additionally, MANCOSA prioritises assessment reliability in relation to academic integrity during the administration of assessments to ensure all students have fair and equitable opportunities for evaluation. In addition to our commitment of transparent assessment criteria and diverse assessment methods, MANCOSA utilises proactive measures to prevent potential student misconduct. To safeguard integrity, the institution may employ exam proctoring and plagiarism detection software, maintaining a balance between security and student privacy, whilst ensuring all students are afforded a fair and equal opportunity to succeed in their assessments. Institutional initiatives aim to inform students about academic integrity, fostering a culture of ethical conduct, thereby strengthening assessment reliability.

Manageability

Assessment should be manageable and operationally fit-for-purpose, that is, not too difficult or expensive to implement – and it should be time efficient. Good assessment practice should be cost effective; that is, assessment should not be carried out by expensive means if adequate information about student performance could be obtained by equally valid, alternative, less-expensive means.
Quantity and type of assessment should also allow academics to achieve reliable results in a reasonable period. This also relates to timely feedback to students to improve their learning at the next step in the learning process.

Directness

Assessment should be as direct as possible; that is, it should be related to the real-life use of the knowledge and skills outside educational settings.
To ensure relevance and validity, the focus should be on measuring student mastery of significant, not peripheral, outcomes. During the planning for a new module or programme, tuition and assessment methods should be developed simultaneously in relation to student learning and the meeting of learning outcomes to ensure that assessment is relevant. Directness must be balanced with manageability.

Authenticity

MANCOSA encourages authenticity where students are required to produce independent work. This is monitored and guided by the institution's policy on plagiarism (refer to section 10 of this policy). Authentic assessment also includes assessment of processes, practices, skills and reflection that occur in the learning situation. To assure authenticity in assessment, MANCOSA may deploy measures such as student authentication, moderation of assessments and graded scripts and assessment proctoring tools.

6. TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

On an academic level, MANCOSA develops a profile of student achievement of specified outcomes in formative and summative assessments.
Formative data enables the academic to plan interventions to support student learning. Summative assessments ascertain a level of competence for a module or programme.
Student assessment performance is viewed as feedback on the achievement of the overall teaching criteria and standards and is used as part of a systematic monitoring by quality assurance of teaching and learning, and assessment quality.

6.1 Summative and Formative Assessment

Both types of assessment are integral components of all modules within a programme.

6.1.1 Formative Assessment

Formative assessment measures consistency of performance and provides feedback to students through contact, support, and structure to the learning experiences of students. It is a key motivator of learning.

Formative assessment refers to assessment that takes place during the process of learning and teaching and is intended to:

- support the learning and teaching process;
- provide feedback to the student on his/her progress;
- identify the student's strengths and weaknesses;
- assist in the planning of future learning;
- be developmental in nature and contribute to the student's capacity for self-evaluation;
- Assist with decision-making regarding the readiness of the student to do a summative assessment.

6.1.2 Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is conducted for the purpose of making a judgement about the level of competence of a student in relation to the outcomes of a module and/or programme. The result of such a formal assessment is expressed as a mark reflecting a numeric and letter grade. The minimum number of summative assessment opportunities granted is one per module within a programme.

6.1.3 Supplementary Summative Assessments

To be eligible for a supplementary summative assessment, students must earn a minimum percentage from their combined year mark and summative mark. If a student either fails the final summative assessment or is granted an aegrotat assessment, the year mark will contribute to their eligibility for a supplementary assessment. However, it is important to note that the Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee will carefully review and scrutinize all requests for supplementary assessments.

6.2 Grading of Assessments

Percentages will be awarded when marking and 50% constitutes a pass mark for all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Sub-minimum requirements may apply to selected programmes as stipulated in the programme handbooks.

6.3 Feedback

Instructional feedback is fundamental to the learning process. Academics are expected to provide timely feedback that identifies where misunderstandings have occurred and the ways in which the student can improve on a marked assessment. Feedback should be individualised to the specific student's attempts whenever possible and practicable. Generic feedback should also be given in answers/ guidelines to self-assessed tasks and academic- marked assessments. Feedback on formative assessments must reach students before they commence with their summative assessment. Based on the current landscape of online distance education, MANCOSA strives to a 30-day period for the release of formative and summative results as the maximum waiting time. This communicated timeline is a precautionary measure as results are often released in shorter time frames, but the turnaround time for the release of results may be subject to potential variables. From a policy perspective, MANCOSA is committed to ensuring that the release of formative and summative assessment results will not exceed 30 days. Notably, summative assessment results are not released individually, but rather as a collective for all modules a student is registered for within a programme. The allotted turnaround time for assessment feedback ensures that marking is of the highest possible standard and that quality is not compromised. MANCOSA's academic calendar is structured to accommodate adequate marking time to meet this requirement.

6.4 Student responsibility

Students are responsible for incorporating assessment feedback in their learning; making use of the assessment criteria that they are given; being aware of the rules, policies and other documents related

to the assessment of a module; and to provide academics with feedback on the assessment methods used and their assessment practices.

6.5 Students with disabilities

MANCOSA is committed to ensuring fair treatment for all its students. The Assessments Department will collaborate with the relevant academic programme leader to decide for students with special needs resulting from disabilities including aspects such as available learning centres, time for completion of the Summative Assessment and mode of the assessment (taped, oral, Braille, use of laptops, etc.) at the expense of the student.

7. QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee will oversee and monitor the implementation of the Assessment Policy. The culture of ongoing reflection and research into the quality of assessment policies, principles and practices should be a feature of regular practice.

7.1 Policy review and revision cycles

This policy will be reviewed and approved every third year by the relevant stakeholders, including the Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee, as well as the Academic Executive Committee, and revised every six years unless circumstances, such as a change in higher education policy, dictate that there should be an earlier review and revision. The Learning and Teaching Committee will periodically review criteria in particular subjects, giving immediate attention to new modules and modules that evidence poor student performance.

7.2 Examiners, Moderators and Markers

MANCOSA makes use of a complement of suitably qualified academics who perform the duties of assessment development, moderation of assessments and marked scripts as well as markers. Their functions and relevant training are highlighted in the standard operating procedure to carry out these assessment practices effectively.

7.3 Integrity of Data

Maintaining the integrity of student data is a crucial task in the education system, and it requires a combination of technological and administrative measures. One way to ensure data integrity is by implementing secure systems that prevent unauthorized access, data tampering, and other forms of cyber-attacks. MANCOSA performs regular audits to ensure that data is accurate and up to date. Quality assurance measures, such as system access control, 2-stage factor authentication can also help to ensure that student results are reliable and consistent. It is essential to have a culture of accountability and transparency to ensure that coordinators and administrators uphold high standards of data integrity and quality in their work.

8. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

A variety of ‘fit for purpose’ methods of assessment are used within a module to assess a student and his/her work as defined by the programmes and module outcomes.

MANCOSA is steadfast in its commitment to employing a diverse array of 'fit for purpose' assessment methods across its modules and programmes. The institution recognizes that effective assessment is pivotal in gauging student understanding and attainment of program outcomes. Each assessment method is carefully aligned with the specific objectives and outcomes of the modules and programmes, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of students' knowledge and skills. MANCOSA embraces a student-centric approach, tailoring assessment methods to cater to varied learning styles and preferences, thereby promoting inclusivity and accommodating the diverse needs of the student body.

Furthermore, MANCOSA's assessment practices adhere to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level descriptors; a commitment which reflects the institution's dedication to maintaining academic standards in accordance with national guidelines.

The specific assessment methods, structures and weightings for each programme and module are thus guided by the NQF level of the module and programme, the exit level outcomes of the programme and specific module outcomes, the nature of the subject matter and academic discipline of the programme, as well as the mode of academic delivery. Additionally, all assessment sub-minimum requirements for achievement are determined per programme. These assessment methods, structures, weightings and sub-minimum requirements are stipulated in the relevant programme handbooks.

The assessment procedures and methods in this section highlights the assessment types deployed per NQF level, the number of assessments and the weighting of each towards the result.

- All assessment activities are accompanied by a rubric and memorandum.
- With regards to the Assessment of WIL or Teaching Learning Practice for Education programmes, as applicable, the assessment outcomes and procedures will be detailed in the relevant programme modules.

9.1 Method of Assessment per Programme

9.1.1 Higher Certificates Programmes

Each module is delivered and assessed over a 5-week period.
The assessment method for each module on this programme is by:

Formative Assessment 1 – 4 –These are online assessments. These assessments are in the form of multiple-choice questions, true/false or a combination of both. The knowledge check quiz assesses your understanding of key concepts and theories and is designed to stimulate active and self-managed learning.

Summative Assessment – This assessment is in the form of a project and requires calculations and/or application to relevant theory. A project requires you to produce an authentic piece of work that is sophisticated/challenging. The project is related to real-world contemporary situations, whereby you can develop higher order thinking. The project will assess content knowledge and additional skills such as creativity, collaboration, problem solving and innovation.

- The assessment method for each module on this programme is by:
  (1) Knowledge Checks
  (2) Project
- Final assessment for each module is determined as follows:

Assessment type	**Contribution to final mark**	**Sub-minimum requirement**
Knowledge Check 1	10%	An average of 50% (20/40) across all formative assessments
Knowledge Check 2	10%	An average of 50% (20/40) across all formative assessments
Knowledge Check 3	10%	An average of 50% (20/40) across all formative assessments
Knowledge Check 4	10%	An average of 50% (20/40) across all formative assessments
Project	60%	50%

- To pass a module the following requirements must be met:
  1. the sub-minimum requirements as outlined above must be met,
  2. a final combined mark of 50% is required.

Note: Students will only be allowed to submit their project provided that the Knowledge Check Quiz have been attempted.

9.1.2 Advanced Certificate Programmes

Formative Assessment 1 – These are online assessments. These assessments are in the form of multiple-choice questions, true/false or a combination of both. The knowledge check quizzes assess your understanding of key concepts and theories and is designed to stimulate your active and self-managed learning.

Formative Assessment 2 – This assessment is based on a case study/scenario which requires calculations and/or application to the relevant theory. This provides you with a feel for the complexities of the working world and allow the theories, models, and research to be applied in practice.

Online Summative Assessment – This is an open book assessment that is similar in nature to the traditional examination. The main premise for an open book assessment is to allow you to answer in more critical and analytical ways, thus encouraging higher order thinking skills. An open book assessment

assesses the understanding of the learning outcomes of the module and tests the ability to understand and provide innovative solutions to complex challenges.

The assessment method for an advanced certificate programme is by:

(1) Formative Assessment and
(2) Online Summative Assessment

The contribution to the final mark is as follows:

(1) Formative Assessment- 40% and
(2) Online Summative Assessment - 60%

To pass a module the following requirements must be met:

- The compulsory completion of ALL assessment activities;
- the sub-minimum requirements as outlined below
- a final combined mark of 50%

You will be expected to attempt the online summative assessment, only if the subminimum requirement, as outlined above, have been met. The onus is on the student to confirm that they have met the subminimum requirements for the formative assessments prior to attempting the online summative assessment. If a student has not met the subminimum requirements for the formative assessments, they will be required to reregister for that module. MANCOSA will not be responsible for students attempting the online summative assessment without meeting the formative assessment subminimum requirements.

Assessment type	**Contribution to final mark**	**Sub-minimum requirement**
Knowledge Check	10%	An average of 50% (20/40) across all formative assessments
Case Study	30%	
Online Summative Assessment	60%	30%

9.1.3 Advanced Diplomas

Formative Assessment 1 – These are online assessments. These assessments are in the form of multiple-choice questions, true/false or a combination of both. The knowledge check quizzes assess your understanding of key concepts and theories and is designed to stimulate your active and self-managed learning.

Formative Assessment 2 – This assessment is based on a case study/scenario which requires calculations and/or application to the relevant theory. This provides you with a feel for the complexities of the working world and allow the theories, models, and research to be applied in practice.

Online Summative Assessment – This is an open book assessment that is similar in nature to the traditional examination. The main premise for an open book assessment is to allow you to answer in more critical and analytical ways, thus encouraging higher order thinking skills. An open book assessment assesses the understanding of the learning outcomes of the module and tests the ability to understand and provide innovative solutions to complex challenges.

The assessment method for an advanced certificate programme is by:

(3) Formative Assessment and
(4) Online Summative Assessment

The contribution to the final mark is as follows:

(3) Formative Assessment- 40% and
(4) Online Summative Assessment - 60%

To pass a module the following requirements must be met:

- The compulsory completion of ALL assessment activities;
- the sub-minimum requirements as outlined below
- a final combined mark of 50%

You will be expected to attempt the online summative assessment, only if the subminimum requirement, as outlined above, have been met. The onus is on the student to confirm that they have met the subminimum requirements for the formative assessments prior to attempting the online summative assessment. If a student has not met the subminimum requirements for the formative assessments, they will be required to reregister for that module. MANCOSA will not be responsible for students attempting the online summative assessment without meeting the formative assessment subminimum requirements.

Assessment type	**Contribution to final mark**	**Sub-minimum requirement**
Knowledge Check	10%	An average of 50% (20/40) across all formative assessments
Case Study	30%	
Online Summative Assessment	60%	40%

9.1.4 Undergraduate Degree Programmes - Year 1

Formative Assessment 1 and 2 - These are online assessments. These assessments are in the form of multiple-choice questions, true/false or a combination of both. The knowledge check questions assess students understanding of key concepts and theories and are designed to stimulate students active and self-managed learning.

Online Summative Assessment – This is an open book assessment that is similar in nature to the traditional examination. The main premise for an open book assessment is to allow you to answer in more critical and analytical ways, thus encouraging higher order thinking skills. An open book assessment assesses the understanding of the learning outcomes of the module and tests the ability to understand and provide innovative solutions to complex challenges.

Assessment type	Contribution to final mark	Sub-minimum requirement	Number of Attempts
Formative Assessment 1 (Knowledge Check Quiz)	20%	Compulsory completion and an average of 50% (20/40) across Formative Assessment 1 and 2	2
Formative Assessment 2 (Knowledge Check Quiz)	20%		2
Online Summative Assessment	60%	30%	2 (Only if subminimum in online summative assessment is not met and/or final mark is less than 50%)

To pass a module the following requirements must be met:

- The compulsory completion of ALL assessment activities;
- the sub-minimum requirements as outlined below
- a final combined mark of 50%

You will be expected to attempt the online summative assessment, only if the subminimum requirement, as outlined above, have been met. The onus is on the student to confirm that they have met the subminimum requirements for the formative assessments prior to attempting the online summative assessment. If a student has not met the subminimum requirements for the formative assessments, they will be required to reregister for that module. MANCOSA will not be responsible for students attempting the online summative assessment without meeting the formative assessment subminimum requirements.

9.1.5 Undergraduate degree programmes Year 2, 3 and 4

Formative Assessment 1 – These are online assessments. These assessments are in the form of multiple-choice questions, true/false or a combination of both. The knowledge check quizzes assess your understanding of key concepts and theories and is designed to stimulate your active and self-managed learning.

Formative Assessment 2 – This assessment is based on a case study/scenario which requires calculations and/or application to the relevant theory. This provides you with a feel for the complexities of the working world and allow the theories, models, and research to be applied in practice.

Online Summative Assessment – This is an open book assessment that is similar in nature to the traditional examination. The main premise for an open book assessment is to allow you to answer in more critical and analytical ways, thus encouraging higher order thinking skills. An open book assessment assesses the understanding of the learning outcomes of the module and tests the ability to understand and provide innovative solutions to complex challenges.

Assessment type	Contribution to final mark	Sub-minimum requirement	Number of Attempts
Formative Assessment 1 (Knowledge Check Quiz)	**10%**	**Compulsory completion and an average of 50% (20/40) across Formative Assessment 1 and 2**	**2**
Formative Assessment 2 (Case Study/Scenario)	**30%**		**2 (Only if the mark obtained in the first attempt is less than 50%)**
Online Summative Assessment	**60%**	**40%**	**2 (Only if subminimum in the online summative assessment is not met and/or final mark is less than 50%)**

To pass a module the following requirements must be met:

- The compulsory completion of ALL assessment activities;
- the sub-minimum requirements as outlined below
- a final combined mark of 50%

You will be expected to attempt the online summative assessment, only if the subminimum requirement, as outlined above, have been met. The onus is on the student to confirm that they have met the subminimum requirements for the formative assessments prior to attempting the online summative assessment. If a student has not met the subminimum requirements for the formative assessments, they will be required to reregister for that module. MANCOSA will not be responsible for students attempting the online summative assessment without meeting the formative assessment subminimum requirements.

9.1.6 Postgraduate Diploma, Honours and Masters

- The assessment method for each module on this programme is either by:
  (1) Formative Assessments (case study and Projects) and an online summative assessment.
  (2) The honours and master's programme have a compulsory research report and dissertation respectively.
- Where the assessment is based on a formative assessment and an online summative assessment the final mark is calculated as follows:
  (1) Formative assessment - 40% and
  (2) Summative assessment - 60%

Formative Assessment 1 – This assessment is based on a case study/scenario which requires calculations and/or application to the relevant theory. This provides you with a feel for the complexities of the working world and allow the theories, models and research to be applied in practice.

Formative Assessment 2 – This assessment is in the form of a project and requires calculations and/or application to relevant theory. A project requires you to produce an authentic piece of work that is sophisticated/challenging. The project is related to real-world contemporary situations, whereby you can develop higher order thinking. The project will assess content knowledge and additional skills such as creativity, collaboration, problem solving and innovation.

Online Summative Assessment – This is an open book assessment that is similar in nature to the traditional examination. The main premise for an open book assessment is to allow you to answer in more critical and analytical ways, thus encouraging higher order thinking skills. An open book assessment assesses the understanding of the learning outcomes of the module and tests the ability to understand and provide innovative solutions to complex challenges.

Assessment type	Contribution to final mark	Sub-minimum requirement	Number of Attempts
Formative Assessment 1 (Case Study/Scenario)	20%	Compulsory completion and at least 40% in each individual assessment and a combined average of at least 50%	2 (Only if subminimum in assignment is not met)
Formative Assessment 2 (Project)	20%		2 (Only if subminimum in assignment is not met)
Online Summative Assessment	60%	40%	2 (Only if subminimum in the online summative assessment is not met and/or final mark is less than 50%)

- To pass a module the following requirements must be met:

- the compulsory completion of ALL assessment activities;
- the sub-minimum requirements as outlined above
- a final combined mark of 50%

- You will be expected to attempt the online summative assessment, only if the subminimum requirement, as outlined above, have been met. The onus is on the student to confirm that they have met the subminimum requirements for the formative assessments prior to attempting the online summative assessment. If a student has not met the subminimum requirements for the formative assessments, they will be required to reregister for that module. MANCOSA will not be responsible for students attempting the online summative assessment without meeting the formative assessment subminimum requirements.

10. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY (PLAGIARISM)

Plagiarism is the practice that involves the use of another person's intellectual output and presenting it (without appropriate acknowledgement) as one's own. Therefore, in legal terms, this is a criminal offence. Students are assessed on the basis that work submitted is their own as per the declaration on the assessment cover page or dissertation/research report declaration. Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of information and other dishonest academic practices are considered as academic offences. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Word-for-word copying of sentences/paragraphs in an assessment without acknowledgement or with insufficient or improper acknowledgement;
- Downloading essays and/or assessments from the web and presenting these for submission;
- Presenting another student's work or research data as one's own work;
- Copying parts of any text without acknowledging the source(s);
- The use of someone else's concepts, results and conclusions or arguments without acknowledging the originator of the idea(s) or conclusion(s).
- Outsourcing of assessments to a third party with or without payment with the knowledge that these will be submitted for grading.
- The Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee will request, where needed, the Student Disciplinary Committee to investigate any allegations of such offences and will establish the nature and/or the level of offence and pronounce a sanction.
- Research proposals and dissertations/ research report are put through plagiarism software (TURNITIN) to ensure that information used in work submitted is not plagiarised.

To learn more about academic dishonesty and plagiarism, please refer to the Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy.

11. SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENTS

- All assessments should be undertaken according to the dates stipulated in the programme handbook and MANCOSAConnect for each programme.
- No late submissions of formative assessments will be accepted for all programmes.
- The rules regarding late submission of assessments can only be revoked in exceptional cases where there is evidence of mitigating circumstances (i.e. death or hospitalisation). In these circumstances, late submission may be considered at the discretion of the Assessment Manager provided that supporting documentation is made available within 5 calendar days of any assessment due date. Work commitments are not considered as mitigating circumstances.

11.1 Marking of Assessments

- All assessments are graded by relevant subject matter specialists.
- The graded scripts are moderated externally, for exit level programmes by subject matter specialists.
- The final combined grade comprising of formative and summative marks are tabled at AVC for ratification.
- In cases where a student is not convinced about the mark obtained in the summative assessment, permission to view the script can be granted subject to the payment of a fee.

11.2 Re-marking of assessments

- Assessments may be re-marked independently at the request of the student. This will be done at a charge per assessment and proof of payment must be submitted together with the application for a re-mark.
- In the event of a discrepancy between the original mark and the re-mark, then the higher mark will be granted to the student.
- Students applying for a re-mark must do so within 5 calendar days of receipt of the assessment result.
- Any student requesting a re-mark must fill in a standard MANCOSA Re-Mark Request Form via MANCOSAConnect.
- No re-mark will be granted on resubmission assessments.
- No refunds are granted for re-marks irrespective of outcome.

11.3 Re-submission of Assessments

- Students may be offered a chance for remediation in their assessments. This comes in the form of re-submission of formative assessments except for KCQ. Summative assessments only in the form of projects may apply.
- A student who obtains a mark of less than 50% for a formative assessment or summative assessment (projects) may have another attempt at improving his/her grade for that assessment.
- Application for a re-mark is not permitted on a re-submission.

11.4 Aegrotat Summative Assessments

- An aegrotat summative assessment may only be granted to students who claim and are able to provide evidence of mitigating factors.
- Students who do not attempt a summative assessment due to illness or circumstances beyond their control are required to submit proof to substantiate their claims e.g. hospitalisation and death certificates.
- A student who has qualified for an aegrotat summative assessment must write at the stipulated date and time. This is the final opportunity for the student to attempt the summative

assessment for the semester. No postponement or claims of mitigating factors for an aegrotat summative assessment will be permitted.

- A request for these mitigating factors for aegrotat summative assessments will only be considered if the student has submitted the formative assessments for the module/s concerned.
- An aegrotat application can only be requested for a final summative assessment sitting and provided that the online application is received by the Assessments Department within 5 calendar days of the missed final summative assessment.
- A student who does not pass a module after having written the aegrotat summative assessment will be deemed to have failed the module and will have to re-register for the module.

11.5 Supplementary Summative Assessments

- Students who fail a final summative assessment for a module may qualify for a supplementary summative assessment if the following conditions are met:
  (1) Submitted and achieved the sub-minimum mark in the formative assessments for the module.
  (2) Attempted the final summative assessment without achieving a pass mark.
  (3) An aegrotat summative assessment has been approved.
- It is the student's responsibility to check if he/she has been granted any supplementary summative assessments.
- A student granted a supplementary summative assessment must attempt the summative assessment at the scheduled time. No postponement or claims of mitigating factors for supplementary summative assessment is permitted.
- A student who does not pass a module after having written the supplementary summative assessment will be deemed to have failed the module and will have to re-register for the module.
- The supplementary summative assessment may be granted if all the required conditions listed above are met.

11.6 Right of Appeal

The following would suffice as Grounds for Appeal:

- If circumstances exist which materially affect the student's performance which were not known to the Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee when its decision was taken, and which was not reasonably practicable for the student to make known to the Committee beforehand.
- If there were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the summative assessment and/or formative assessment to create a reasonable possibility that the result might have been different had the procedural irregularity not occurred.
- If there is evidence of prejudice, bias, or inadequate assessment on the part of one or more examiners or moderators.

The time limit within which a student may appeal the decision of the Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee is within 5 (five) calendar days from the date on which the student has been notified of the result. This time limit applies to the appeal received by the relevant manager on the appropriate Appeals/Mitigating Circumstances Form. Any discussions with academic or administrative staff do not count as notification of an appeal.

- It is the responsibility of the registered student to ensure that MANCOSA has his/her correct updated contact details. It is also the responsibility of the student to check his/her email to ensure essential information is received.
- Any additional document should be the original, typed or word-processed, or hand-written legibly. Faxes and photocopies are not acceptable. PDF documents are accepted; however, the original may be requested for viewing to establish authenticity.
- Students must ensure that their reasons for appeal are as factual and specific as possible and fall within one or more of the categories in mentioned above.
- Reasons for appeal must be supported by evidence. Unsupported claims or unsupported allegations against an individual or a group of staff will not be tolerated. False information and defamatory allegations will be dealt with under the Student Code of Conduct.

12. MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

12.1 General

These are defined as unforeseeable or unavoidable serious disruptions of studies caused by circumstances beyond a student's control. All matters of mitigating circumstances must be approved by the Assessment, Certification and Verification Committee.

Students who wish to inform MANCOSA of mitigating circumstances must:

- Submit this in writing within 5 calendars days after the scheduled assessment date.
- Provide a full and complete account of dates on which the mitigating circumstances apply specifying the assessments affected. This evidence will be reviewed by the assessment administration manager and an appropriate decision will be taken.
- Ensure that the application is accompanied by independent supporting evidence, e.g. medical certificate for hospitalisation or death certificate.

13. ASSESSMENTS RELATING TO SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES

13.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Assessment for RPL purposes complies with the principles and procedures as outlined in this policy. RPL systems, processes and procedures are governed by the MANCOSA's *Recognition of Prior Learning Policy*.

13.2 Assessment and Language

MANCOSA's *Language Policy* determines the language of learning, teaching, research, and assessment.

14. ASSESSMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SPECIFIC NORMS

14.1 Marking in Accordance with Specific Norms

It is important to note that MANCOSA has specific policies and regulations on marking and moderation, and all assessment must conform to these standards. The criteria used for assessment is criterion-referenced, which measures performance based on a clearly defined and delimited domain of learning tasks. All student work that is formally assessed will be marked according to pre-defined criteria, which are explicitly listed for the student and linked to the outcomes of the module. The assessment criteria must indicate how marks are to be allotted against the expected task requirements.

Grades for summative assessments are provided as percentages and are not released until the work has been externally moderated and confirmed by the Assessment, Verification, and Certification Committee. Assessments should be marked objectively against the task as defined and against the criteria as approved. Feedback should be provided on formative assessments to support the judgement of the marker and the grade awarded, and to enable the student to identify areas for improvement. Summative assessments should also be marked objectively against the task as defined and against the assessment criteria as approved.

It is preferable for marking to be anonymous to ensure fairness, with markers not having access to the identity of the student whose assessment is being assessed, and the student not having access to the identity of the marker. This requires the use of student registration numbers on assessments rather than student names.

14.2 Assessment Criteria

All marking must be affected in accordance with the criteria presented in the table below.

A	Excellent 75%+	Excellent work which demonstrates an authoritative grasp of the concepts, methodology and content appropriate to the subject discipline.
B	Very Good 70 – 74%	Very good work which demonstrates a sound level of understanding based on a competent grasp of relevant concepts, methodology and content; displays skill in interpreting and analysing complex material; material well organised.
C	Good 60 - 69 %	Work that demonstrates a coherent response to the requirements of the assessment task; clear expression of ideas; uses relevant source material; demonstrates some understanding of the concepts; draws relevant conclusions; appropriate organisation of response.

D	Acceptable 50 – 59%	Passable but with limited awareness of requirements of assessment task; evidence of some understanding; some attempt to draw relevant conclusions.
E	Fail 0- 49%	Fail. Student has not demonstrably met the minimum competencies to warrant a pass

15. MODERATION OF ASSESSMENTS

Moderation comprises assessment moderation and moderation of marked scripts.

- The purpose of moderation is to determine whether the standard applied to the overall batch of marked scripts conforms to the approved assessment criteria and has been accurate and consistent.
- The purpose of moderation on developed assessments is to determine whether the standard of assessment aligns to the NQF level, module outcomes and SAQA level descriptors.
- Formal procedures for the moderation of developed assessment and graded scripts are the responsibility of the Assessments directorate. Below are the general rules relating to internal and external moderation.

For further information, please refer to the MANCOSA Assessment Moderation Policy

15.1 Internal moderation

- MANCOSA requires all developed assessments and graded scripts to be subject to a formal process of review before it is finalised. The Director, Assessments Administration, Academic Assessment Managers, and the academic staff responsible for moderation must implement a system that ensures accuracy, clarity and consistency in the assessment process. The nature of the moderation and any changes made to individual, or module results must be fully detailed as per the moderator report.

15.2 External moderation

All exit level assessments that contribute to the student's award shall be moderated by an External moderator. Below are the broad policy guidelines on external moderation:

- MANCOSA appoints external moderators for a 3-year period, which can be renewed for a further 3 years in their respective areas of expertise.
- External moderators are required to moderate the standards achieved against the criteria set for the assessment and verify the validity of the grades awarded. External moderators must therefore remain aware of the reasons why markers have assigned the chosen grades. They must thus have access to comments made on the work and be informed of grades assigned by markers.
- External moderation of developed assessments is to determine whether the standard of assessment aligns to the NQF level, module outcomes and SAQA level descriptors.

- The Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee meeting should only be held after the external moderators have had the opportunity to scrutinise and moderate scripts for all the assessment types in a module. The basis on which work is selected for scrutiny by the external moderators must be agreed beforehand (normally a sample of about 10% of scripts over 30 scripts otherwise, all scripts are usually reviewed – based on borderlines, fails and distinctions). Where work contributes to a student's final award, the external moderator must supervise the full range of grades, with particular emphasis on those near to the boundaries between classifications. A clear schedule must be set for the dispatch and return of work for scrutiny.
- In exceptional circumstances, following external moderation, it may be agreed to scale a set of marks, up or down. MANCOSA requires that this be done only in exceptional circumstances and where it is agreed that scaling is the most appropriate action. It should be applied within narrow limits and +/-10 proposed as a maximum. However, it will lie at the discretion of the Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee, with Academic EXCO oversight.
- Where it is evident that the level of the task was not appropriate to the level of award or where there was some general problem with the assessment such as an ambiguity which affected all students, detailed reports must be generated by the external moderators and these need to be reviewed by the relevant academic assessment manager for decision-making. The Assessment, Verification and Certification Committee has the final responsibility of deciding on the most appropriate and academically sound course of action to address the problem.

15.3 Assessment of Dissertations and Theses

Refer to the Research Policy for relevant details

15.4 Marks

a. VERIFICATION

It is important to ensure that the quality of the assessment processes is monitored effectively. The Assessment, Verification and Certification committee plays a critical role in this regard, from verifying the correctness and accuracy of recorded marks to analysing all moderator reports and confirming or overturning their findings. They operate within the academic governance structure to ensure that all assessment processes meet the required standards.

b. ASSESSMENT MARK ADJUSTMENTS

MANCOSA acknowledges that variation and inconsistency is an ongoing potential risk in assessment, and as such has outlined the parameters under which mark adjustments may be implemented to address variation and inconsistency in assessment. In doing so, MANCOSA aims to balance the need for fairness, consistency, and academic rigor with the goal of supporting student progress and success. Mark adjustments should only be made when there is sufficient evidence to support the need for them, and that they should be conducted in a transparent and objective manner to maintain the integrity of the assessment process. Assessments may require adjustment under the following circumstances.

- As a result of recommendations from a moderation process.
- A decision to condone boarder-line marks has been taken by the Assessment, Verification and Certification (AVC) committee (minutes of this should be available).
- Mark adjustments may be conducted on summative for questions or assessment instruments that were found to be misaligned to the relevant NQF level descriptor and associated competency expectations, or for questions that were not accurately assessed in the initial marking process.
- Additionally, mark adjustments may be made to account for any errors or discrepancies that may have occurred during the marking process, such as incorrect marking or incorrect recording of marks (in which case the standard mark adjustment form needs to be completed and authorized).
- External factors which may have impacted students' ability to complete an assessment fairly, such as a technical glitch or system failures during online assessments.

16. ASSESSMENT RECORDS AND REPORTING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

To meet the requirements of the HEQC, MANCOSA has aligned its internal Student Information System (SIS) to the reporting requirements of SAQA developed a system for maintaining and updating detailed information about past, present and potential students.

The following information should form an integral part of student records and reporting to the National Learner Records Database (NLRD):

- Name, unique student number and ID/Passport number;
- Contact details of student;
- Demographic information (age, gender, geographical location, racial group – for equity plans occupation);
- Education and training background and experience (prior qualifications, prior learning, and previous experience, learning skills, language skills and preference);
- Special learning needs (relevant disabilities or learning difficulties);
- Additional learning needs (necessary experience and knowledge of relevant technology);
- Resource factors (place and time of learning, access to resources, technology, financial resources for additional learning or support materials);
- Motivation for entering a programme of learning;
- Programmes for which the student is registered;
- Performance during programme; and
- Achievement during and at the end of the programme

In addition, to enable SAQA to maintain accurate information on national learner and learning profiles, this information can serve many of the quality requirements of the provider. This information is also used to design learning programmes or modules within programmes or to NQF standards, materials and student support systems and services. Updating and reviewing this information in a formal and regular way allows MANCOSA to develop a flexible and student-centred approach to learning provision and assessment [MANCOSA POLICY DOCUMENT; 2014].

17. PERSONAL INFORMATION HANDLING AT MANCOSA

POPIA, which stands for the Protection of Personal Information Act, is a South African data protection law that regulates the processing of personal information. The purpose of POPIA is to ensure that the handling of personal information is done in a manner that respects individuals' privacy rights and protects their personal data.
This policy ensures compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) and aims to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of an individuals' personal data.

Purpose: MANCOSA collects and processes personal information during assessments for the sole purpose of appointing academic staff, remuneration of academic staff, onboarding to MANCOSA's information systems, preauthorisation and authentication to access MANCOSA assessments and assessing students' academic performance. The data collected will be relevant, adequate, and not excessive for the intended purpose. Refer to MANCOSA Privacy Policy and PAIA manual.

Lawful Basis: All processing of personal information during assessments will be conducted in accordance with the lawful bases stipulated in POPIA, including the necessity of processing for the legitimate interests pursued by MANCOSA or the data subject's consent where applicable.

Data Security: MANCOSA will implement appropriate technical and organizational measures to ensure the security and confidentiality of personal information collected during assessments. This includes safeguards against unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, and destruction of data. Refer to IT Policy.

Data Retention: Personal information obtained during assessments will be retained only for as long as necessary to fulfil the purpose for which it was collected, or as required by applicable laws and regulations. Once the retention period expires, the data will be securely deleted or anonymized. Refer to Data Retention and Destruction Policy.

The department is dedicated in its commitment to adhering to principles and regulations outlined in the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA).

18. REVIEW

This policy is a living document hence it will be reviewed every 3 years to ensure institutional relevance and regulatory compliance.