FACULTY OF SCIENCE

RULES and RECOMMENDATIONS

for

EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT

in

UNDERGRADUATE MODULES

(for implementation in 2025)

1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1   Overall requirements

The Faculty of Science (FoS) subscribes to Stellenbosch University's Assessment Policy and the Assessments and Promotions Chapter in the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar. The university-wide assessment rules given in the SU Calendar and the faculty-specific rules and recommendations in this document replace the rules for the previous examination and flexible assessment systems and are **applicable from 2023 onwards** for assessments in all undergraduate modules.

In the Faculty of Science,

> *We design assessments that aim to impact students' learning positively and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning through, amongst others, using feedback constructively and creating opportunities for assimilating new knowledge. We strive for assessments that are authentic (in the sense of the SU Assessment Policy) and fair and that do not overload lecturers, teaching assistants, or students.*

The purpose of the Faculty of Science rules and regulations for effective assessment is to accommodate the current variety of assessment strategies and to allow for the introduction of new strategies, whilst being aligned with the SU Assessment Policy and SU Assessments and Promotions Chapter. For ease of reading we have used the headings and corresponding numbering of the latter document.

These rules are purposefully broad. Furthermore, rules that are already stipulated in other assessment documents (yearbook and assessment policy) are not reiterated, or repeated. The only instances where a rule is repeated is for the purpose of clarifying it for the Faculty of Science context.

The assessment of Master's theses and Doctoral dissertations are addressed in the Faculty of Science Postgraduate Guidelines. The assessment of modules offered for honours degrees and structured MSc degrees are addressed in the Faculty of Science Postgraduate Module Guidelines (being formulated by the Vice-Dean (Research and Postgraduate Students).

In case of queries not covered by the contents of this document, please contact the Vice-Dean (Teaching and Learning) for advice.

1.2 Scope of application and applicable assessment rules

The Faculty of Science's Rules and Recommendations for Effective Assessment aim to promote assessment practices that capture the spirit of the SU Assessment Policy. In doing so, the understanding is that lecturers are best placed to make carefully considered, achievable, and defensible assessment decisions that align with the module outcomes and learning opportunities. It assumes learning, on the side of both students and lecturers, as the starting point, and conceptualizes assessment as a two-way conversation. It operates from the following key premises:

1. Maintaining a fair and achievable workload for lecturers, teaching assistants, and students throughout the semester, for example through spreading assessments over the course of the semester.
2. Promoting assessment as a two-way conversation between colleagues as well as between lecturers and students, for example through moderation conversations as well as the assessment information in the module framework and the results of, or feedback on, formative assessment tasks such as tutorials.
3. Viewing assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process, that includes opportunities to learn the required evaluative judgement, such as tutorials.
4. An opportunity for students to learn, improve and show their mastery of the outcomes in a way that is fair, reliable, and of the required integrity, for example, allowing another opportunity for high-stakes tasks with sub-minima.
5. Uniform and clear communication.

For each module there will be:
- An **assessment strategy** determining the use of the A1 and/or AF assessment period and the A2 and A3 assessment periods (as described in Section 4). This will be communicated in the module framework.
- An **assessment plan** which will provide in the explicit details (as described in Section 6). This will be communicated in the module framework.

The FoS Teaching and Learning Programme Committee will not be monitoring or regulating the assessment plans but may offer advice and/or require access to these as the need arise (for example, when responding to student queries in consultation with colleagues). The FoS Teaching and Learning Programme Committee will need to be advised of changes to the assessment strategy for a module. If such changes are to be made while the module is being offered – then this will need to be approved by the FoS Teaching and Learning Programme Committee.

2   SUBJECT AND MODULE TYPES

In the Faculty of Science, use is made of all the subject and module types listed under 'Subject and Module Types' in the [SU General Yearbook](#) Assessment and Promotions Chapter.

3   MARK TYPES AND PASSING A MODULE

In the Faculty of Science,

1. The following mark types, as described in Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the [SU Calendar](#), will be recorded on SUNStudent:

    a) For all modules, use is made of the Final Mark (FM).

    b) For all semester modules, use is made of marks for A1 and/or AF and A2.

    c) For all year modules, use is made of marks for A1S1 and/or AFS1, A2S1, MYM, A1S2 and/or AFS2, MTD, A2S2.

    d) For some modules, use is made of the mark for A3.

    e) For all modules, unless otherwise specified, use is made of the Dean's Concession Assessment mark (DCA).

2. For each module the **assessment strategy** (see Section 5) and the **assessment plan** (see Section 6) will provide specific details of how the Final Mark (FM) is calculated.

3. The examination assessment system and associated terminology of class mark and examination mark will no longer be used from 2023.

4   ASSESSMENT PERIODS

In the Faculty of Science, the following assessment periods are used for each semester:

1. **A1/AF period** is from the start of the semester until the last day of the semester's lectures to allow for practical assessments and assignment submissions. This understanding means the A1/AF period consists of only the AF period or a combination of the A1 period and AF period (described in the Sections 4.1 and 4.2 of the SU Assessment and Promotions Chapter).

2. **A2 period** follows directly after the A1/AF period, as described in Section 4.2 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the

General Calendar (Part 1) of the [SU Calendar](). The dates are in the [SU Almanac]().

3. **A3 period** follows directly after the A2 period, as described in Section 4.3 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the [SU Calendar](). The dates are in the [SU Almanac](). Use of the A3 period is not compulsory. Admission to the A3 assessment is determined by provision 6.2.5 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the [SU Calendar]().

4. **A4 period** is used for the Dean's Concession Assessments (DCAs) scheduled in January or February.

5   FACULTY ASSESSMENT RULES

For each module:

1. There will be an **assessment strategy** that best suits the outcomes and pedagogical approach for the module, while meeting the rules of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the [SU Calendar]().

2. The Faculty's Assessment Rules and Regulations will be available on the following Teams sites: Science Faculty Board in the Channnel '[FoS Teaching, Learning, Assessment documentation]()'.

3. The assessment strategy and dates will be decided in the year preceding the implementation, in accordance with Rule 6.1.7 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the [SU Calendar](), deadlines determined by the Head: Timetables and Venues, and communicated to students by the Registrar.

4. Any changes to the assessment strategy and dates during the implementation thereof will be subject to the approval of the Science Learning & Teaching Programme Committee.

The Faculty of Science makes use of the following broad assessment strategies.

For **semester modules,** the options are:

- **Option 1**: A1 and/or AF covers part of the syllabus; A2 and A3 each cover the entire syllabus.
- **Option 2**: A1 and A2 each cover different parts of the syllabus; A3 covers the entire syllabus.
- **Option 3**: A1 and A2 each cover different parts of the syllabus; A3 covers selected parts of the syllabus.

- **Option 4**: A1 comprises assessment opportunities spread throughout the semester; A2 is an optional additional assessment opportunity; no A3 is offered.
- **Option 5**: A1 comprises assessment opportunities spread throughout the semester, and A2 and A3 are optional additional assessment opportunities.
- **Option 6**: specified variant of these strategies.

For **year modules**, the corresponding options are:

- **Option 1**: A1S1, A2S2, A1S2 each cover different parts of the syllabus; A2S2 and A3 each cover the entire syllabus.
- **Option 2**: A1S1, A2S2, A1S2, A2S2 each cover different parts of the syllabus and A3 covers the entire syllabus.
- **Option 3**: A1S1, A2S2, A1S2, A2S2 each cover different parts of the syllabus; A3 covers selected parts of the syllabus.
- **Option 4**: A1S1 and A1S2 comprise assessment opportunities spread throughout each of the semesters; A2S2 is an optional additional assessment opportunity and no A3 is offered.
- **Option 5**: A1S1 and A1S2 comprise assessment opportunities spread throughout each of the semesters; A2S2 and A3 are optional additional assessment opportunities.
- **Option 6**: specified variant of these strategies.

In the Faculty of Science, the two 8-credit third-year modules, Biochemistry 323 and Bioinformatics 312, are each offered in a 6-week block. So, the assessment strategy will not make use of the A1, A2, A3 assessment periods and will need to be explicitly in the Addendum.

6   GENERALLY APPLICABLE ASSESSMENT RULES

For each module:

1. The **assessment plan** will clarify

    a) the expectations for achieving the outcomes of learning (including, disciplinary knowledge and skills as well as SU graduate attributes) and

    b) the alignment of the assessment opportunities with the module's TLA approach within the context of the SU TLA Policy.

2. The assessment plan will be finalised no later than one week before the start of the offering of the module.

3. The assessment plan will be communicated clearly to all registered students as part of the module framework on SUNLearn.

4. Any changes to the assessment plan will be communicated timeously, as far as practicably possible, via SUNLearn. However, when changes to an assessment plan are due to exceptional circumstances (such as load-shedding and general safety, health and environmental issues) these may be communicated at short notice.

5. The assessment plan will include *at least* the following information:

    a) learning outcomes and the associated assessment criteria

    b) assessment strategy (as defined in Section 5) and assessment periods, including relevant dates;

    c) assessment methods (e.g. projects, assignments, closed-book assessments, practicals) and assessment modes (e.g., online or invigilated on-campus);

    d) criteria, if applicable, for admission to or exclusion from each assessment opportunity;

    e) assessment opportunities which are compulsory;

    f) sub-minima, if any, that will be applied in the module while ensuring that students have access to at least two assessment opportunities;

    g) final mark calculation;

    h) assessment opportunities for which the marks will be capped;

    i) arrangement, if any, for a missed assessment opportunity.

6. The chosen assessment plan **should include both formative and summative assessments**.

7. The purpose of **formative assessment** opportunities is to help students judge their own progress and/or obtain regular feedback on their understanding. These should be offered on an ongoing basis and early enough in the module to ensure that students can adapt their studying appropriately and in time.

8. For a formative assessment opportunity offered as a test a mark may be awarded. A tutorial, during which students may obtain feedback on their understanding, may be considered as a formative assessment opportunity for which no mark is awarded.

9. It is the responsibility of the lecturer to ensure that they create effective formative assessment opportunities. It is, however, the

responsibility of the students to ensure that they use these opportunities effectively.

10. **Summative assessment opportunities** are typically high stakes, with the purpose of awarding marks and deciding if a student has reached a specified level of attainment.

11. The chosen assessment plan **should ideally include more than one type of assessment method or different question types** (e.g., having both constructed and selected response type questions or using test and projects and/or assignments).

12. The chosen assessment plan **should distribute the academic and assessment workload throughout the semester** in order to make effective use of all contact time with students; to ensure an achievable workload throughout the semester for both students and lecturers; and to allow students time to assimilate new knowledge. To this end, it is recommended that:

    a) Lecturers provide an overview of the spread of notional hours for the module.

    b) Students be informed how many hours they should expect to spend on an assignment or task.

    c) Considering the credits and notional hours of the module, some contact time (e.g., lecturing time) could be made available for students to work on large assignments or tasks.

13. Students cannot be failed based on a single summative assessment opportunity (Rule 5.1.7 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the [SU Calendar](#)). If students for any reason do not use an offered assessment opportunity (for example, because of timetable conflicts, illness, personal commitments, religious considerations or leave granted by the Registrar), it will still be considered to be an opportunity offered to that student.

14. Careful consideration should be taken before implementing sub-minima.

    a) A sub-minima may be used to confirm that students who pass the module have achieved specific learning outcomes. This needs to be clearly communicated. For example, a module may have a sub-minimum for each of the practical and theoretical components of the module or a module offered in different blocks may have a sub-minimum for each block.

    b) In cases where sub-minima are used the rule that students cannot be failed based on a single assessment opportunity

(rule 5.1.7 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the [SU Calendar](#)) should be adhered to.

15. It is recommended that:

    a) Each Department/Division/Centre uses a standardised format for formulating the assessment plans for modules offered.

    b) In accordance with provision 7.1.9 of the [SU Language Policy](#), each question paper presents questions in English and Afrikaans and ideally using the two column format, with English on the left and Afrikaans on the right.

    c) In accordance with provision 3.1.2 of the [SU Policy on Intellectual Property: Protection and Commercialisation](#), each question paper should include the following statement (with the year changed to the current) in the footer of the front page:

        i. **Copyright © 20.. Stellenbosch University. All rights reserved.**

    All students should be alerted to provision 3.1.2 of the [SU Policy on Intellectual Property: Protection and Commercialisation](#), regarding unauthorised distribution and use of SU study related materials (including assessment papers or part thereof).

6.1 Timetable related assessment provisions

1. The assessment opportunities will be scheduled as follows:

    a) Centrally scheduled assessment opportunities will be done in accordance with communication and deadlines determined by the Head: Timetables and Venues (Stellenbosch Campus).

    b) All internally scheduled assessment opportunities for a module will be done in consultation with the SU Assessment Timetable and in consultation with the module coordinators of the other modules in the programme(s) for which the module is offered.

    c) Before planning a computer-based assessment opportunities in CUAs approval is required from the

Science Learning & Teaching Programme Committee as well as the SU Academic Planning Committee.

d) The last week of the A1 and/or AF period may be used for practical assessments or assignment submissions, considering the preceding points regarding scheduling of assessments.

2. The time allocations for assessments that make use of a time limit must be communicated clearly to students.

3. Changes to the scheduling and/or mode of an assessment that are necessitated due to exceptional circumstances (such as load-shedding and protocols for managing health and safety of all) may be communicated at short notice.

4. Any other changes to the assessment strategy (described in Section 5) and dates during the implementation thereof will be subject to the approval of the Science Learning & Teaching Programme Committee.

6.2 Admission to assessments

For each assessment opportunity the criteria for admission to or exclusion from the assessment opportunity must be clearly communicated in the module's assessment plan.

6.3 Allocation of final marks

1. The final marks for modules are calculated and entered by the module's home department or division or centre on SUNStudent, following Rule 6.3.1 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar.

2. All final marks are out of 100.

3. All calculated final marks must be rounded to the nearest integer, with the calculated marks exactly midway between integers rounded up.

4. For a module with sub-minima for different components or different learning outcomes, there may be limits on the final marks, as described in Rule 6.3.4 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar. This will determine whether a student may register for a module for which the module is a pre-requisite or whether a

student may need to re-register for the module and complete all or certain components.

6.4   Recording of results

1. SUNStudent, and no other platform, keeps the definitive record for the final marks for each module (Rule 6.4.1 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar).

2. Departments should not communicate final marks to students in another way, inter alia to avoid the potential for contradictory information.

3. The environment hosting a module is responsible for recording on SUNStudent, for all the students registered for the module, at least the final mark (Rule 6.4.3 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar).

4. All assessment marks contributing to the final mark that are not loaded onto SUNStudent should be made known to students on SUNLearn for the module (Rule 6.4.16 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar and in accordance with the POPIA act.)

5. A student may query a mark recorded, no later than 7 calendar days after the assessment results were published.

6.5   Discussing marked answer scripts with staff

Students may view and discuss their marked answer scripts with the lecturer concerned, subject to provisions in Section 6.5 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar.

6.6   Rules for student conduct at assessment

The Faculty of Science follows the rules for student conduct at assessments as provided in Section 6.6 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar. This includes, the time within which a student must arrive at

an assessment venue and when a student may leave an assessment venue.

All staff and students are responsible for ensuring they understand and comply with

- the academic integrity requirements in the SU Plagiarism Policy and
- the ethical and responsible use of AI tools in assessment practices provided in the interim SU Guidelines on allowable AI use and academic integrity in assessments.

The Faculty of Science follows the SU formal procedure for investigating and managing allegations of academic misconduct.

6.7 Accommodation of religious considerations

The Faculty of Science follows the provisions in Section 6.7 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar.

6.8 Accommodation of special needs during main assessments

The Faculty of Science follows the provisions in Section 6.8 of the SU General Yearbook Assessment and Promotions Chapter.

6.9 Moderation

The Faculty of Science recommends that there should be an ongoing conversation between the lecturing team, module coordinator, class representative(s) and the internal moderator, as outlined in the Tables 1-3 of the SU Regulation for Internal and External Moderation (as approved in November 2024).

The Faculty of Science appoints assessors and moderators in accordance with the SU Regulation for Internal and External Moderation (as approved in November 2024) and Section 6.10 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar.

6.10 Assessment to confirm a distinction

In cases of doubt about whether a student should pass a module with distinction or not, the Faculty of Science follows the procedure in Section 6.11 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar.

7 DEAN'S CONCESSION ASSESSMENTS

The Dean's Concession Assessments (DCAs) for the 2025 academic year will be written in January/February 2026 and are subject to the DCA rules in Section 7 of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar.

The default for each module is that a DCA will be offered unless explicitly stated otherwise in the module framework.

8 RECALCULATION OF FINAL MARKS AND RE-EVALUATION OF ASSESSMENT SCRIPTS

Marked scripts for assessment opportunities offered during the A1 period are ideally returned to students, whether on paper or electronically. In modules where this is not the case, lecturers should keep the marked scripts for a period of at least one semester after the assessments have taken place. Note that professional accreditation requirements may require that marked scripts be kept for a longer period.

The Faculty of Science follows the application procedures for the re-calculation of final marks and re-evaluation of scripts in Section 8 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar.

9 REPEATING A MODULE

The Faculty of Science follows the provisions in Section 9 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar.

10 PROMOTION

The Faculty of Science follows the provisions in Section 10 of the Assessment and Promotions Chapter of the General Calendar (Part 1) of the SU Calendar.