**Title: Assessment Policy**

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**Approval Authority:** Board of Trustees

**Document Owner:** Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Review:** The policy is subject to a periodic review every 4 years or in a shorter cycle as per amendments of University's Policies/ Regulations

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide academic staff at Gulf University to develop and implement effective, valid, and reliable assessment practices, so as to maintain both the academic standards of the graduates and enhance the quality of the students' learning experience. This policy details the assessment definitions, methodologies, and their roles in evaluating students' work.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to assessments of students' work in all programs at Gulf University.

## 3. Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **BQA** | Education and Training Quality Authority |
| **CILOS** | Course Intended Learning Outcomes |
| **C-TLAC** | College Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee |
| **HEC** | Higher Education Council |
| **NQF** | National Qualifications Framework |
| **PILOS** | Program Intended Learning Outcomes |
| **U-TLAC** | University Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee |

## 4. Definitions

**Assessment Criteria:** Assessment criteria describe what an assessor needs to see that students have achieved learning outcomes. Assessment criteria cannot, therefore, refer to hidden mental processes but rather must describe actual performance of a skill, provide evidence of an attribute or evidence  of understanding of the concepts, theories and principles introduced in a program of study.

**Assessors:** Assessors are those responsible for designing the assessment task and for implementing and marking this task. In the case of formative assessment, this is often the instructor responsible for the course. In the case of summative assessment, the assessor may be internal or external to Gulf University or a combination of both.

**Course Intended Learning Outcomes:** Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) describe the knowledge, skills and attributes envisioned to be achievable by students who have been enrolled in a course. CILOs, therefore, contribute to PILOs.

**Diagnostic Assessment:** Diagnostic assessment includes all forms of assessment that are used to diagnose a students' learning needs, to diagnose the need for further input by the instructor or to diagnose the need to adjust the learning program. Formative assessment is often used for this process alongside its primary function of providing developmental feedback to the student.

**Formative Assessment:** Formative assessment includes all forms of assessment that have learning enhancement and the provision of feedback to students as its primary purpose. Formative assessment serves to motivate and deepen student learning, to consolidate work done thus far and to give students a sense of their achievements and areas requiring further attention. Formative assessment always includes developmental feedback and is often followed by summative assessment.

**Instructor:** An instructor is an individual appointed by Gulf University to teach courses.

**Student:** A student is any individual who is formally registered in a program offered by Gulf University.

**Learning:** Learning is understood to encompass the knowledge and skills that result from engagement with the teaching activities planned and designed for a program of study. Learning is cumulative and can manifest itself in many forms and assessment needs to take account of this. New learning builds on and expands existing learning.

**Learning Outcomes:** Learning outcomes state what students should be able to do by the time they have completed the course or program for which the outcomes are set. Outcomes can include knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The attainment of outcomes is determined through the assessment process.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the copying of ideas and content from another source without appropriate reference. This can include the copying of work from another student. Where plagiarism has been detected in any assessment, the Plagiarism Policy and Procedures must be implemented.

**Program Intended Learning Outcomes:** Program Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) describe the knowledge, skills and attributes envisioned to be achievable by students who have followed a program of study. Demonstration of achievement of the PILOs is a necessary requirement for the award of a qualification associated with a program.

**Summative Assessment:** Summative assessment includes all forms of assessment that lead to the measurement of student learning, usually in the form of a mark or score, for the purpose of determining student success in demonstrating achievement of set outcomes. Summative assessment is thus the means by which student progress is determined.

**Verifiers/Moderators:** Verifiers/Moderators are those who scrutinize the validity and consistency of the assessment tasks through verification (pre and post-moderation). They are internal and external to Gulf University. The verifier/moderator has responsibility for assuring the validity of the assessment by checking the alignment between:
- The assessment type and content with the relevant outcomes.
- The assessment criteria and the relevant outcomes.

The verifier/moderator also has responsibility for assuring the reliability of the assessment by sampling the assessed tasks and checking that the assessment criteria and marking have been accurately, fairly, and consistently applied.

## 5. Policy Statement

Gulf University ensures that:
5.1 Assessment policy and procedures are in full compliance with the Higher Education Council's regulations. Accordingly, the University ensures systematic review of the criteria.
5.2 Assessment should be aligned to CILOs.
5.3 Assessment should be valid; in that it is designed to enable measurement of aligned CILOs.
5.4 Assessment should be reliable, in that its criteria are clearly articulated, can be understood, and implemented by assessors and verifiers/moderators.

5.5 Assessment should be fair, respecting the dignity and privacy of students including students with disabilities.

5.6 Assessment should be credible, by implementing measures to ensure student's own work, marking consistency, precise and accurate capturing of marks.

5.7 Students are exposed to a range of assessment methods appropriate to the CILOs being assessed.

5.8 All courses should embed authentic assessment approaches to provide an opportunity for students to reflect on real life context.

5.9 Assessment feedback should be provided to students regularly with specific information against relevant assessment criteria, about their work and how it could be improved.

5.10 Academic requirements and integrity are ensured through developing assessment and feedback literacy amongst students and staff.

5.11 Course instructors are required to provide assessment brief and assessment criteria to the students prior to each assessment.

5.12 Course instructors should undertake reasonable steps to ensure academic integrity of students' work when academic dishonesty is suspected.

## 6. Policy Details

### 6.1 Principles of Assessment Methods

Assessment methods are:
- *Developmental*, in that some assessments are formative and provide sufficient supportive feedback to enhance learning.
- *Valid*, in that they are designed to measure what they state they will measure.
- *Transparent*, in that the criteria by which students will be assessed is made clear to students, assessors and verifiers (moderators).
- *Consistent*, in that assessors will evaluate the student work against the stated criteria.
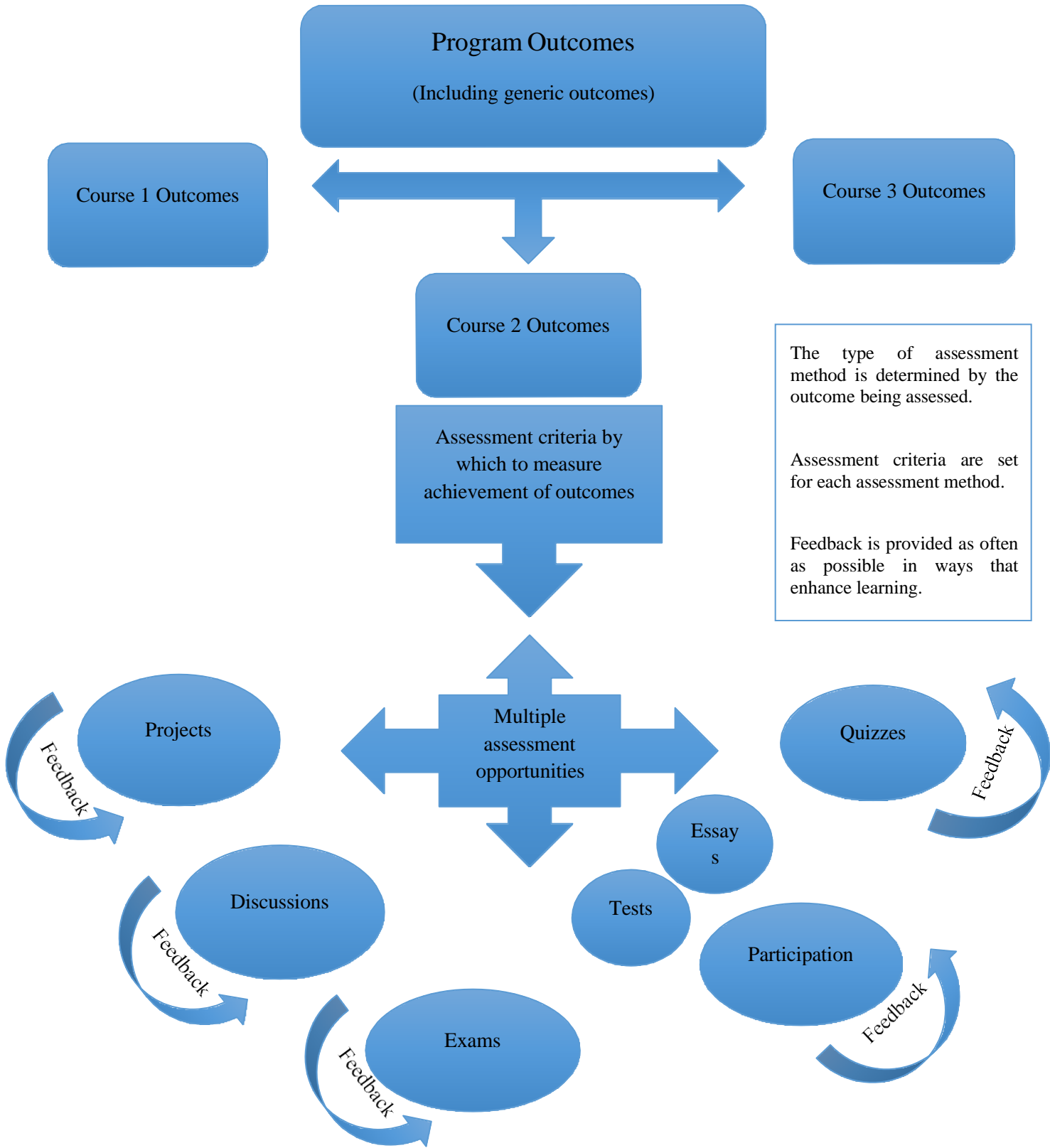- *Reliable*, in that they will be verified (moderated).

### 6.2 Alignment

The principle of alignment for curriculum coherence is central at Gulf

University. This means that the course materials, teaching approach, learning activities and assessments are designed to ensure that they align to ensure the attainment of the relevant learning outcome(s).

In order to ensure that there is alignment between the course outcomes, the assessment methods and their weights, the following factors are considered:

- CILOs be stated in the course specifications.
- Alignment of  assessment methods with CILOs.
- Weighted mark for each assessment method.

The following diagram illustrates the alignment between course outcomes and assessment methods:

**Program Outcomes**

(Including generic outcomes)

**Course 1 Outcomes**

**Course 3 Outcomes**

**Course 2 Outcomes**

Assessment criteria by which to measure achievement of outcomes

The type of assessment method is determined by the outcome being assessed.

Assessment criteria are set for each assessment method.

Feedback is provided as often as possible in ways that enhance learning.

Multiple assessment opportunities

Projects

Quizzes

Feedback

Feedback

Discussions

Essays

Tests

Participation

Feedback

Feedback

Exams

Feedback

### 6.3  Assessment Methods

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | **Participation** | Continuous process of measuring class presentations, communication skills, team building and other soft skills in the form of brainstorming, seminar, role-plays, practical exercises etc. Such participation shall comprise of student-instructor discussions during lectures and group discussions amongst students. |
| 2. | **Course Work** | Course work shall undertake a longer period of time than a single class and shall include assignments, homework, problem solving activities, case studies, practical, laboratory or group projects with report on particular topics. |
| 3. | **Quiz** | Short answer questions in a structured format measuring mainly knowledge and subject specific skills. |
| 4. | **Major Examinations** (Midterm and Final Exams / Jury / Panel Assessments) | Major Examinations (Midterm and final exams, Jury/Panel Assessments) shall be designed for the purpose of evaluating students' knowledge and various skills relevant to the course intended learning outcomes (CILOs). |

### 6.4  Marking and Assessment Verification

Marking and assessment verification is central at Gulf University. This means, that there are clear formal procedures for internal and external marking criteria for its courses along with formal procedures for internal and external verification of assessment to ensure reliability and fitness for purpose.

### 6.5  Moderation and Approval of Results

The principle of moderation and approval of assessment results is essential at Gulf University. Consequently, there are clear formal procedures for internal and external moderation of assessment and approval of results, to ensure reliability, fairness, and consistency.

### 6.6  Deferred and Late Assessment

Gulf University ensures clear formal procedures that provide opportunity to students, who are unable to complete an assessment due to legitimate and unexpected circumstances, to have deferred and late assessment arrangements.

### 6.7 Appeals against Results

Gulf University ensures careful appeal procedures that provide opportunity to students, who believe that the evaluation of their particular assessment task has not been valid, transparent, consistent, or reliable.

### 6.8 Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

Gulf University upholds academic integrity through the assessment process that sets out the formal arrangements for reporting and managing cases of plagiarism and academic misconduct.

### 6.9 Assessment of Students with Special Needs

Gulf University ensures clear formal procedures that provide opportunity to students with disability with support during the assessment process on a case- by-case basis, depending on their requirements.

### 6.10 Feedback to Students
Gulf University ensures timely feedback to students on their assessed work for multiple purposes:
- To be informed of their progress in the course.
- To enhance their understanding of what is expected of them.
- To deepen their learning of the knowledge content.
- To develop their awareness of disciplinary norms.

### 6.11 Security of Assessment Documents and Records

Gulf University ensures that proper precautionary measures are in place to uphold security of all student assessment documents and records. That means students are unable to access examination scripts, model answers, mark sheets, verifiers' (moderators') reports and Jury assessments prior to, and after assessment events. However, students' records are available on their request.

## 7. Responsibilities

**Students are responsible for:**
- following this document appropriately.

**Instructors are responsible for:**
- implementing this document appropriately.

**Heads of Departments are responsible for:**
- ensuring that all faculty members and students are fully informed of this document.
- ensuring that this document is appropriately implemented.

**Deans are responsible for:**

- ensuring that all faculty members and students follow this document.
- ensuring that this document is appropriately implemented.

**C-TLAC and U-TLAC are responsible for:**

- appropriate implementation of this document.

**University Examination Committee is responsible for:**

- appropriate implementation of this document.

**Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for:**

- appropriate implementation of this document.

**University Policy Development and Review Committee is responsible for:**

- systematic review of the effectiveness of this document as custodian.

## 8.  Related Policies

- Disability Policy
- Plagiarism Policy
- Policy of Mapping Programs to National Qualifications Framework
- Program Design, Development and Approval Policy
- Program Review and Development Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy

## 9.  Related Procedures

- Assessment Appeal Procedures
- Assessment Procedures
- Assessment Verification and Moderation Procedures
- Conduct of Examination Procedures
- Deferred and Late Assessments Procedures
- Plagiarism Procedures
- Teaching and Learning Procedures

## 10.  Related References and Standards

| | |
|---|---|
| **BQA** | Institutional Review Handbook |
| **BQA** | National Qualifications Framework Handbook |
| **BQA** | Programs-within-College Reviews Handbook |
| **HEC** | Academic Regulations |