# Assessment policy

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# Assessment Policy

## Conferment of the degree

The MSc degree is conferred by virtue of the successful completion of modules and a dissertation.

The final mark will be calculated as follows:

Modules: 60%

Dissertation: 40%

## Duration

The programme extends over a minimum period of one year full-time and two years part-time, and a maximum of three years.

## Requirements for the degree

The degree is conferred on a student who:

- Completes the degree within the prescribed time period.

- Obtains at least 50% for every module and at least 50% for the dissertation.

The degree is conferred with distinction on a student who:

- Completes the degree within the prescribed time period.

- Obtains at least 75% for the dissertation and an average of at least 75% for the modules.

If a student fails a module, he/she will have to repeat the module the following year.

### Modules which have a practical component

If a student fails either the online or the practical component of a module, he/she will have to repeat the module (online and practical component) the following year.

## Requirements for non-degree purposes

- A certificate and appropriate credits will be awarded to a student who obtains at least 50% for a module.

- A student passes a module with distinction if he/she obtains an average of at least 75% for the module.

- If a student fails a module, he/she will have to repeat the module the following year.

## MODULES

No final examination will be given within a module. Your final mark for a module will be compiled from your mark for assignments (including written assignments, presentations, discussions and quizzes) and where applicable, practical sessions.

## Assignments

Assignments may take on various formats, depending on the nature of the module, and should be completed within the scheduled time slots indicated in the study guide. For example, you could be asked to produce a written assignment on a specified topic, prepare a PowerPoint presentation, or participate in an online discussion. The number and the topics for the assignments will be given in the study guide for each module. The weighting of the marks for the different forms of assignments may differ depending on the module.

The Assignments and Discussions tools in clickUP will be used to present and submit assignments. Detailed instructions on how to use these tools are available on the Student CD. If the Web is inaccessible to the extent that it affects the timely submission of an assignment or a quiz, you must contact the relevant lecturer to make alternative arrangements.

A student will be given one opportunity per module to improve his/her mark, by resubmitting a written assignment, subject to the following conditions:

- o The student scores **less than 50%** for the **first** written assignment
- o The facilitator/lecturer does not correct the student's assignment, but sufficient feedback is provided to enable the student to improve his/her mark
- o The assignment is resubmitted before a memorandum for the assignment is published, and before the submitted assignments are discussed in an open forum.

If a student scores less than 50% for any subsequent assignments, there will be no opportunity to improve the mark.

**Written assignments**

- o The Assignments tool in clickUP will be used to present and submit written assignments.
- o The length of written assignments will be specified for each individual assignment in the study guide for each module. Preferably, written assignments should be no more than 2000 words excluding the reference list.
- o Assignments should be typed using the Arial font, at least size 10 and 1,5 line spacing.
- o The contents must be well researched and be in greater depth than was expected at the undergraduate level.
- o Assignments should contain references to recent and relevant literature.
- o The rubric provided below must be studied with care, as written assignments will be evaluated according to this rubric. Therefore, the following layout should be considered in structuring your assignment:

- o Introduction (containing a problem statement)
  - o Literature overview
  - o Discussion
  - o Conclusions
  - o Reference list.
- o All references and citations must be in the format specified in the Guide for Authors for the Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Research.
- o Written assignments will be assessed according to the following rubric:

| Criteria and qualities | Excellent | Very good | Good | Needs improvement | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Introducing the idea: Problem statement** | The topic is introduced, and groundwork is laid as to the direction of the assignment. | | Readers are aware of the overall problem, challenge, or topic that is to be examined. | | Neither implicit nor explicit reference is made to the topic that is to be examined. |
| | **10** | **8** | **6** | **4** | **2** |
| **Body: Flow of the assignment** | The assignment goes from general ideas to specific conclusions. Transitions tie sections together, as well as adjacent paragraphs. | | There is a basic flow from one section to the next, but not all sections or paragraphs follow in a natural or logical order. | | The assignment appears to have no direction, with subtopics appearing disjointed. |
| | **20** | **16** | **12** | **8** | **4** |
| **Coverage of content** | The appropriate content in consideration is covered in depth without being redundant. Sources are cited when specific statements are made. Significance is unquestionable. The length of the assignment is within | | All major sections of the pertinent content are included, but not covered in as much depth, or as explicit, as expected. Significance to educational/training field is evident. | | Major sections of pertinent content have been omitted or greatly run-on. The topic is of little significance to the educational/training field. |

| | 20 | 16 | 12 | 8 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | the given guidelines for the assignment. | | | | |

| Clarity of writing and writing technique | Writing is crisp, clear, and succinct. The use of pronouns, modifiers, parallel construction, and language are appropriate. | | Writing is generally clear, but unnecessary words are occasionally used. Meaning is sometimes hidden. Paragraph or sentence structure is too repetitive. | | It is hard to know what the writer is trying to express. Writing is convoluted. Misspelled words, incorrect grammar, and improper punctuation are evident. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 20 | 16 | 12 | 8 | 4 |
| **Conclusions:** <br> **A synthesis of ideas and hypothesis or research question** | The author was able to make succinct and precise conclusions based on the review. Insights into the problem are appropriate. Conclusions and the hypothesis or research question are strongly supported in the assignment. | | The author provides concluding remarks that show an analysis and synthesis of ideas occurred. Some of the conclusions, however, were not supported in the body of the assignment. The hypothesis or research question is stated. | | There is no indication the author tried to synthesize the information or make a conclusion based on the literature under review. No hypothesis or research question is provided. |
| | 10 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| **Citations/References** | All needed citations were included in the assignment. | | Citations within the body of the assignment and a | | Citations for statements included in the assignment |

| | References matched the citations, and all were encoded in the format specified in the Guide for Authors. | | corresponding reference list were presented. Some formatting problems exist, or components were missing. | | were not present, or references which were included were not found in the text. Format not according to the Guide for Authors. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **10** | **8** | **6** | **4** | **2** |
| **Timeliness** | Assignment was submitted on time. | | Assignment was submitted up to one week late. | | Assignment was submitted more than two weeks late. |
| | **10** | **8** | **6** | **4** | **2** |
| **Total: /100** | | | | | |

(Adapted from Education 690 Assessment Rubric-Criteria for Literature Review, College of Education, San Diego State University. URL: http://edweb.sdsu.edu/Courses/Ed690DR/grading/literaturereviewrubrique.html)

**PowerPoint presentations**

- o The Assignments tool in clickUP will be used to present and submit PowerPoint presentations.
- o A PowerPoint presentation should be well planned with an introduction, topic of discussion and a conclusion.
- o Explanatory notes should be provided with each slide:

  Click on **View**-> **Notes page**, and type the notes in the text box.
- o The layout must be simple and clear with attention to legibility and appropriate colour scheme.
- o Animations should be well planned and restricted to the minimum.
- o Please refrain from using any sound effects.
- o The PowerPoint file should not exceed 4 MB in size.
- o To minimize the file size of a presentation containing images, proceed as follows:

  Right-click on any image in the PowerPoint presentation
  Select **Format picture**
  Click on **Compress...**
  Select the followig options:

  > Apply to: **All pictures in document**
  > Resolution: **Web/Screen**
  > Options: **Compress pictures** and **Delete cropped areas of pictures.**

- o PowerPoint presentations will be assessed according to the following rubric:

| Criteria and qualities | Excellent | Very good | Good | Needs improvement | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Organization | Presentation is clear, logical and organised. User can follow line of reasoning. | | Presentation is generally clear and well organised. A few minor points may be confusing. | | User can follow presentation only with effort. Some arguments are not clear. Organization seems haphazard. |
| | 20 | 16 | 12 | 8 | 4 |
| Style | Level of presentation is appropriate for the audience. | | Level of presentation is generally appropriate. | | Aspects of presentation are too elementary or too sophisticated for audience. |
| | 15 | 12 | 9 | 6 | 3 |
| Use of the medium - graphics, diagrams, slides, transitions, effects, etc | Techniques and material used enhances the presentation. They are prepared in a professional manner. Images are appropriate and convey meaning rather than provide aesthetic appeal. Font is large enough to be seen by all. Information is organized to | | Techniques and material used contribute to the quality of the presentation. Images are not always appropriate and are sometimes used merely for unnecessary cosmetic effect. Font size is appropriate for reading. Appropriate information is | | Techniques and material used are poorly prepared or used inappropriately. Images do not promote learning in any way. Font is too small to be easily seen. Too much or too little information is included. Unimportant material is |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | maximize audience understanding. Details are minimized so that main points stand out. Balanced use of transitions and effects enhance user's understanding. | | included. Some material is not supported by visual aids. Transitions and effects are not clearly connected to content. | | highlighted. Ineffective use of transitions and effects. Users may be confused. |
| | **10** | **8** | **6** | **4** | **2** |
| **Depth of Content** | Explanation of key concepts and theories are accurate and complete, drawing upon relevant literature. Applications of theory are included to illuminate issues. Users gain insights. | | For the most part, explanations of concepts and theories are accurate and complete. Some helpful applications are included. | | Explanations of concepts and / or theories are inaccurate or incomplete. Little attempt is made to tie theory to practice. Users gain little from the presentation. |
| | **15** | **12** | **9** | **6** | **3** |
| **Accuracy of Content** | Information (names, facts, etc.) included in the presentation is consistently accurate. | | No significant errors are made. Audience recognizes any errors to be the result of oversight. | | Enough errors are made to distract a knowledgeable audience / user, but some information is accurate. The presentation is useful if the user / audience can determine what is reliable. |

| | 10 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Use of language:**<br><br>**Grammar and word choice** | No spelling or grammatical errors. Words are chosen for their precise meaning. | | Very few spelling or grammatical errors. With a few exceptions, words are chosen for their precise meaning. | | Audience can follow the presentation, but they are distracted by some grammatical errors and use of slang. Some sentences are incomplete, and/or vocabulary is somewhat limited or inappropriate. |
| | 10 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| **Length of presentation** | +/- within four minutes of allotted time. | | +/- within eight minutes of allotted time. | | Too long or too short; ten or more minutes above or below allotted time. |
| | 10 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| **Timeliness** | Presentation is submitted on time. | | Presentation is submitted up to one week late. | | Presentation is submitted up to 2 weeks late. |
| | 10 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| **Total: /100** | | | | | |

(Adapted from Department of Education Leadership and Policy Studies, 1998 and Huba, ME & Freed, JE. 2000. *Learner-centred assessment on college campuses. Shifting the focus from teaching to learning.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.)

**Discussions**

- o The Discussions tool in clickUP will be used for scheduled discussions on subject matter.
- o Your participation in discussions will be assessed and will contribute to the final mark. It is therefore important for you to participate.
- o Use these discussions to voice your opinion, challenge other colleagues' opinions and stimulate creative thinking through posing new ideas and asking pertinent questions.
- o Online discussions will be assessed according to the following rubric:

| Criteria and qualities | Excellent | | Good | | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Quantity** | The learner contributed regularly. | | The learner's level of contribution was acceptable. | | The learner hardly contributed, or did not contribute at all. |
| | **15** | **12** | **9** | **6** | **3** |
| **Organization** | Contributions are clear, logical and organized. Reader can follow line of reasoning. | | Contributions are generally clear and well organized. A few minor points may be confusing. | | Reader can follow only with effort. Some contributions are not clear. Organization seems haphazard. |
| | **15** | **12** | **9** | **6** | **3** |
| **Depth of Contribution** | Writer provides an accurate and complete explanation of key concepts and theories, drawing upon relevant literature. Applications of theory are included to illuminate issues. Readers gain much insight. Displays originality and individual thinking. | | For the most part, explanations of concepts and theories are accurate and complete. Some helpful applications are included. Readers gain some insight.Some evidence of originality and individual thinking. | | Explanations of concepts and / or theories are inaccurate or incomplete. Little attempt is made to tie theory to practice. Readers gain little or no insight.Tends to repeat others' ideas. |

| | 20 | 16 | 12 | 8 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Accuracy of Contribution** | Information (names, facts, etc.) included in the contribution is consistently accurate. | | No significant errors are made. Readers recognize any errors to be the result of oversight. | | Enough errors are made to distract a knowledgeable reader, but some information is accurate. The contribution is useful only if the reader can determine what is reliable. |
| | **20** | **16** | **12** | **8** | **4** |
| **Use of language: Grammar and word choice** | Sentences are complete and grammatically correct, and they flow easily. Words are chosen for their precise meaning. | | For the most part, sentences are complete and grammatically correct, and they flow easily. With a few exceptions, words are chosen for their precise meaning. | | Readers can follow the contribution, but they are distracted by some grammatical errors and use of slang. Some sentences are incomplete, and/or vocabulary is somewhat limited or inappropriate. |
| | **10** | **8** | **6** | **4** | **2** |
| **Responsiveness to other students' contributions** | Shows a good level of preparation and insight as well as initiative, clarifies, restates, interprets, synthesizes, integrates various threads and responds to questions. Summarizes when needed or | | Shows an adequate level of preparation and insight. Generally responsive to other contributions, feedback, comments, questions, and needs. Misses some | | Displays a lack of preparation and insight. Responds to other contributions inadequately. |

| | redirects the discussion. | | opportunities for interaction. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **20** | **16** | **12** | **8** | **4** |
| **Total: /100** | | | | | |

(Adapted from Department of Education Leadership and Policy Studies, 1998 and Huba, ME & Freed, JE. 2000. *Learner-centred assessment on college campuses. Shifting the focus from teaching to learning.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.)

### Self-assessment

- o Self-tests in the Assessments tool in clickUP will be used in some modules to provide an opportunity for self-assessment. Please consult your study guide for more detail.
- o Feedback will be provided on each question.
- o These self-tests can be completed as many times as you wish.
- o The self-tests do not have a mark allocation, and therefore do not contribute to your marks for the course.

### Quizzes

- o The Assessments tool in clickUP will be used to present, submit and assess web-based quizzes.
- o Quizzes must be completed in the scheduled time. (Refer to your study guide). No submissions will be allowed after the time limit has expired.
- o You will have only one opportunity to complete a quiz.
- o The submission dates for all quizzes will be available on the Schedule link on the Home page. Please keep yourself informed of these dates.
- o A quiz will be available for at least 12 hours. Once initiated, the quiz will only be open for a specified time.

### Practical sessions

- o Where appropriate you will be assessed during and at the end of each practical session on the skills covered in the module. Please consult your study guide for more information.
- o Assessment will be in the form of one or more of the following:
    - o A practical book to be completed during practical training.
    - o An open book examination at the end of the practical session.
    - o A written examination to assess your understanding of the concepts.
    - o Specimens to be identified.
    - o Skills will be assessed according to a rubric.

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## DISSERTATION

### Format

A dissertation, based on a research project (which need not be original) planned and written down by the student is required in partial fulfillment of the MSC degree programme. Assistance with specialised procedures (e.g. statistical processing) is allowed but must be acknowledged.

Drafting a protocol will commence in the module Research Methodology according to the format currently adopted by this University. The title will be identified as part of an assignment.

Promotors will be appointed to assist you with the preparation of the protocol. References and citations are to be according to the format specified in the Guide for Authors. A draft article based on the dissertation must be prepared for and comply with the requirements of an acknowledged journal that qualifies for subsidy and submitted with the dissertation, failing which the degree will not be conferred.

The following format must be used:

- o Introduction, including the aims and objectives of the study
- o Literature review
- o Materials and methods
- o Results/Observations
- o Discussion
- o Summary
- o References
- o List of illustrations
- o List of tables
- o Appendices (optional)

All references and citations must be in the format specified in the Guide for Authors of the Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Research.

## Assessment

The dissertation is evaluated in terms of the structure and clarity of the literature review, integrated argument, the use of factual information supported with references, the conclusions derived and language proficiency. Your supervisor(s) may expand these categories and allocate a weighting to each one. The dissertation is evaluated individually by the supervisor(s) and the external examiner who each submits a written report to the office of Academic Administration. This report includes:

- o The mark(s) allocated, and
- o A recommendation on whether the candidate should be examined on the dissertation in order to ascertain his or her knowledge and understanding of the topic.

The examination is specific and deals only with the topic of the dissertation.
A dissertation may not be conditionally accepted: it is either accepted (> 50 %) or rejected (< 50 %). In the event of a dissertation being rejected, a candidate may submit an amended version or another dissertation within two years and will bear the full cost of the examination.