

# ASSESSMENT POLICY



## OVERVIEW

<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of the Assessment Policy is to drive learning, inform learners of their progress and the role of grading assessments.
<b>Custodian</b>	UCT Online High School Principal
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Vice-Chancellor of UCT
<b>Version History</b>	Version 1, effective 21 July 2021
<b>Key Stakeholders</b>	Faculty, Learner Success, Learners, Parents



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## Rationale

Assessment is central to all teaching and learning experiences, and it is critical that all stakeholders – learners, parents, support coaches and teachers have as much knowledge as possible about a learner’s development.

Assessment is designed to improve learner learning, monitor effectiveness of programmes and provide future directions, consolidate the concepts being covered and provide an opportunity to embed the knowledge gained into longer term memory. A further reason for assessment (particularly summative assessments) is to give the learner a chance to become familiar with exam-based questioning and the associated final examination skills.

It is imperative that both learners and parents have a clear understanding of the reasons for assessment, what is being assessed, the criteria for success and the tools used to make consistent judgements.

The key aim of assessment designed by Valenture is assessment of learning, assessment for learning and assessment as learning.. The learner and faculty need to know what has been learnt and to enable learning to take place. Once a learner knows what they know and what they do not know, it directs their future learning. The same applies for teachers as it informs their teaching, interaction and the direction they give learners.

It is not this policy’s intention to set out the various means by which assessment will take place. Assessment practices are determined by the team members responsible for teaching and learning, pedagogy, and curriculum design. They will be informed by the requirements of each individual course and any requirements set down by our accreditation partners (where applicable). Parents and learners are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the assessment practices of their respective subjects, which are made available on the Online Campus.



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UCT Online High School has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information in our handbooks. However, we reserve the right at any time, if circumstances dictate, to:

(i) make alterations or changes to any of the published details of the substance and opportunities on offer or;

(ii) add to or withdraw any of the provisions, and opportunities on offer.

Guardians and learners are given every assurance that changes will only be made as and when appropriate, and you will be fully informed as soon as possible.



## Definitions

**PLACEMENT TEST:** For UCT Online High School, a set of criteria will be used to assess the suitability of a candidate for the online school. Should it be determined by the admissions team that it is unclear if a learner should be admitted, an entrance assessment will be administered to help with that decision. While entrance will be as non-selective as possible in order to allow as many learners as possible to benefit from this way of learning, there are instances where the online environment would be unsuitable for the applicant (e.g. if the admissions team is made aware of learning difficulties for which our programme is not designed to cope with).

**SUBJECT:** A subject within a programme offered by UCT Online High School e.g. Mathematics.

**BASELINE ASSESSMENT:** These assessments provide information about learners' prior knowledge before beginning a learning task, program or unit of work, and give us an indication of the learners' ability, both academic and behavioural. It also provides an indication of the learner's expected grade in each subject. This value will be the basis from which we will assess the learning gain of the learners. This baseline assessment will also be used in the development of the learner's individual learning programme and articulation until their final exam.

**FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Tasks that assess small amounts of learning. They are very important in helping a learner gradually assimilate the learning objectives being covered in an organised and continuous way. They, therefore, provide information that shows how well the learning objectives are being met as the course is proceeding. It helps the learner gauge how well they are grasping particular concepts or skills within the learning path ahead of higher-stakes assessments at the end of a term or semester. It also provides faculty with valuable feedback about the learners' progress which can inform future learning, intervention and guidance of the learner through their courses. The purpose of formative assessments is to provide information regarding how well the



learning objectives of a given learning task or program are being met. It helps the learner gauge how well they are grasping a particular concept within the learning path. It also provides learners and faculty with information about the learners' progress that can inform future learning.

**SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Tasks that assess larger volumes of work. They are in the form of tests, projects or exams and the assessed content covers a number of topics. This form of assessment gives a good indication as to how well a learner can integrate information from different topics as they can effectively assess higher-order thinking. It helps learners learn how to remember and use larger volumes of work, which is particularly useful in preparing them for final examinations. Owing to their significance in learning, they have a larger weighting. These assessments generally take place at the end of the teaching and learning cycle and give learners opportunities to demonstrate what has been learned. For grade 12, learners are required to write the CAPS aligned examinations at a physical venue allocated to them. These examinations are externally assessed and result in grades being awarded by the examination body.

**ASSESSMENT TOOLS:** Any task, requiring learner input, that gives us information about their prior knowledge, progress towards, or achievement of, defined learning outcomes.

**SELF ASSESSMENT:** The learner assesses their own progress, using a simple marking guide or rubric. Suitable for baseline or formative assessments.

**PEER ASSESSMENT:** Learners comment on and assess each other's work. Suitable for formative assessments and group work.

**TEACHER ASSESSMENT:** Tasks assessed by a teacher because they require higher-order thinking skills and more detailed feedback. Suitable for both formative and summative assessments.



**RUBRIC:** Rubrics are used as scoring instruments to determine grades or the degree to which learning outcomes have been demonstrated or attained by learners. Rubrics are generally designed to be simple, explicit, and easily understood. Rubrics may help learners see connections between learning (what will be taught) and assessment (what will be evaluated) by making the feedback they receive clearer, more detailed, and more useful in terms of identifying and communicating what learners have learned or what they may still need to learn.

**MARKING GUIDE:** A marking guide is very similar to a rubric, but it's simpler. For each marking criterion, a comment / model answer explains what is being sought, and provides a maximum mark that can be awarded. Marking using a marking guide is more detailed and less subjective than awarding a single grade.

**PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE:** This is a folder in which a collection of summative tasks are stored, to be assessed holistically as a project, or separately as evidence of attainment of exit level outcomes. Portfolios of evidence are also collected as evidence of the learning and teaching that happens at UCT Online High School and may provide valuable data during the accreditation process.

**TARGET GRADE:** The Semester Target is a grade set by the subject teacher for the learner to work towards achieving for a subject. This target is one which the teacher believes the learner is realistically capable of achieving should they work diligently and apply the guidance given to them.

## Assessment principles

It is of paramount importance that all types of assessment are underpinned by a set of principles that guide how and why different types of assessment are carried out. These principles are:





- All forms of assessment must form part of the larger learning process and learner experience.
- Assessment should cater for different levels of competency and take into account learners' potential for success.
- Assessment should be used to identify areas of both strength and weakness for learners, and to determine where support and intervention may be required.
- The purpose and desired outcome of each assessment must be explicit.
- All forms of assessment must be appropriate to the course level.
- The results of all assessments must be communicated to learners and parents accurately and timeously.
- Assessment should be focussed on developing the individual learner in alignment with the goals and mission of UCT Online High School.

## Progression requirements

Each subject at UCT Online High School has stipulated progression requirements (i.e. requirements that must be met for a learner to qualify to write exams, and to successfully complete the programme).

The progression requirements for each programme will be communicated to parents and learners at the time of enrollment. Learners will be required to familiarise themselves with the progression requirements of their respective programme and to ensure that these are met.

## Completion of assessments by learners

Learners at UCT Online High School are required to complete all forms of assessment that form part of the course for which they are enrolled by the assigned deadlines. To



facilitate this, learners will be given clear guidelines and deadlines for the completion of each form of assessment.

Where extraordinary circumstances do not permit a learner to meet the deadline for assessment, it is the learner's responsibility to timeously inform the appropriate member of the UCT Online High School team so that the correct procedures can be followed and a revised deadline can be set. In such circumstances learners must complete the outstanding assessment by the revised deadline.

The failure to complete an assessment by the assigned deadline, irrespective of circumstance, may have a negative impact on the learner's academic performance and may affect their ability to complete the programme for which they are enrolled.

## Grading

The purpose of grading is to enable

- learners to:
  - get a view on how well they are achieving the learning objectives.
  - understand and master the assessment objectives for their course.
  - learn how to improve academically.
- teachers to:
  - get a view on how well their learners are mastering the learning and assessment objectives of the course.
  - provide effective feedback to allow the learner insight into improving their performance.
  - use the information gained to remediate any problems learners are grinding with progressing to do their best
- the school to analyse these metrics to:
  - assess the learning gain of each learner.
  - review grading and assessment practices to make them more effective and to enhance learning.

- give a view on the quality of the academic offering.

## Grading of assessments

Grading of assessments needs to take place within set periods of time so that learners can receive timely feedback on their work and benefit from the feedback ahead of submitting their next module's assessments. The following policy stands for the grading of assessments:

**Formative assessments:** Learners are required to submit their formative assessments for each module by the deadline stipulated on the Online Campus.

**Summative assessments:** Learners submit cycle tests on the day that they are written and these are available for grading within 30 minutes of writing assessments. A summative assignment will be marked after the summative assessment is done.

## Plagiarism

Learners need to submit original work or reference work that is not their own. Plagiarism in assignment submissions is treated extremely seriously. Plagiarism is a code of conduct offence and any allegation of plagiarism will be investigated. If a learner is found guilty of plagiarism they may receive zero for the relevant assignment submission, and there may be additional sanctions applied that may have a material impact on the completion of the learner's programme.

## Describing Performance

The following codes and percentages for recording and reporting learners' performance in Grade 7 - 12:



RATING CODE	DESCRIPTION OF COMPETENCE	PERCENTAGE
7	Outstanding achievement	80 - 100
6	Meritorious achievement	70 – 79
5	Substantial achievement	60 – 69
4	Adequate achievement	50 – 59
3	Moderate achievement	40 – 49
2	Elementary achievement	30 – 39
1	Not achieved	0 – 29

## Grading Queries

Parents and learners may, where they believe there has been an error in the grading of any assessment, request that this be reviewed by submitting a request to the appropriate member of the UCT Online High School team.

Such a review, if accepted, will be conducted within three business days and the outcome communicated to both the parents and the learner.

## Continuous Assessment re-marks

Learners may request, in writing, a re-mark of an assignment at any stage of the programme. **Please note that re-marks may result in an increase, decrease or no change to a learner's mark.** A re-mark must be requested in writing to a learner's Support Coach.

## Academic Reports

Academic reports are sent to parents and learners at set intervals to provide feedback on the grades attained for each of their subjects.



## Other policies and guidelines

Learners and parents are expected to have familiarised themselves with all other applicable policies, procedures and guidelines which have a bearing on assessment at UCT Online High School. These include, but are not limited to, the UCT Online High School Learner Handbooks, and the relevant guidelines on academic integrity and the avoidance of plagiarism. They will be made available to both parents and learners when a learner is registered for their respective course and are readily available on the UCT Online High School website.