Examinations Policy

Code: FAC- POL-QA-01.01.08
Version: 2.4
Date: 04.06.2024

Belgium Campus iTversity
Quality Management System (QMS)

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1 Relevant Documents

This policy is benchmarked against and should be read in the context of the relevant legislation underpinning the principles against which institutional policies, processes and standard operational procedures are developed, implemented, and maintained.

Act	The Higher Education Act (101 of 1997)
Reference	CHE: Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) Criteria for Programme Accreditation (CHE; 2004)
Reference	Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma, and Bachelor's Degree Programmes Requiring a National Senior Certificate (DHET; 2005)
Reference	National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa (SAQA; 2017)
Reference	The Higher Education Qualification Sub-framework

FAC-POL-QA-01.01.05	Examination Procedure
FAC-POL-QA-01.01.15	Pass Requirements Policy
FAC-POL-QA-01.01.06	Assessment Policy
FAC-POL-QA.01.01.07	Moderation Policy
FAC-POL-QA-01.01.09	Invigilation Policy

2 Document Approval

CEO	Head of Education	Academic Dean
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3 Document Control

All records are kept in safe and in secure custody (either in records storage areas or off-site storage in case of hard copy records or on approved electronic systems in case of electronic records) according to prescribed procedures and guidelines particularly the Document Control Log provided by the Quality Assurance department.

Date Reviewed	Reviewed Version	Update Affected
14/08/2020	2.1	EP312
15/03/2021	2.1	FAC-POL-QA-01.01.08
01/01/2015	2.2	FAC-POL-QA-01.01.08
01/03/2023	2.3	Change of Policy Custodian
04/06/2024	2.4	Revision and update of policy

4 Definitions

Term	Definition
Access	The means of gaining entrance or an opportunity to participate in an exam.
Appeal	To make a formal request to contest a decision made.
Irregularities	Refers to the behaviour that amounts to a breach of a rule or custom. It can also be improper or dishonest conduct during examination.
Examination	Refers to questions or problems posed to which the examinee must supply answers or solutions within a specified timeframe. It is a summative assessment and is marked with a memorandum or rubric that specifies the required output artifacts with a marking guide that shows how marks are allocated to each component.
Examination Commission	Reviews and deliberates the results of the examinations. The commission consists of at least three members selected from the Executive Committee (Exco), the dean or deputy dean of the faculty, the programme co-ordinators, department heads or their authorised deputies or nominees.

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Examination Session	A period is set for students to take final summative assessments.
Exit Level-Module	Means a module that is offered during the last academic year and/or experiential learning year. For the Master of Information Technology the exit level-module is the dissertation.
Invigilation	It is an essential task to ensure the proper conduct of examinations. This process is handled by trained individual members of the faculty.
Online Examination	This is a proctored web-based examination system where examinations are given online through the internet or intranet using a computer system.

5 Acronyms

SRC	Student Representative Council
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
CHE	Council of Higher Education

6 Purpose

The purpose of the Examinations Policy document is to ensure that the faculty conducts the planning and management of the Belgium Campus iTversity examinations effectively and in all the student's best interests. It also aims to provide an effective examination system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.

7 Scope

The policy applies to every student granted admission for examinations at Belgium Campus iTversity. All students must ensure that they have read and understood the examination rules and processes before sitting examinations. If a student is uncertain about any of these rules, it is the student's responsibility to clarify this with the SRC, lecturers, or general Belgium Campus iTversity employees in the academic department.

8 Policy Description

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8.1   General/Introduction

- An examination serves as the final assessment of a student's proficiency in a module's exit level outcomes.

- An examination consists of questions or problems posed to which the examinee must supply answers or solutions within a specified timeframe. This assessment occurs at a scheduled time and venue under controlled, invigilated conditions. The venue can be a physical classroom or an online examination platform.

- An examination may consist of one or two papers. It may contain questions that require typed answers and questions answered by the creation of electronic artifacts.

- Certain modules may require students to perform an oral examination or viva voce. The oral examination or viva voce may occur in person or through an electronic video conferencing platform. Lecturers will inform students which modules the students will be examined in advance. This will be in form of an examination schedule or timetable.

- Before a student gains entry to a scheduled examination and the invigilated online session, the terms for using the online platform must be accepted using a digital signature.

- As an additional measure to ensure the integrity of the examination, a proctored web-based examination system or platform is utilised to monitor student activity during examinations.

- Minimum system requirements to complete the examination using the online system are:
  - Webcam – Any working webcam, integrated or external USB webcam
  - Microphone – Any working microphone, integrated, USB, or audio jack connection.
  - Google Chrome Browser – our assessment and invigilation online system does not support any other browser.
  - Windows 10 or higher.
  - Internet bandwidth greater than 1Mb/s. Greater than 2 Mb/s is recommended.

- A student will have to register to write an examination online and verify that the minimum system requirements are met. If a student's system does not meet the minimum system requirements the examination should be written on campus.

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8.2 Admission to Examination

- A student must gain admission to the examination for a module as per the requirements specified in the Pass Requirements policy. A student who fulfils these requirements gains entry to an examination and one re-examination, where the first examination's results cannot earn a passing grade of 50% for the module.

- A student enrols automatically for a first examination or re-examination during the next examination period.

- A student may cancel an upcoming examination if they are not ready to sit the examination. A standard form is available on the student portal for this purpose. It must be completed and submitted to the faculty at least one week before starting the examination period. The student will then be enrolled for that examination during the next examination period.

- If a student cancels an examination, they will only be granted the opportunity to complete just one examination during the next examination period and will not be granted a second/ or a re-examination.

- A student who misses an examination due to illness or compassionate reasons must submit full documentary evidence from a registered medical practitioner. Here, the student's enrolment for that examination may be cancelled. The student enrolled for an examination in the affected module during the next examination period. A student who misses an examination not cancelled in advance and does not provide valid reasons for the absence will be awarded zero for this examination.

- A student must sit the first examination during one of the four examination periods during the academic year. If this does not occur, the student will be awarded zero for the first examination.

- A student, who did not gain admission to the examination for a module because the Pass Requirements policy conditions were not fulfilled, may apply for special permission to sit the examination. A standard form is available for this purpose on the student portal. The student must provide compelling reasons why the conditions were not met and evidence of remedial actions to improve their proficiency in the module. These applications should be submitted to the faculty at least two weeks before starting the examination period. Special admission grants access only to a first examination. No

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admission may be granted to a re-examination if the student did not fulfil the standard conditions for admission.

8.3 Preparing for Examinations

- Examinations are set and moderated as per the Assessment policy and Moderation policy.

- The faculty prepares at least two independent examinations for each module. All these examinations will be of the same standard. The faculty will choose an examination for use during a specific examination period, but the selected examination will not be known even to the faculty members who set the papers. An invigilation schedule and marking and moderation schedule are published in the faculty.

- Before each examination period, an information and planning session is conducted in the faculty to review all regulations and logistics for the upcoming examinations.

- Information about any students for an examination session with special needs, and extra time granted are stored and implemented by the proctored web-based examination system.

- A student following a standard programme will never sit two examinations in the same session. When a student follows a personalised programme due to repeating modules from earlier academic years, the student may have to sit an examination from this year and another academic year during the same examination session. When this occurs, the faculty will guide the student to sit an examination, rest for a suitable period and then sit the second examination. The student may not leave this controlled environment until these examinations are complete.

8.4 Examination Schedules

- An academic year contains four quarterly examination periods plus a re-examination period in January of the following calendar year.

- The examination schedule for each quarter is published one calendar month before the examination period on the LMS, showing the date and time of each examination.

- Each day of an examination period consists of a morning session (examination commences at 08h00) and an afternoon session (examinations commence at 13h00).

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- Candidate lists (attendance registers) are published per module on the Learner Management System, showing whether the candidate gained admission to the examination for that module and the venue and seat number where the candidate will complete the examination.

8.5   Examination Regulations - Onsite

- Students should personally ascertain the location of the examination venue where the examination will be completed.

- Students must identify themselves positively at the examination venue with their official student card. The student card must always be visible during the examination. Students without student cards must report to Faculty to request an alternative form of identification. This alternative identification will be signed and dated and valid only for that specific examination session.

- Students must wear their official uniform, with the school tie, when sitting for an examination.

- Students must take their seats in the examination venue at least 15 minutes before the examination commences.

- Students who are late for the examination will not get additional time unless approval from the faculty was obtained before the examination.

- Should a student be more than an hour late for the examination, they must first obtain permission from the faculty before being admitted to the examination venue. A student may not be admitted at this time if other students sitting the examination have already completed the examination and left the venue.

- The invigilator is officially in control of the examinations in the venue and must be obeyed in all matters about the examination.

- All mobile phones and electronic devices, including smartwatches, must be switched off before the examination commences. All bags and other items must be placed in the area indicated by the invigilator for the duration of the examination.

- Question papers will explicitly specify when students may use electronic calculators or the computers in the venue during the examination. If not explicitly permitted, use is prohibited, and such devices may not be used during the examination.

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- Students may not make notes on any part of their body or their clothing, either before or during the examination.

- Students must follow all instructions as published on the question paper.

- Students are responsible to ensure that any electronic artefacts created during the examination are saved correctly on the examination server before leaving the examination venue. Naming standards as specified in the instructions on the question paper must be followed strictly.

- Students who take any book, document, or object (such as a tissue, a ruler, or a pocket calculator containing notes) that may aid them in the examination into the examination venue without authorisation and who then neglect to hand the unauthorised material to the invigilator before an examination is made available to the students, are guilty of contravening the examination regulations and expose themselves to disciplinary measures. Similarly, any student who communicates or attempts to communicate with another student during the examination will be guilty of contravening the examination regulations.

- Students must adhere to any announcements that are made before or during the examination by the invigilator.

- Candidates may leave the examination venue when ending their examination and are allowed by the invigilator, but not before one hour after the stipulated commencement time of the session and within 30 minutes of the official end of the examination.

- Students must maintain silence in the examination venue.

- Smoking is prohibited in the examination venue and students may not request to leave the venue for a smoke break during the examination session.

- No foodstuffs or drinks may be taken into an examination venue.

- Students who need to leave the venue to visit the bathroom must be accompanied by an invigilator of the same gender.

- Students may request paper to perform calculations. Rough sheets must be so marked and handed in for destruction after the examination.

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- Additional time may be granted to individual students based on recommendations by the Student Support Department due to specific medical conditions or disabilities. This information will be stored and implemented on the examination tool.

- When a student loses time due to a technical problem, having to be moved to a different seat, or power failures, the faculty will advise the invigilator and examination administrator what additional time to grant the student to complete the examination.

8.6 Examination Regulations - Online

A candidate taking the Online Examination through the proctored web-based examination system must also abide by the following rules laid down in this policy.

- Candidates taking the online examination must prove their identity before the examination by:
    - taking a photograph of themselves with the webcam (the face must be fully visible), and
    - taking a photograph with the webcam of a valid proof of identity including a closely resembling photograph.

- The Candidate is obliged to show the test environment by making a 360° film of the test environment with the webcam; this film must be suitable to enable our proctored web-based examination system to check whether the environment is in line with the requirements as laid down in this policy.

- The test environment in which the candidate takes the examination must meet the following requirements:
    - The candidate's test environment must be quiet.
    - There may not be any other people in the room.
    - On the desk or other workplace, there may not be anything except a computer and, in case the computer does not have an internal webcam, an external web camera.

- All other materials must be removed, unless explicitly permitted (Photo ID, email with link and activation code, books allowed during open book Test/Examination).
    - There may not be sounds from music, television, or any other sounds.
    - There may not be other computers or similar devices running in the examination room.
    - Lighting must be "daylight" quality and overhead are preferred if possible. If overhead is not possible, the source of lights should not be behind the candidate.

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- During the examination, the candidate's conduct must meet the following requirements:
    o The candidate cannot communicate with anyone or talk out loud (not to themselves either). Communication is allowed only in case of emergency, or for contacting the invigilator in case of technical disturbances.
    o The candidate may not leave the room after starting the examination.
    o The candidate must face the computer screen during the examination.
    o The candidate is not allowed to take screenshots during the examination.
    o During the examination, the candidate is not allowed to use any other applications than our proctored web-based examination system.
    o The candidate is not allowed to surf the internet and/or to consult digital data or web pages or to have these opened unless this is explicitly permitted.

- Wearing earplugs or headphones are not allowed.

- The candidate must always be dressed and behave decently.

- Computer/Webcam setup during the examination - concerning the requirements for the setup of the computer and webcam that are used during the examination:
    o It is not allowed to have desktop sharing software installed and activated on the computer.
    o The webcam and microphone required for the test/exam must be enabled and running.
    o The webcam must always be focused on the candidate taking the examination.
    o The candidate's face must be positioned in the centre of the webcam view and must be visible throughout the examination.
    o Nothing may cover the lens of the webcam at any time during the examination.

8.7 Examination Regulations – Master of Information Technology
The following regulations apply to the Master of Information Technology.

- Students should submit a notice of intent to submit the dissertation for examination. The student completes the form which is accessible on the student portal.

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- The supervisor that was allocated to the student must approve the intention to submit.

- The supervisor that was allocated to the student nominates possible examiners to the research and ethics committee. External examiners are well-experienced academics in their respective fields.

- External examiners are appointed to assess the dissertation by the research and ethics committee.

- Electronic copies of the final dissertation and examination instructions will be sent to the appointed external examiners. The turnaround time to assess the dissertation is six weeks.

- The external examiners will send their examiner reports to the chairperson of the research and ethics committee within the six-week period. The external examiner indicates the examination result as:
  - Accept unamended
  - Accept with minor revisions
  - Apply major revisions and re-submit for examination
  - Reject

- In the event that the external examiners or one of the examiners have failed to submit the report on time the committee will follow-up.

- The research and ethics committee will inform the supervisor of the recommendations made by external examiners. The reports on the feedback are anonymised.

- Student and the supervisor will address the minor revisions within a four-week period.

- In the event of major revision, the student will have a one-year period to rework the dissertation and resubmit for examination.

- The supervisor must report back to the research and ethics committee on the amendments to the final dissertation in line with examiner recommendations.

- The student will defend the results of the research before a review panel.

- The research and ethics committee decides whether the student complied with the degree's exit level outcomes.

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- The degree gets conferred at the next official convocation of the institution.

8.8 Irregularities

- If the invigilator is convinced that an irregularity has occurred during an examination, they will inform the examination administrator. For this examination the candidate's previous answers, be stored safely on the server. The candidate will be allowed to restart the examination but will not be granted any additional time. The invigilator records the date and exact time.

- After the examination session ends, the invigilator will complete an incident report and attach any supporting evidence, like confiscated crib notes, photographs, or screenshots.

- If any suspicious activity is detected by the proctored web-based examination system, the faculty will flag the artefacts or answers. The faculty member marking the examination can then be provided with recordings performed during an online system examination to verify that no transgression of the examination rules took place during the examination.

- The faculty will investigate the incident, and the findings from the investigation of the incident are reported to the examination commission for a decision.

- If a student is found guilty of dishonest behaviour, the examination commission considers the ' 'student's disciplinary record and imposes one or more of the following sanctions, as appropriate when considering possible past offenses:
  o The student is awarded a result of zero for the examination. In this case, it will not be possible for the student to sit a re-examination.
  o The student is awarded a result of zero for the entire module. In this case, the module is immediately deemed to be failed and will have to be repeated during the next academic year.
  o In extreme cases of theft of academic material or habitual offense, the student's entire academic year may be judged to be failed. The student will retain no credit for any module of their current academic year's programme.

- The student may be invited to a full disciplinary hearing if:
  o Deemed necessary to impose sanctions beyond the academic consequences enumerated above.
  o The student does not accept the outcome of the investigation and imposed sanctions.

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8.9 The Examination Commission

- An examination commission is formally constituted after each examination period. The function of this commission is to review and deliberate the results of the examinations.

- An examination commission consists of at least three members selected from the Executive Committee (Exco), the dean or deputy dean of the faculty, the programme co-ordinators, department heads or their authorised deputies or nominees. The senior officeholder serving on the specific instance of the commission shall chair that commission.

- Members of the institution's executive committee or representatives from student support department may be invited to attend the commission in an observer capacity.

- The commission uses the results and statistical analyses generated by the faculty.

- The commission may refer results for modules back to the faculty for additional moderation or for adjustment.

- The examination commission must formally accept the results of that examination period before the results are released and published.

- The commission will consider any irregularities reported during the examinations, reach a verdict, and impose sanctions if necessary.

- The examination commission may report their observations or recommendations to the faculty for consideration, investigation, or implementation.

8.10 Assessment of Examinations and Processing of Results

- The faculty assesses all examinations (electronic answers and artefacts) as per the memoranda, including assessment rubrics and assessment guidelines, created with the question paper, as described in the Assessment policy.

- Assessment of examinations is moderated as described in the Moderation policy. If, as per the referenced policy, re-marking is required, the process returns to the paragraph above.

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- Electronic result sheets and moderation results are created during assessment and moderation.

- Results are captured in the administration system and verified against the source documents, resulting in the result sheets.

- Results are not available or visible outside the faculty until the examination commission concludes its deliberations and declares that the examination period results are accepted. The results are released in the system and will be visible via the student portal.

8.11 The Promotion Commission

- A promotion commission is constituted after the conclusion of each academic year. The function of this commission is to review and deliberate the results of the academic year.

- The members and observers for a promotion commission are selected similarly as described for an examination commission.

- The commission uses the results and statistical analyses generated by the faculty. As described in the Pass Requirements policy for a programme year, it ensures that the pass requirements are applied correctly for each student during the completed academic year. This includes decisions on:
  o Which students pass the academic year,
  o Which students the faculty may promote to the next academic year with a personalised itinerary,
  o Which students fail and must repeat the previous programme course, and
  o Which students fail the entire programme due to exceeding the maximum time available or a maximum number of failures of a programme.

- The promotion commission may report any observations or recommendations to the faculty for consideration, investigation, or implementation.

8.12 Access and Appeals

- The faculty shall retain examination's artefacts created during an examination for a minimum of five years after the student successfully graduates or the period available for completion expires.

- A student has the right to view their marked examination with the appropriate memorandum used for assessment. Lecturers may review these materials with

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the student and discuss any decisions taken during the assessment. A student wishing to review their examination must complete the necessary application form available on the student portal and submit it to the faculty within two weeks of the publication of the results. There shall be no fee attached to the reviewing of examination scripts.

- A student may request the re-marking of an examination. The required form must be completed and submitted to the faculty within two weeks of the publication of the results. A student must pay a re-marking fee in advance. The examination will be reassessed and moderated within two weeks after the closing of applications for re-marking. If the re-marking returns a more beneficial result, the faculty will refund the student. The moderated result of the re-marking shall stand as the final result for that examination.

- A student enrolled in the Master of Information Technology, can only appeal if a failed result, by requesting a re-examination. A student must pay a re-marking fee in advance. This fee will be determined on an annual basis.

9   Review of this policy

Review and amendment of this policy will be done in line with the approved institutional policies and regulatory requirements. This will take place in consultation with the relevant quality assurance structures at the departmental and institutional level, under the auspices of the official custodian of this policy, namely the Head of Education and the Academic Dean.