



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

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The Institute of Ismaili Studies

Assessment Development Policy

1. Scope and audience

- 1.1. This document provides for the formulation and moderation of assessments, including the formulation and moderation of Assessment Briefs and the setting and moderation of assessment titles. It is for the attention of all staff involved in the assessment of a given programme, including External Examiners, the Head of Department, Programme Leader, Module Leaders, lecturers and markers (including second markers).
- 1.2. This document should be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents: Programme Design, Development and Approval Policy; Teaching and Learning Strategy; and Handbook for Teaching and Assessment.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of clarity, definitions are provided below for key terms used in this document:

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Assessment Brief	<i>Found in the Module Outline:</i> A description of the task students must complete as part of the assessment for the module, which is written in line with the requirements of the Assessment Specifications. Information about submission and/or examination will be included here.
Assessment Specifications	<i>Found in the Module Outline:</i> Details of how a module will be assessed, which contain information about the type of task (e.g. essay or question paper), including the weighting of the tasks relative to the overall modular mark and the target ILOs.
Assessment title	A task set to assess performance with regard to the ILOs for the module. These may be, for example, essay titles, essay questions, presentation titles, written examinations.

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
ILOs	<i>Intended Learning Outcomes:</i> The knowledge, skills and understanding that students should be able to demonstrate by the end of teaching and learning for the module. Each assessment component is tied to one or more ILOs.
Marker	A qualified expert who judges the student performances, assigning a mark out of 100 to each performance and providing contextual feedback both to justify the decision reached about the mark and to provide formative guidance for students to improve on their performance in the topic areas and/or skills in question. First markers work closely with second markers as necessary for the purpose of moderating marks. Names of markers are included in the Module Outline.
Moderation	<p><i>Moderation of Assessment Briefs:</i> Oversight of a proposed assessment model to ensure that it is appropriate for the subject area and the targeted ILOs.</p> <p><i>Moderation of assessment titles:</i> Oversight of specific proposed assessment titles designed in response to the Assessment Brief.</p> <p><i>Moderation of marking:</i> Assessed student performances which count for 40% or more of the overall modular mark are subject to second marking; first and second markers must moderate their marks: i.e. discuss their judgments to assure themselves and demonstrate they have arrived at a fair and qualified final mark for each performance.</p> <p><i>Moderation of unseen examination papers:</i> Oversight by the External Examiner of proposed unseen examination papers.</p>
Second marker	For any assessment which counts for 40% or more of the overall mark, student performances are subject to second marking or sample second marking. The second marker reviews the first marker's marks and feedback, provides their own marks, and then works with the first marker to moderate the marks.
VLE	<i>Virtual learning environment:</i> In the IIS' case, this is Moodle.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1. Assessment Specifications are proposed by the Module Leader in consultation with the Department of Graduate Studies and must be validated as part of the Module Outline by the Validation Panel before Assessment Briefs can be devised. Changes to Assessment Specifications require revalidation of the module.
- 3.2. Each Module Leader is responsible for liaising with the respective Programme Leader for the formulation of the Assessment Briefs, as well as to ensure that appropriate resources (books, articles, notes etc.) are available to students in order to successfully undertake the specified assessments. Changes to the Assessment Briefs require approval by the relevant department.

3.3. Assessment titles need to be developed by Module Leaders in consultation with the respective Programme Leader and ultimately approved by the relevant department before being issued to students (usually through publication on the VLE) as approved.

3.3.1. Questions for unseen examination papers must also be moderated by the External Examiner before being used.

4. Procedure for moderating Assessment Briefs and assessment titles

4.1. Moderation of Assessment Briefs: This procedure applies to all forms of assessment requiring:

- The production of written materials (e.g. essays, book reviews) where assessment titles are available to or agreed with students in advance of the submission deadline.
- A discursive element delivered in speech (e.g. oral and poster presentations).

4.1.1. All assessments agreed for a given module must be described in a comprehensive set of *Assessment Briefs*. The Assessment Briefs must include:

- All assessment components, including word count/duration, deadlines and percentage weighting relative to the overall modular mark (100%).
- An appropriate deadline, proportional to the work required to complete the assessment.

See the *Assessment Brief Pro-Forma* in regard to the appropriate format, content and presentation of Assessment Briefs.

All Assessment Briefs must be moderated before issue to students. For this, they must be submitted to the Programme Leader, who will review the information, liaising with the Module Leader as necessary for the purpose of evaluating the validity of the proposed Assessment Brief. The Programme Leader will seek input and guidance as necessary from the Head of Department.

Once moderated, the Assessment Brief will be published on the VLE.

4.1.2. In reviewing and evaluating Assessment Briefs, it is the Module Leader and Programme Leader's joint responsibility to ensure that:

Module-wise:

- All assessment components for a module are appropriately tied to the ILOs for that module.
- The set of assessment components address **all** the ILOs for the module in question.
- All assessment components are designed in line with the overall validated Assessment Specifications for a given module. All changes should maintain the spirit and purpose of the validated assessment strategy.

- Assessment components are distributed in an appropriately balanced manner throughout term time, avoiding an excessive concentration of submissions during Assessment Week.
- Assessment titles can be issued to students at the beginning of term, or, where they require student engagement with the devising and agreement of the title, that they can be so devised and agreed, with appropriate moderation, in a reasonable time before the submission date so that students can prepare sufficiently for the assessment.
- Provision is made for all assessments bearing a weight of 40% or more of the overall modular mark to be second marked. Furthermore, in such cases, to ensure that second marking can be accomplished within a reasonable timeframe so that the release of final feedback and marks is not unduly delayed.
- The necessary resources are available to students within the time allotted for the completion of a given assessment.
- The Assessment Briefs are pitched at the appropriate FHEQ level.

Programme-wise:

- Assessment weighting is consistent across the modules offered as part of a given programme.
- The overall assessment of the programme is distributed in an appropriately balanced manner throughout term time, avoiding an excessive and/or overlapping workload during Assessment Week.
- Please refer to the Assessment Guidelines for details about forms of assessment, weighting etc.

- 4.2. Setting and verifying assessment titles: Assessment titles can be **EITHER** unilaterally set by the Module Leader **OR** devised and agreed with the input of students. The second approach allows students to cultivate their particular interests and foster their individual learning.

Please note, that a hybrid formula is **not** acceptable: **ALL** assessment titles must be set **either** by the Module Leader **or** in collaboration with students.

4.2.1.If assessment titles are set by the Module Leader:

All proposed assessment titles must be submitted to the Programme Leader by the Module Leader for verification **four weeks before** teaching starts. In special cases, and where there is good reason, a different deadline may be agreed between the Module Leader and the Department of Graduate Studies.

In collaboration with the Module Leader, the Programme Leader will review and evaluate the proposed assessment titles. All instructions for an assessment title must:

- Be written clearly and in such a way as not to disadvantage any moderately well-prepared student.
- Pertain directly to the aims and subject matter of the module, and therefore demonstrate that they are pitched at the appropriate FHEQ level.

- Target those ILOs specified in the Assessment Specifications. All assessment titles must target the same ILOs as specified for the component to which they relate.
- Unambiguously specify how to approach the title (e.g. “A critical analysis of...”; “A comparative case between...” etc.), also taking into consideration the pertinent FHEQ level.
- Be of a comparable level of demand and involve a comparable amount of work from students (i.e. no easier or more difficult titles).
- Be practical: students can succeed in the title by making use of the available learning resources.
- Allow all moderately well-prepared students to achieve a mark within the range of the specified marking scale (i.e. 0–100).
- **Not** have been used in the last two academic years. The overall mix of assessment titles must be unique to the current academic year.
- **Not** be open to interpretation as offensive, discriminatory or demeaning of any individuals, groups, ideologies, nations, traditions or identities.

The Programme Leader will confirm with the Module Leader the approved titles, having reviewed the draft titles with input and guidance from the Head of Department as necessary. The complete list of moderated assessment titles should be made available to students at the beginning of the term in which the assessment is due unless a different deadline has been agreed with good reason.

4.2.2. If assessment titles are set by the Module Leader in collaboration with students:

In case a Module Leader wishes to agree titles with the students subject to the same Assessment Brief, it is the Module Leader’s duty to ensure that a **complete** list of draft titles reaches the Programme Leader **no later than three weeks** before the deadline for the assessment. In special cases, and where there is good reason, a different deadline may be agreed between the Module Leader and the Department of Graduate Studies.

In collaboration with the Module Leader, the Programme Leader will review and evaluate the proposed titles. All titles for a given Assessment Brief must be moderated against the principles at 4.2.1 above.

The Programme Leader will confirm with the Module Leader the approved titles, having reviewed the draft titles with input and guidance from the Head of Department as necessary.

In case a title needs significant changes, or is not approved, the Module Leader will immediately contact the student to agree the necessary changes or to formulate a different title, which must subsequently be moderated following the present procedure.

Moderated titles should be made available to each student individually **no later than two weeks** before the assessment in question is due. In special cases, and where there is good reason, a different deadline may be agreed between the Module Leader and the Department of Graduate Studies.

5. Setting and moderating question papers

5.1. The following procedure applies to both seen and unseen question papers to be taken under examination conditions:

- Module Leaders will submit first drafts of question papers to the Programme Leader **five weeks before** the start of the term in which the module in question is supposed to be taught. In special cases, and where there is good reason, a different deadline may be agreed between the Module Leader and the Department of Graduate Studies.
- Module Leaders and the Programme Leader will work together to review and evaluate the question papers in order to produce revised drafts of the paper.
- They shall reach an agreement on one or more sets of questions within two weeks, based on the following criteria:
 - Are all instructions for assessment titles clear, concise and unambiguous?
 - Are all instructions for assessment titles written clearly and in such a way as not to disadvantage any moderately well-prepared student?
 - Are the requirements of each assessment title unambiguous for a moderately well-prepared student?
 - Do all assessment titles pertain directly to the aims and subject matter of the module, and therefore demonstrate that they are pitched at the appropriate FHEQ level?
 - Do all assessment titles target those ILOs specified for the question paper? Where there are optional questions, do all optional questions target the same ILOs?
 - Can all assessment titles be answered within the time allotted, allowing appropriate opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills achieved across the range of possible marks (i.e. 0–100)?
 - Are all instructions for assessment titles free of content and factual errors?

5.2. For unseen question papers only: The second drafts of question papers shall then be forwarded to the External Examiner for moderation. The External Examiner will return the question papers with comments to the Programme Leader **within two weeks** from receipt. The Module Leader will produce final drafts of the question papers in light of the External Examiner's moderation, which will be checked by the Programme Leader in order to produce the first proof of the question paper. The question paper(s) must be ready for printing by the beginning of the term in which it will be taken by students unless a different deadline has been agreed with good reason.

5.3. It is the duty of the pertinent Module Leader to make sure that seen question papers are available on the VLE **sufficiently in advance to allow students to undertake the necessary preparation, also bearing in mind their ongoing workload.** The date when papers will be made available to students should be specified in the Assessment Brief as soon as it is published on the VLE, and strictly adhered to.

6 Document Control

Version	Role / Activity	Person(s) responsible	Date
Version 1	Author	AMC	June 2018
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