NATIONAL UNIVERSITY-SUDAN [NUSU]

Policy and Procedures of the Academic Course:
Approval, Provision, Assessment and Moderation

This document is produced in accordance with the Academic Council Powers and Competence as detailed in the University Charter 12.1

(1) Introduction:

The National University-Sudan (NUSU) has adopted detailed principles of provision of learning courses to fulfill its academic mission. The course in any faculty in NUSU is fundamental and all efforts to fulfill it must be exerted.

The steps below are approved by the NUSU Scientific Council. Any major change in should be approved by the Academic Council.

(2) Basic Documents:

1. NUSU Prospectus
2. Student Manual
3. Graduate Programmes Course Outline
4. Essential Documents
5. Policy and Duties of the course coordinator

These documents are the sources for further explanations.

(3) Responsible Bodies:

1. Course Committee (CC)
2. Course Coordinator (CC$_O$)
3. Faculty Dean (FD)
4. Faculty Board (FB)
5. Secretary of Academic Affairs (SAA)
6. Academic Council (AC)

(4) Principles:

Each course must:

1. Have clear objectives and expected learning outcomes
2. Have community impact
3. Adopt self- directed learning
4. Be evidence-based
5. Abide by ethical and professional principles

(5) Course Committee (CC) Membership and Responsibilities:

(a) Membership:

1. Formed by the faculty dean of three staff members minimum and a student representative (Student Coordinator)
2. Each staff member must hold, at least, a master degree
3. Headed by the course coordinator (convener) or by the most senior member
4. Accountable to the dean faculty

(b) Responsibilities:

The Course Coordinator (CCo) is responsible for the academic leadership and oversight of all aspects of the course including the setting and review of assessment tasks. This includes the following specific tasks:

1. Review the course objectives and learning outcomes (CLOs)

2. Design time-tables (T T) to ensure the delivery of the objectives and the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs).

3. Implement the principles stated in item **(4)**.

4. Follow-up, via the course coordinator (CCo), the details of the delivery of the course and decide who students' are eligible (attended $\geq$ 80%) to sit for the exam.

5. Design assessment criteria e.g. MCQ, OSCE, short notes, practical, seminars etc…

6. Decide what percentage ($\leq$ 50%) of total marks to be assigned to continuous assessment including mid-exam.

7. Obtain exam and model answers from the concerned teaching staff.

8. Assign deserved marks for each question.

9. Organizing and supervising the moderation process of courses.

10. Carry out the pre-assessment moderation of courses. This includes:
    10.1   Appointing one or more member(s) of academic staff as moderator(s) to undertake the moderation activities for the course. The moderators should not include a first marker for the course.
    10.2   holding a meeting to ensure moderators understand the moderation arrangements, providing them the needed documents.

10.3 Facilitating communication between markers and moderators in advance of marking to ensure the proper implementation of the moderation process

10.4 Preparing Pre- Assessment Moderation report, to confirm that appropriate moderation procedures have been followed.

11. Review the marking of the exam, if not done electronically, using the approved grade descriptors (Item-6). This includes:

11.1 Ensuring that marking and submission of grades have been done within the specified timeframe

11.2 Ensuring that marking has been done fairly and consistently when compared with the marking criteria (Item-6).

12. Check the accuracy of examination marks/grades (post assessment moderation-1) by organizing and managing moderation via sampled second marking. The sample should include examples of all grades (A,B,C,and F).

12.1 For this purpose, a minimum size of 10% of the total number of answer papers, and a maximum of 50% of answer papers is required.

12.2 The moderator should review the first marker's marks, and check that marking for the sample is consistent with the relevant model answers, grade descriptors and marking criteria if more than one marker is involved, the moderator should insure that they are all taking consistent approach. If the moderator is not satisfied that the marks are appropriate, they should discuss them with the marker concerned and then make necessary adjustments to the mark. If the moderator identifies a systematic issue regarding the marking, any adjustment or remarking should be applied to all students. Where marking is undertaken electronically, manual check should be conducted to ensure tat the software is functioning properly.

12.3 Where examinations do not involve written work or other physical products (e.g assessment of presentations, laboratory or other practical exams, the moderator should either be present at the time when work to be moderated is performed or by having access to an audio or video recording.

12.4 In the event of a difference of no more than 5% between the marker(s) and the moderator, averaging may be used to reconcile the difference.

12.5 In the event that an agreement between the marker and the moderator has not been reached, the Course Coordinator should assign a second moderator, and the judgment of the second moderator will be final.

12.6 The course Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the appropriate arrangements are made to record and document the moderation process. If there is a difference of no more than 5% between the first marker's and moderators

13. Forward the exam results to the faculty board.

13.1   The Faculty Board (FB) is responsible for reviewing marking and moderation arrangements in order to ensure that assessment criteria have been applied consistently.

  a.   The COo is responsible for obtaining Faculty Dean's approval for forwarding the assessment results to the FB before the deadline specified in the NUSU academic calendar.
  b.   The assessment reports should strictly observe NUSU standards in terms of format and style in order to ensure clarity.

14. Attend the Faculty Board discussion and participate in its final resolution of the results (post assessments moderation–2)

   14.1   The assessment reports will be presented to the Faculty Board by the Faculty Dean, and it is the duty of the COo to be present in order to answer any specific questions that might require his/her intervention.
   14.2   The COo is responsible to take notes, comments and feedback of the discussion of the Faculty Board related to the assessment reports of his/her faculty that need further action to be taken.

15.   Sign the final results (Dean Faculty and Course Coordinator)

16. Forward the signed results to the SAA for post assessment moderation–3.

17. Announce the results signed by the SAA. The COo is responsible to forward the assessment results to the IT Department for publishing via NUSU website.

18. Maintain records and minutes of the meetings regarding the course at each level and file them.

(6) Grade Descriptors:

Grades	Marks	Criteria
Excellent (A)	≥ 80%	• Deep and systemic engagement with assessment task • Impressive demonstration of comprehensive mastery of the subject matter
Very good (B⁺)	≥ 75 to < 80%	• Very high degree of engagement level with assessment task • Demonstration of very high degree of mastery of the subject matter
Good (B)	≥ 65 to <75%	• Intellectually competent • Factually very sound • High degree of attaining the learning outcomes
Satisfactory (C⁺)	≥ 60 to < 65%	• Good level of intellectual engagement • Factually sound answers

Acceptable (C)	≥ 50 to <60%	● Minimal acceptable level of intellectual engagement with the assessment task
Unacceptable (F)	< 50%	● Unacceptable intellectual engagement level

(7) Student Appeal (Be read with Student Appeal Procedure and Academic Regulations):

Fairness entitles that the other side may be right. If a student has an impression that he/she has not been assigned the deserved marks, she/he has right to appeal. The appeal should follow this sequence:

Course Coordinator → Head Department → Dean Faculty → SAA→ University President.

(8) Procedure of Appeal:

- Appeal for re-correction within the 15 days following the announcement of the results.
- The dean faculty forms a panel of three experts to re-correct the concerned paper
- If an error in marking is found, the concerned dean forwards the case to the SAA for assigning the merited marks to the student.

(9) Final Approval of the Results:

Results are finally approved by the Academic Council (post moderation-4).

Appendix I:

MODERATION OF ASSESSMENT

I. ASSESSMENT DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

II. IMPLEMENTATION, MARKING AND GRADIING

III. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

I. **ASSESSMENT DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**

1. Items should be subjected to review

2. Items match objectives/outcomes of subject or course

3. Be aware of cultural bias in assessment

4. Vary types of assessment [e.g. Multiple Choice Questions, essays, short answers, case studies etc..]

5. Make assessment criteria clear for both students and those marking; Make students and markers familiar with assessment criteria and marking key

6. Hold real or virtual round table with markers to discuss requirements and check divergent types of answers to assessment questions.

7. Give enough time and contextual keys to those whose English is not their first language.

II. **IMPLEMENTATION, MARKING AND GRADING**

1. Do markers cross mark assignment in a subject other than the one they teach

2. If there are multiple markers, have they held a consensus marking meeting

3. In large number classes, do markers review earlier marking items.

4. Is a sample of assessment double marked and compared

5. Does the same marker marks all of the assessment items

6. Are students' marking items anonymous

7. Are very high and very low marks discussed with the markers

8. Are feedback comments, timely and sensitive, given to markers who mark very "high" or very "low".

9. Are markers given a spreadsheet showing the range of marks.

III. **REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

1. Avoid post-assessment scaling of marks, and ensure that potential marking bias has been addressed.

2. Complete moderation report for each assessment.

3. Ensure contribution of teaching staff to moderation.

4. Include analysis of moderation in course reports.

5. Ensure actions to improve curriculum and assessment of courses next time taught.

NUSU PHASES OF MODERATION OF ASSESSMENT*

*ADAPTED BY NUSU FROM: ALTC Moderation for Fair Assessment in Transnational Learning and Teaching Project (2008-2010)
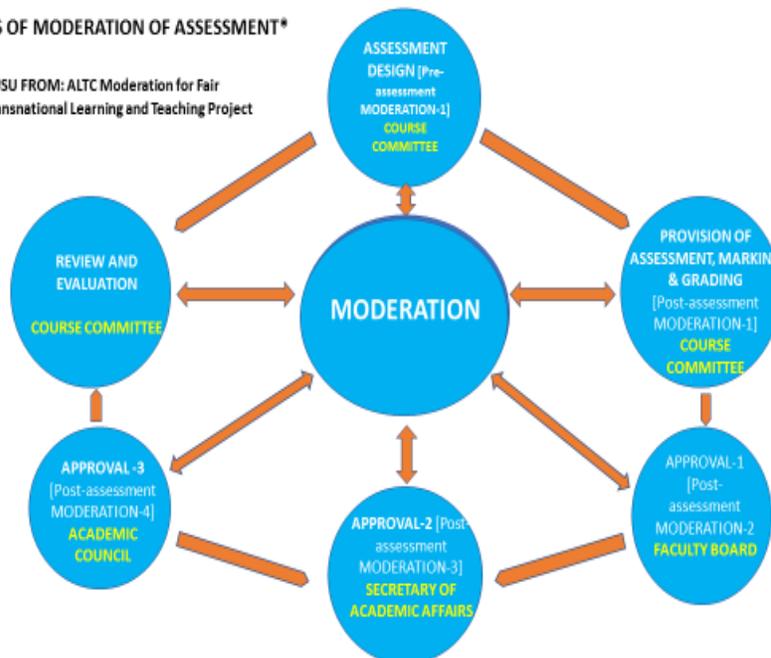
Appendix 2:

The Duties of the Course Coordinator

Introduction:

In accordance with the powers and competence assigned to the Academic Council (University Charter 12-1) NUSU has adopted detailed principles for provision of learning courses to fulfil its academic mission. The course in any faculty in NUSU is fundamental and that at most efforts must be exerted to fulfil it. For this NUSU Scientific Council has approved the following:

I. Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

1.1   Prepare proposals for the objectives, LOCs and means to conduct the courses based mainly on the University Prospectus and other approved documents.

1.2   Make use of previous documents regarding the course especially last year's course report.

1.3   Discuss the objectives and the LOCs of the course with the members representing the concerned departments and the course committee.

1.4   Sign the final copy of the approved objectives and the LOCs.

1.5   Pass the final signed copy of the objectives and the LOCs to Dean Faculty for approval.

1.6   Distribute the final signed copy of the approved objectives and the LOCs to all concerned instructors.

1.7   Keep the minutes of the meetings convened, original document of the course objectives and LOCs in the course file.

1.8   Prepare the course Timetable before the beginning of the academic year i.e. at least four weeks before the start of the course.

2. Preparation of the Course Timetable:

2.1 Prepare and draft of the course timetable reference; the previous timetables, objectives, LOCs as follows:

2.1.1   Use the most recent timetable format.

2.1.2   Give each activity a serial number (e.g. L2 = Lecture No. 2).

2.1.3   Assign Wednesday's afternoons for non-academic activities.

2.1.4   Allocate time for private learning (SDL).

2.1.5   Document Exam dates in the (T.T) together with feed-back on the exams.

2.1.6   Schedule for Formative Assessment in the first quarter of T.T.

2.2   Present the final draft of the Timetable for discussion by the course committee.

2.3   Sign the final format of the Timetable and pass it for signature by the Dean Faculty and finally by the Secretary of Academic Affairs.

2.4   Keep the original version of the Timetable in the course file.

2.5   Hand a copy of the approved Timetable to each of the instructors and to the student coordinator.

3. Implementation of the Course:

3.1   Deliver an introductory lecture containing the discussion by the course coordinators as detailed in the first lecture document.

3.2   Follow the implementation of the timetable and tackle any obstacle to insure smooth flow of the course.

3.3   Give a weekly verbal report about the course, even if there are no problems to the Dean Faculty.

3.4   Follow closely the attendance of the students and make weekly cumulative and notify the students whose attendance is poor ($\leq 80\%$).

3.5   Give feedback to the students about their attendance at quarter and mid time of the course to avoid barring students sitting for the exam.

3.6   Prepare a list of the students eligible to sit for the final Exam (attending $\geq 80\%$), and those barred.

3.7   Pass the final list of the students who are eligible to sit and those barred from   sitting for the exam to the Dean Faculty for signature.

3.8   Notify the students barred from sitting for the exam, at least 48 hours, before the exam date.

4. Assessment:

(To be read in conjunction with policies and procedures of Academic Course)

4.1   Hand the Examinations to the Exam Office at least three days before the exam

4.2   Be sure of the presence of enough number of invigilators at the exam hall.

4.3   Attend the exam and collect the exam papers from exam office.

4.4 Collect the answer papers and keep them in Exam Office for 24 hours maximum.

4.5   Hand the final examinations results, to the Exam Office for typing within maximum 24 hours.

4.6   Rectify immediately any typing errors in the final examinations results.

4.7   Prepare the final course report using the approved format and discuss the report with Dean Faculty. If need be the report is discussed with the Secretary of Academic Affairs.

5. General Notifications:

5.1   Use the last version of the Payment Agreement form.

5.2   Supervise completing teacher log-sheet.

5.3   Get the no objection of the Dean Faculty to make changes in the Timetable due unexpected reason(s).

Appendix 3:

The Introductory Lecture

The introductory lecture to any course at NUSU delivered by the course coordinator should:

1. Explain the objectives and the expected learning outcomes (ELOs) of the course.

2. Review with students the timetable, with special emphasis on:

    a. Formative assessment.

    b. Mid-course exam and feedback on it.

    c. Final exam and feedback on it.

    d. Tutorials, seminars, practical, assignments, field visits making part of the concerned course.

3. Explain, reference article 15.1 of Student Manual, the assessment methods and the weights assigned to various components of the course in each of them.

4. Explain, reference article 7.2 of the student manual, the importance of attendance and the consequences of absenteeism for more than 20% of the course activities.

5. Stress the importance of the academic supervision and any issue related to that concerned course.

6.   Supervise the selection of the student course coordinator

7. Explain how to the Course Coordinator (C.C) at office hours and other times.

8. Encourage students for self –directed learning (SDL) and discuss any difficulties which may face them.

9. Encourage cooperation of students for group readings and discussions as effective means to score high marks and grades.

10. Emphasize cooperation and interaction between staff and students.