



UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
The Malawi Polytechnic

**RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR ACADEMIC EXAMINATIONS
AND ASSESSEMENT UNDER MODULAR SYSTEM**

Approved by

SENATE

on

14th January 2011

1. Introduction to the new system

The Malawi Polytechnic began the process of converting to the modular system in 1997 to address several challenges including large number of courses offered per semester which affected students' performance. This entailed reviewing its curricula and changing the rules for the administration of examinations and assessment. Since that time, several consultations, workshops and seminars have taken place. Heads and Deans were involved as part of the consultation process. A committee was set up to look at the rules and regulations used by other colleges within the University of Malawi. This document presents the outcome of that process and provides rules and regulations for assessment under the modular curricular at the Polytechnic.

2. Implementation strategy

Initially, the proposed system will run concurrently with the old one, and as part of the Polytechnic strategic plan, it will apply to the incoming first year students from the 2010/2011 academic year. It will finally apply to all students when the incoming students get to 4/5th year in 2015/2016. However, the old rules will apply to continuing students until they complete their studies except for those repeating together with incoming students.

Implementation will be monitored by the quality assurance committees through:

- Staff and students feedback,
- External examiners reports, and
- Feedback from University of Malawi Senate.

3. Programme load

Under these regulations one (1) credit represents the amount of learning achieved through a notional 10 hours of learning time which includes everything a learner has to do to achieve the intended learning outcomes in a module and a module is a block of knowledge worth 10 credits.

For any semester, a student shall take a minimum of 60 credits. Consequently, at the end of a Four-year or Five-year programme of study, a student is expected to have accumulated a minimum of 480 or 600 credits, respectively. However, the number of modules per semester may vary from one programme to another. Therefore students are advised to consult the relevant faculty regulations.

4. Assessment

Assessment of a module is based on a 101 point scale. Overall assessment of students' performance in a semester shall be based on all modules taken in that semester. Furthermore, overall

assessment of students' performance at any level shall be based on modules taken at that level.

4.1 Grading system

The 101 point scale shall be used to determine marks obtained by a student as follows:

0-39 Failure;

40-59 Pass;

60-69 Pass with Credit; and

70-100 Pass with Distinction.

4.2 Assessment of a module

4.2.1 A module is assessed by coursework and/or examinations as described in the module specifications.

4.2.2 To pass a module a student must obtain a minimum overall mark of 40%, unless otherwise stated in the programme document.

4.2.3 Module marks as well as average marks used in all assessments are rounded to the nearest whole number (integers).

4.2.4 Attachment/internship, practical and projects will be assessed as specified in the programme.

4.3 Audited modules

A student may register to audit modules that are not prescribed in the curriculum upon approval of concerned departments. The student will be held responsible for regular

class attendance, practical, assignments, and examinations. The student's transcript will carry a grade with an indication that it is an audited module. However, for audited modules, credit shall not be earned towards a final award.

4.4 Referrals

4.4.1 A student who obtains a failing grade in one or two modules shall be eligible for supplementary examinations.

4.4.2 Supplementary examinations shall normally be administered before the beginning of the next academic year.

4.4.3 A pass in a referred module shall be awarded a mark of 40% regardless of the actual mark scored.

4.5 Repeating a module(s)

4.5.1 A student who fails supplementary examinations of modules that include the core and or pre-requisite shall repeat the module(s) when they are next offered. The student shall not be allowed to proceed to the next level until all modules are cleared.

4.5.2 A student who fails supplementary examinations of elective or optional modules only shall be allowed to proceed to the next level; however, the student shall not be allowed to graduate until they have passed the failed

modules. Further, the student shall not be allowed to accumulate more than three modules.

4.5.3 A student who fails more than two modules up to 50% of the modules that include the core and or pre-requisite shall repeat those modules when they are next offered. The student shall not be allowed to proceed to the next level until all modules are cleared.

4.5.4 A student who fails more than two modules up to 50% of the elective or optional modules only shall be allowed to proceed to the next level; however, the student shall not be allowed to graduate until they have passed the failed modules. Further, the student shall not be allowed to accumulate more than three modules.

4.5.5 The actual grade(s) obtained for the repeated module(s) shall be awarded.

4.5.6 A student shall be allowed to repeat modules once only at their own cost.

4.5.7 A student who repeats module(s) will be expected to complete within the duration of the programme with an extension of one year.

5 Missing examinations

5.1 Normally the only valid reasons for missing the examination are illness and bereavement. Illness shall be supported by medical evidence from a medical practitioner. In particular,

extramural activities and misreading of the examination timetable are not valid reasons for missing examinations.

- 5.2 A student who misses examinations through valid reasons shall be allowed to take deferred examinations before the next semester.
- 5.3 A student who fails a deferred examination shall be eligible for supplementary examination to be administered before the beginning of the next academic year.
- 5.4 Students who miss an examination or any assessment without valid reasons shall be awarded a grade of zero for that examination or assessment.

6 Incomplete module grade

- 6.1 If a student has not completed any work in the module, he/she shall be awarded an incomplete remark (I) until the work is completed.
- 6.2 An incomplete remark not removed within one academic year following its receipt becomes a grade of zero.
- 6.3 Further, the student shall not be allowed to accumulate more than two incomplete grades.

7 Aegrotat

- 7.1 Students whose coursework has been satisfactory, but are prevented by illness from completing the requirements of an examination, may be allowed to proceed as if they have

passed, subject to satisfying eligibility conditions in cases of deferred examinations. In case of doubt, a deferred examination shall be administered.

- 7.2 Students awarded an aegrotat pass in their final year will not be eligible for any mark of credit or distinction in their awards, but they may elect to sit a deferred examination in those papers which they missed and thus become eligible for a mark of credit or distinction.
- 7.3 A recommendation for the award of an aegrotat pass must be supported by the College Academic Assessment Committee and shall be brought to Senate.

8 Withdrawal from a programme

8.1 Voluntary withdrawal from a programme of study

- 8.1.1 Students may withdraw temporarily or permanently from a programme of study by a written application and approval within two weeks of commencement of semester of study. In such cases, a remark of “VW” is assigned to modules. A student who discontinues attendance in a programme of study without official withdrawal receives grades of zero in the modules.
- 8.1.2 A student shall be allowed to withdraw for a maximum period of one academic year and only once in their

programme of study. However, special consideration may be given in cases of serious illness, which has been certified by a qualified medical doctor.

8.1.3 The following are acceptable reasons for a student to withdraw:

- a) Withdrawal on financial grounds;
- b) Withdrawal on health grounds certified by qualified medical doctor;
- c) Withdrawal on pregnancy grounds certified by qualified medical doctor; and
- d) Withdrawal on compassionate grounds.

8.1.4 A student cannot use more than one of the above cases to withdraw in one academic year unless approval has been given by a Committee set up by the Principal.

8.1.5 A student must submit a written application and receive written approval before withdrawing from College.

8.1.6 Students who withdraw temporarily may apply for readmission into the programme in a semester offering modules that were being offered at the time they had withdrawn.

8.2 Academic withdrawal

8.2.1 A student who has failing marks in more than 50% of the modules taken in that academic year shall be withdrawn from the programme on academic grounds.

8.2.2 A student shall be withdrawn from the programme on academic grounds if he or she fails to complete the requirements for the award within the specified programme duration.

8.3 Appeals

8.3.1 Any appeal against withdrawal on academic grounds should be directed to the Vice-Chancellor who will in turn direct it to the Appeals Committee.

8.3.2 There shall be a standing Appeals Committee which shall hear and decide on appeals against the decision of Senate withdrawing students.

8.3.3 Students who wish to request that a particular grade be investigated or examination be remarked should direct their request to the Vice-Chancellor who shall refer the matter to the relevant College. The Head of Department of the Lecturer affected by the appeal or his/her nominee shall be invited as witnesses.

8.3.4 The appellant shall be heard on his/her appeal either orally or in writing and he/she shall bear the cost of appearing for the purpose of being heard.

9 End of programme assessment

End of programme assessment is done in the final level of the programme and is based on the marks obtained in the last two levels of the programme.

9.1 Awards

9.1.1 Requirement for an award of University Certificate

A student who has accumulated 240 credits, with at least 120 credits obtained at Level 1 and who cannot progress further on the programme will normally be awarded a University Certificate.

9.1.2 Requirement for an award of University Diploma

A student who has accumulated 360 credits, with at least 120 credits obtained at Level 2 and who cannot progress further on the programme will be awarded a University Diploma.

9.1.3 Requirement for an award of University Bachelors Degree

A student who has accumulated 480 credits, with at least 120 obtained at Level 3 will be awarded a University Bachelors Degree.

9.1.4 Requirement for an award of University Bachelors Degree with Credit

A student who has accumulated 480 credits, with at least 120 obtained at Level 3; and scores an average mark of 60% with no mark below 50% at Level 3 and an

average mark of not less than 55% at Level 2 will be awarded a University Bachelors Degree with **Credit**.

9.1.5 ***Requirement for an award of University Bachelors Degree with Distinction***

A student who has accumulated 480 credits, with at least 120 obtained at Level 3; and scores an average mark of 70% with no mark below 60% at level 3 and an average mark of not less than 65% at level 2 will be awarded a University Bachelors Degree with **Distinction**.

9.1.6 ***Requirement for an award of University Honours Degree (Honours-Third Class)***

A student who has been credited with at least 600 credits and at least 120 of which were obtained at level 4 will be awarded a University Bachelors Degree (**Honours-Third Class**).

9.1.7 ***Requirement for an award of University Honours Degree (Honours-Second Class)***

A student who has accumulated 600 credits, with at least 120 obtained at Level 4; and scores an average mark of 60% with no mark below 50% at Level 4 and an average mark of not less than 55% at level 3 will be awarded a University Bachelors Degree (**Honours-Second Class**).

9.1.8 ***Requirement for an award of University Honours Degree (Honours-First Class)***

A student who has accumulated 600 credits, with at least 120 obtained at Level 4; and scores an average mark of 70% with no mark below 60% at Level 4 and an average mark of not less than 65% at Level 3 will be awarded a University Bachelors Degree (**Honours-First Class**).