

ASSIGNMENTS POLICY

Implementation date	October 2007
Last reviewed	October 2021
Next review date	October 2025
Responsibility	Accreditation and Assessment Manager
Ratification	EDEX Committee

1. PREAMBLE

- This policy aims to enhance the quality of assessment practices in the institute.
- This policy supports and gives expression to the institute's commitment to be the premier governance professional body in Southern Africa through its assessment practices.

More specifically, the purposes of this policy are:

- To enhance student learning. This is aimed at providing support to students and assisting them to pass the examinations.
- To ensure that assessment adheres to principles of best practice;
- To ensure that assessment judgements can be justified (explained and defended);
- To assist staff in their understanding of what makes for good assessment practice and be accountable for the quality of assessment they implement;
- To maintain nationally and internationally benchmarked standards of CGISA qualifications by ensuring that assessment practices are appropriate to the qualification levels and module/programme outcomes; and
- To make skills development providers responsible and accountable for translating the policy into assessment practices, so that in any quality audit or evaluation, they can show evidence of sound assessment practice.

2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **Assessment:** The evaluation and grading of work, supervised or unsupervised, carried out by a student in satisfying the requirements of a module.
- **Consistency:** The assessment would produce the same result if repeated with comparable students and comparable tutors.
- **Criterion-referenced assessment:** A type of assessment designed to provide a measure of performance that is interpretable in terms of a clearly defined and delimited domain of learning tasks.
- **Fair:** Fairness implies that the method of assessment does not present any barriers to achievements that are not related to the evidence.
- **Flexibility:** Assessment practices should be flexible enough to accommodate the scope of knowledge and skills covered by the assessment criteria, variations in context, the range of needs and the personal circumstances of all potential students.
- **Integrated assessment:** Refers to that form of assessment that permits a student to demonstrate applied competence.
- **Memoranda:** These are formally defined as marking guidelines, consisting of specific pre-established performance criteria, used in evaluating student work.
- **Practicability:** Refers to ensuring that assignments take into account available (financial) resources, facilities, equipment and time.
- **Reliability:** The assessment is consistent from student to student, and from context to context.
- **Transparency:** The assessment process is clear and open to everyone making use of it.
- **Validity:** An assessment is valid if the assessment focuses on the requirements laid down in the standard. An assessment is valid when it assesses what it claims to assess.

3. SCOPE

The policy is applicable to all Board modules of the Institute.

4. REQUIREMENTS FOR ASSIGNMENTS

4.1 Assignment questions

- Questions must be prepared with reference to the syllabus prescribed by the Institute and supported by prescribed textbooks, and/or study materials and/or guides and legislation (where applicable).
- Assignments should be set out of 100 marks.
- Assignments should be problem-based and require students to carry out independent research, interpret a case study or solve a problem, rather than simply answer questions from the textbook.
 - For **written assignments**, the length of the answers should be appropriate to the questions and should require approximately ten (10) pages of typed work (1.5 spacing, size 12 font) (approximately 3000 words); using MSWord (which must be converted to PDF before submitting), and students should be advised accordingly.
 - For **numerical assignments**, students should be asked to carry out a number of complex financial calculations and may present these in Excel format. They should also be asked for comments and evidence-based opinions on the results of the calculations, using appropriate theoretical concepts.
- Although topics/subject areas may be tested regularly, questions must be original and not be repeated from one semester to the next.
- The wording, grammar, punctuation and style of questions must conform to the standard expected of persons operating in a professional capacity.
- Questions must be fair and unambiguous and the requirements must be clear.
- Questions should use Bloom's revised taxonomy.
- Questions, as far as is reasonably possible, must be of a business-related nature.
- The language and contexts in which the questions are set must not be such as to give offence to any group of candidates.

4.2 Marking Schemes

- Assignment marks will contribute 30% to the final overall mark for a candidate. Students must nevertheless get a **subminimum of 30%** on the assignment to pass the subject.
- Sample answers such as those that would be expected from candidates, should be supplied. Answers should not be a copy and paste from the textbook.
- The examiner should not draft the memorandum by copying from the internet.
- The marking scheme must indicate the marks to be awarded to each question and/or part thereof to identify the level of knowledge and skill being assessed, the level of importance of and the time afforded to each question.
- All workings for computational answers must be provided.
- Where questions require that reference be made to appropriate legislation and/or case law, the marking scheme must clearly state which legislation and/or case law should be included in the answer and the extent of the detail required. Cases and statutes do not have to be referenced in full.
- The assignment examiner should not use marking schemes in a prescriptive manner: there should be scope to reward original relevant thought.

4.3 Marking of assignments

Assignments are uploaded to Moodle in PDF format (not scanned in), or excel in the case of finance assignments. **With the exception of finance assignments**, students must submit assignments to

Turnitin (link will be on Moodle). Students may submit their assignments in draft form as a first step and then view their Turnitin report with a view to amending their assignments if necessary to reduce their plagiarism percentage, before submitting the final version of the assignment. Please refer to the plagiarism policy.

The assignment examiner must use the track changes and comment facility in marking the assignments. The assignment examiner will download these from the Moodle system and will upload them back to Moodle once marked.

The assignment examiner should not include his/her personal details or other contact details.

No further assessment or discussion of the results is permitted.

The Institute will review a sample of the marked assignments on an ad hoc basis on request.

5. PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Delegated CGISA staff and individual assignment examiner have collective responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for translating it into specific procedures.

Policy implementation will be monitored by the Assessment Manager who reports to the CEO and the Education and Examinations Committee of CGISA.

In order that the policy is implemented effectively, formal responsibilities are delegated to individuals expressly responsible for assessment. However, it is the responsibility of the management of CGISA to ensure that assessment is practised in accordance with the highest teaching and learning quality management principles.

The **Student and Examinations Manager** is responsible for ensuring that:

- The programme of all assignments, together with due dates, is communicated and explained to all students registered for the module;
- Records are kept for any quality audit: assignment questions, memoranda, assignment examiner reports and score sheets.

Assignment examiners are responsible for ensuring that:

- Assignments target the appropriate level of competence expected in the module, to accommodate student diversity and to ensure that all the outcomes are met;
- There is fairness in the assignments in that the content is not selective or biased, and special arrangements are made for any student with a declared disability;
- Marking of assignments is done in accordance with memoranda, noting that some tasks will require independent thinking, creativity and autonomous judgement;
- Students are given detailed information on their performance in all assignments, which is aimed at facilitating students' understanding of the mark given;
- Marking of assignments is done in such a way that students can see immediately how a given mark can be explained or justified according to the criteria;
- Feedback on assignments is given individually, in writing; and
- Although feedback often entails judgement of current performance, it is formulated in such a way that the student(s) can see how to improve their learning and are motivated to do so; and is given in a respectful, formative and facilitatory manner.

The **Assessment Manager** is responsible for:

- Appointing assignment examiners together with the selection panel;
- Monitoring implementation of the policy;
- Monitoring the performance of assignment examiners; and
- Monitoring the quality of the assignment and memorandum.

The **Chief Examiner** is responsible for:

- Evaluating the quality of the assignment and memorandum;
- Providing guidance on the implementation of the policy.

6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Assessment and moderation policy
- Assignment examiner contract
- Student disciplinary policy
- Plagiarism policy
- Referencing guidelines
- Student code of ethics
- Student code of conduct during examinations