

GARDEN CITY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

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POLICY ON TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

2015

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PREAMBLE

Garden City University College's strategic Plan 2014-2020 commits to developing and maintaining "a high quality learning environment that maximizes the opportunity for all our students to succeed and provides them with an innovative, intellectually challenging and transformative educational experience". The purpose of this policy is to support this goal by providing a comprehensive framework for teaching and assessment that enhances student learning experience and produce quality graduates outcomes.

2.0 TEACHING

2.1 Qualification to teaching at Garden City University College

Individuals who are given course(s) to teach and examine at undergraduate level shall have a minimum of master's degree by research or equivalent professional qualification in the case of professionally oriented programmes. This applies to both full-time and part-time teaching staff. In cases, individuals with non-research master's degree may be approved by the faculty board to teach but under the mentorship of a senior lecturer.

2.2 Course Allocation

Course allocation shall be done at formal departmental meetings chaired by the Head of Department or his or her appointed representative. This shall be done at least one month before teaching begins. Course allocation should be directed towards staff specialization.

The number of courses allocated to a staff member shall be in accordance with the Conditions of Service of the University College.

2.3 Course Outline

Before lectures begin, every lecturer shall submit a course outline for each course taught (in the prescribed format of his or her department) to the Head of Department and to the students of the course.

Guidelines for writing course outline can be found in the Teaching and Learning Guide.

2.4 Self-Reflection

Reflection and the notion of reflective practice are critical components in the development of teaching expertise and expert teachers. Academic staff are required to reflect on their teaching contributions, set goals and set objectives for teaching in the following year, and identify any assistance needed to achieve those goals as part of the Academic Performance Review (APR).

2.5 Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have a responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty members have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion, and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to difference of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender and nationalities.

2.6 Showing of Films/Videos

Teaching staff members shall not show films or videos prohibited by the laws of the land.

2.7 Class Cancellations

In the case of sudden illness or unavoidable delay, teaching staff should notify their Head of Department and the students about a class cancellation.

Teaching staff members are expected to make up missed classes by rescheduling or having the class taught by a peer.

2.8 Peer Input

Peer observation and reviews is strongly encouraged as an ongoing component of reflective practice for all academic staff. Teaching staff members should arrange to observe each other's teaching and provide feedback for improvement at least once a semester.

2.9 Mentoring

Inexperienced teaching staff members shall be mentored by experienced teaching staff members within the first two years of their appointment.

2.10 Evaluation for Course and Teaching-Quality Assurance

Regular end-of-course student summative evaluations of courses and teaching are required for quality assurance purposes. Summative evaluations are undertaken using the survey instruments designed and maintained by the University College's Internal Quality Assurance Directorate.

Teaching staff members shall inform the Internal Quality Assurance Directorate about the last day of teaching and reserve last 15minutes of the class for evaluation of the course.

No faculty members, instructors or TAs for the course may be present at any time during the administration of the questionnaire.

2.11 Monitoring of Summative evaluation Results

The results of summative evaluations are analyzed by the Internal Quality Assurance Office. A summary annual report for the University College is reviewed by Internal Quality Assurance Committee. Summary annual Departmental reports and details of the course with an overall student satisfaction result of less than **70%** are reviewed with Departmental Heads. However, teaching staff members shall be given students evaluation results of their courses.

3.0 LEARNING

3.1 Student Attendance

Successful work in the University College is dependent upon regular attendance in all classes. Failure to attend regularly may result in receipt of an F in the course. Students who miss classes for certified medical reasons should not be penalized for their unavoidable absences. Their absence should not be counted against them, and they should be allowed to make up missed work. In the case of a prolonged absence for medical reasons, special non-punitive arrangements may be necessary. Please refer to the Students Handbook for questions concerning attendance.

3.2 Academic Integrity

All students are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of the University College. Violations of this policy may include cheating, plagiarism, academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic and non-academic sanction as stipulated in the Student Handbook.

4.0 ASSESSMENT

4.1 Philosophy

Assessment is the process of forming a judgment about the quality and the extent of student achievement or performance, and therefore by inference a judgment about the learning itself. Assessment inevitably shapes the learning that takes place; that is, what students learn and how they learn it should reflect closely the purposes and aims of the course of study.

The aims of assessment include:

- Improving the quality of the curriculum (courses and programmes);
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching process and facilitating continuing improvement;
- Improving and promoting subsequent learning through feedback that is clear, informative, timely, and relevant.
- Formally certifying achievements for external audiences; and

- Accountability to the University, accrediting bodies, employers and the wider community.

4.2 Principles

Assessment practices contribute to the maintenance of academic standards. To achieve this adequately, they must meet principles of:

Validity - they should measure the intended learning outcomes of the modules or course and there should be clear and obvious link in this regard.

Fairness – they should be reasonable in the expectations placed on students and be demonstrably conducted in an equitable and consistent manner. The assessment result should be dependent only on measures of the intended learning outcomes of the module or course, and should be free from bias caused by the individual or group background, either of the assessors or the students. Thus, questions should be intelligible to all those being assessed, and in large modules, with students from a range of courses, should not favor any particular group. Assessment strategies should allow for an accommodation of functional differences arising from disability, learning styles and physical issues. Assessment and examination practices should provide disabled students with the same opportunity as their peers to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes.

Reliability – they should deliver repeatable and accurate judgments. Consistent results should be obtainable for different assessors on each assessment decision.

Rigour – they should measure performance at the level of the module or course and defined procedures, processes and standards should be adhered to strictly.

Discrimination – they should enable assessors to distinguish between candidates who meet and those who fail to meet the intended learning outcomes. Where performances are to be graded, they should ensure that students who perform better are appropriately rewarded in the marks given.

Explicitness – information and guidance on assessment arrangements should be clear and accurate, be made known and be easily accessible to staff, placement and practice assessors, External Examiners and students. It should be clear to students what they are expected to do, the circumstances in which they are asked to do it and how marks will be awarded.

Practicality – as well as being fair in the overall workload placed upon students and staff, the assessment should aim to achieve the maximum valid information for the minimum cost and effort.

In summary, effective assessment:

- Links directly to the learning outcomes of the Programme

- Assesses the central aspects of what is taught and learnt.
- Emphasizes the development of deep, active, reflective learning
- Focuses upon skills and their transfer
- Is efficient for lecturers
- Ensures a reasonable workload for students
- Ensures, where reasonable, that the learning styles of all students including those with disabilities are accommodated.

4.3 Assessment Scheme

For each **course**, a statement of the assessment methods to be used should be given. In addition, course-specific assessment criteria relating to the awards of marks or grades should be articulated.

Assessment methods specify the assessment instrument which is used such as examinations and course work (class exercises, assignments, etc.)

Assessment criteria can be considered as learning outcomes that have been further elaborated by the addition of a performance qualifier, I.e. they entail detail not only what is to be done, but how well it is to be done. It is within the assessment criteria that are established the standard of work required at each level of a course.

Assessment criteria should be made known to students in advance of their attempting an assessment task. This is essential information that allows students to make decisions about what they need to do and the standards to which they are expected to conform.

4.4 Marking Scheme

Marking Schemes are aids used by examiners to assist in the marking of student assessments. They consist of breakdowns of the marks available for an assessment task. They may be attached to model answers and show how marks will be awarded for different aspects of a good answer. While it would be common for a mark scheme to specify individual marks it may be also appropriate to assign groups of marks to allow subjective, qualitative judgments to be made. This allows an element of flexibility and addresses the situation where students give different answers but to the same overall standard.

Teaching staff members shall have marking schemes for all formal assessment tasks. No examination question shall be submitted for moderation without marking schemes.

While assessment criteria are made known to the students to assist them in preparing their assignments with the necessary content and to the necessary standards, marking schemes are normally withheld since they may contain details of acceptable answers or solutions to problems. They are often disclosed, however, as part of the process of feedback.

4.5 Presentation of examination question papers

Examination papers should be prepared on word processor and good quality paper used. The format should be as prescribed by the Faculty Board. Various faculties should adopt a uniform style and format for examination.

4.6 Submission of examination question papers

Examination papers shall be submitted to the Departmental Examinations Officer eight (8) weeks after lectures begin.

All examination question papers submitted to the Departmental Examinations Officer should include internal moderation report. The moderation report form is available at the Department Examinations Office.

4.7 Internal moderation of examination question papers and marking schemes

There shall be Internal Moderators for all courses selected by the Faculty Board and they are appointed by the Dean of the Faculty.

All end-of-semester examinations questions and marking schemes shall be moderated by Internal Moderators before submission to external moderation.

All internally moderated examination question papers should be sealed by the Departmental Examinations Officer and submitted to the University College's Examinations Officer for onward submission to External Examiners for moderation.

4.8 External moderation of examination question papers and marking schemes

There shall be External Examiners for all courses, appointed by the University College, who shall approve examination question papers and the marking schemes before they are administered to students.

4.9 Security of examination question papers

Security of examination papers is very important. Staff should ensure confidentiality at all times. Papers should be stored in a secure place prior to and after approval.

The Quality Assurance Directorate, the Exams coordinator and faculty exams officers shall have responsibility for ensuring examination questions are secured.

4.10 Invigilation

Invigilation of examinations shall be in accordance with examination regulations in the Students Handbook.

4.11 Collection of Scripts

All internal examiners shall collect the answered scripts of their courses for marking within 48 hours after their examination question papers have been administered to students.

4.12 Submission of results and marked scripts

All Internal Examiners shall submit their students' results and marked scripts to the Departmental Examinations Officer by the deadline specify on the Academic Calendar. It is the responsibility of all Internal Examiners to request for the deadline for the submission of results and marked scripts.

Failure to submit results and marked script on time shall attract appropriate sanctions determined by the Academic Board.

4.13 Retention of Examination Scripts

University College regulations, state that examination scripts are retained for two academic years. For the purposes of archiving and review, sample scripts may be retained for longer periods.

4.14 Grading of Assessment

Grading of students assessment shall be in accordance with academic regulations in the Students Handbook.

4.15 Reviewing or Remarking of Examination Scripts

The review or remarking scripts in accordance with the academic regulations and procedure stipulated in the Students Handbook.

4.16 Re-sit

Re-sit examinations shall be organized in accordance with the regulations in the Students Handbook.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility for the assurance and enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment quality rests with every member of staff involved in teaching delivery. Students, in partnership with teaching staff, are responsible for their learning and for providing constructive feedback on teaching and courses.

Responsibility for the oversight of learning and teaching and teaching quality is distributed throughout the University College, through Course Coordinators, Heads of Departments, and ultimately the Internal Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC) reporting to the President and the Academic Board. The Internal Quality Assurance Directorate plays a key role in the oversight responsibility through monitoring and engaging actors involved in delivery of services,

evaluating and reporting to the President of the University College. The Directorate is to ensure that specifications and standards are adhered to and advice appropriately.

All staff, all students and the Academic Board of the University College.