



higher education & training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

7 March 2017

PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES EXTERNAL MODERATION AND EXAMINATION PROCESSES ARE IN PLACE

The Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, states that all the 26 public universities processes on external moderation and examination are in place. This is a programme accreditation prerequisite as stated by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) in accordance with its programme accreditation criteria.

Student Evaluation and Assessment Procedures must be explicitly stated in the Student Assessment Policies and Procedures of each university in accordance with Criterion 6, which states: “External moderation of students’ learning achievements by appropriately qualified personnel. Moderators are appointed in terms of clear criteria and procedures and conduct their responsibilities in terms of clear guidelines.”

In addition, Criterion 13 (CHE, 2004: 19-20) states: “The programme has effective assessment practices which include internal (or external) assessment, as well as internal and external moderation.” Criterion 13 explicitly states that, in order for a programme to be accredited and offered by a university. The learning achievements of students on the exit level of a qualification are externally moderated by appropriately qualified people who have been appointed according to clear criteria and procedures and who conduct their responsibilities in terms of clear guidelines.

External moderation includes the following:

- External moderators are recommended by the examining academic department, are independent experts in their fields, have qualifications at least on the same level as the qualification being examined, are changed regularly, are not appointed as part of reciprocal arrangements (where possible), and are approved by and responsible to Senate/equivalent body.
- The institution provides information on the curriculum and on continuous assessment, and guidelines to assist external moderators in the completion of their reports.

- External moderators mark fully at the exit level of the programme at least 10 percent of the examination scripts for each paper written and do random checks of at least 20 percent of examination scripts for each paper.
- Completed external moderator reports are returned to the lecturer concerned and also to the programme coordinator or head of department/school. Problems are discussed with the lecturer concerned and the programme coordinator monitors the implementation of agreed improvements. External moderators approve the final marks list for the qualification concerned.
- External moderators are expected to comment on the validity of the assessment instruments, the quality of student performance and the standard of student attainment, the reliability of the marking process, and any concerns or irregularities with respect to the observation of institutional/professional regulations.”

In addition, academics from South African as well as from international universities are utilised as external examiners. Such external examiners and moderators must adhere to the minimum criteria for examiners as set by the CHE in its Criteria for Programme Accreditation. At least one external examiner must be utilised for the examination and moderation of dissertations and theses. Their expertise to serve as external examiners is in accordance with the criteria for programme accreditation.

The actual external examiners change and evolve continuously, regardless of whether they are from South African or international institutions. The Department does not collect information on the institutions from which external examiners are drawn. Examiners are used in all exit level examinations in major fields of study in programmes at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Levels 7 to 10. This is a quality assurance requirement.

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