



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA
OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
(ACADEMIC)**

**REPORT OF CDD SUB-COMMITTEE SET UP TO INITIATE
A POLICY ON EXAMINATIONS AND TUTOR-MARKED
ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

INTRODUCTION

CDD, at its emergency meeting held on Tuesday, 15th March, 2011, considered the present examination policy of the University and noted the radical departure from the guidelines of the National Universities Commission (NUC) on test, measurement and evaluation in universities. It therefore concluded that there was need for a review of the University's examination policy.

MEMBERSHIP

The following are members of the Sub-Committee:

1.0 PRESENT

1.	Prof. Ganiyu A. Badmus	-	Dean, School of Education	Chairman
2.	Mr. Ukoha J. Igwe	-	Ag. Director, Examinations & Assessment	Member
3.	Prof. Israel F. Adu	-	Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies	”
4.	Prof. Thomas K. Obidairo	-	Dean, School of Science & Technology	”
5.	Prof. Asif F. Ahmed	-	Dean, School of Social Sciences	”
6.	Prof. Chuks P. Maduabum	-	Dean, School of Business & HRM	”
7.	Prof. Abdul R. Yesufu	-	Director, Centre for Lifelong Learning & WT	”
8.	Prof. Babatunde Ipaye	-	Ag. Director, RETRIDAL	”
9.	Dr. Ifidon G. Oyakhiromen	-	Ag. Dean, School of Law	”
10.	Dr. Uche M. Okonkwo	-	Coordinator, Access & General Studies Unit	”
11.	Ms. Eunice N. Egenti	-	Deputy Registrar (Academic)	Secretary

To assist the Committee in its assignment, Mr. A. A. Hamza, Admin. Officer II (Academic) and Miss Adeola Sofoluwe, Admin. Officer (Academic) were co-opted.

NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD

The Sub-Committee held two (2) meetings on 4th May, 2011, and 23rd June, 2011.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference of the Sub-Committee are as follows:

- (a) Trace the history that led to Management's decision to opt for e-exam such as problems of facilitators not releasing TMAs due to lack of payment of their claims, problems associated with pen and paper including marking, swapping of scripts, delayed release of students' results;
- (b) The insistence of NUC that Universities should embrace pen and paper examinations in addition to e-examinations;
- (c) At what stage/s would the students of NOUN undertake pen and paper examinations (after level one, two, three or four?);
- (d) The mode of TMA, examination, test measurement and evaluation and the validity of measuring NOUN's certificate;
- (e) To initiate a policy on examination administration that would cater for students that submit TMAs and sit for examinations on the one hand, and those that did not sit for examinations on the other hand;
- (f) Initiate a policy that caters for the automation of (e) above and the deferment of examinations, such that students who deferred examination after submission of TMAs would not be scored zero.

Although the assignment of the Sub-Committee was to review the Examinations and Tutor-Marked Assignment Policy, it was noted from the terms of reference that there was no clear-cut examination policy in place. Rather there were:

- (i) guidelines on the conduct of examinations spelt out by Senate before the first examination in June, 2005;
- (ii) procedures for assessment of students contained in the Students' Handbook which also contained the Decree on examinations malpractice.

The Sub-Committee therefore decided to reframe the title of its assignment to read 'Initiation of a Policy on Examinations and Tutor-Marked Assignment'.

HISTORY OF STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT PROBLEMS AT THE NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA (NOUN)

The Sub-Committee noted that the problems of examinations were multifaceted and they include the following:

- (a) students did not register for examinations when they ought to do so;
- (b) tutor marked assignments were not marked and returned by the Facilitators as expected because of lack of payment and as a result of Facilitators not doing their duties properly;
- (c) failure of students to return their tutor marked assignments on schedule;
- (d) on the part of the university, scripts were not monitored as at when due;

- (e) on the part of the students, registration for courses and examinations were not done simultaneously;
- (f) absence of students from examinations could not be properly accounted for,
- (g) there was no proper record of students who came for a particular examination;
- (h) many students failed to identify themselves by way of matriculation numbers or wrote their application form numbers instead of matriculation numbers;
- (i) for results to be completed, there ought to be scores for both tutor marked assignments and examinations. In most cases, many students did not have both scores, rather they had either of the two, leading to a lot of incomplete results;
- (j) marking of students' examinations scripts was done at the study centres but this was replete with malpractices;
- (k) in order to put them under check, the scripts were swapped from one centre to another but the University ran into further problems such as: scripts not being properly accounted for and documented in terms of no. of scripts, return of some scripts without mark sheets, etc;
- (l) the return of scripts by the markers were carelessly handled as there were instances of missing scripts, missing score sheets while some of the scripts were exposed to bad weather hence they became illegible; leading to incomplete results;
- (m) owing to the problem in (xii) above, the scripts for some study centres were brought to the Headquarters for re-marking by the academic staff;
- (n) there were cases of many supervisors not submitting reports of examinations misconduct by students;
- (o) there were lack of adequate number of invigilators to invigilate the examinations at some study centres;
- (p) some of the invigilators compromised the examination requirements by aiding the students to cheat;
- (q) staff of the Headquarters sent to supervise the first examinations actually returned with students' answer scripts which were lodged in bags and deposited in a room in the present library after the examinations;
- (r) central marking was carried out after the first examination in 2005 so there was no problem in obtaining mark sheets from the markers;
- (s) the problem of tutor marked assignments was not caused by lack of payment of claims but many Facilitators could not submit the marked TMAs on time, hence it

contributed to the delay in releasing examinations results (as there was either examination score or tutor marked assignment score but not both for many students);

- (t) there was problem of how to process the results of the 2005 examinations but one Sule Onuh (a System Analyst) designed a formula which was used to solve the problem but this did not last;
- (u) setting of questions for examinations and tutor marked assignments by the Schools. This was a very serious problem, and it is yet to be resolved;
- (v) seeking the services of experts in some courses for which there were no internal staff to handle. However, many of the questions set by these external experts were not received on time;
- (w) inadequate internal academic staff in all Schools;
- (x) many of the external examiners failed to perform to expectation;
- (y) the quality of Facilitators engaged by the University did not allow them to perform and those who set questions did submit on schedule;
- (z) the tutor marked assignments were still being accepted after the deadline for submission had lapsed while the required timeline was not strictly adhered to;
- (aa) the grading, swapping and delay in return of scores affected the administration of pen and paper examinations;
- (bb) there was no proper record keeping of students who were examined at a particular point in time as it was difficult to verify the claim of many students that they sat for examination;
- (cc) not all record of attendance of examinees were submitted to the Directorate of Examinations and Assessment; and
- (dd) reports of examinations misconduct submitted were considered by the panels set up by Management but nothing came out of the reports submitted as no one was ever reprimanded.

The Sub-Committee noted that, in all, five pen and paper examinations were conducted before the transition to e-examinations as follows:

First Examinations	-	June, 2005
Second Examinations	-	June, 2007
Third and Fourth Examinations	-	April and August, 2008
Fifth Examinations	-	June, 2009
First e-Examinations	-	June/July, 2010
Second e-Examinations	-	January/February, 2011

There complaints from students over the results of the first examination held in June, 2005. For instance, the initial results were moderated and after this exercise, many students who passed in the first results released failed woefully; while those who failed earlier on passed very well. The conclusion was that the procedures for evaluating the students were defective.

OBSERVATIONS OF THE SUB COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF THE PROBLEMS OF EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION IN NOUN

The Sub-Committee considered the submissions on the problem of examination administration, the past decision of Senate on the appointment of Facilitators and observed as follows:

- (i) facilitation would be done at 100 and 200 levels only. It wondered what would become the fate of the postgraduate students in terms of facilitation;
- (ii) only qualified personnel should be appointed as Facilitators for 100 and 200 level students;
- (iii) relying on Facilitators to set questions for 100 and 200 level students would mean that there would be no one to set questions for 300 level and above include the postgraduate diploma and masters students;
- (iv) with iLMS, e-formatting of TMAs, Maple TA and other facilities in place, the University would not be willing to dump the conduct of examination on e-platform in a hurry because of the investment it had made;
- (v) there was need to wait for an official pronouncement by the National Universities Commission (NUC) on their thinking about e-examination as well as pen and paper examination so as to guide the universities;
- (vi) the issue of unstable university academic calendar was becoming more of an embarrassment to the institution which kept shifting its calendar dates in the name of openness thereby creating chaos because of lack of order;
- (vii) the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), India which was a model being imitated by NOUN has a well defined calendar. Also, at IGNOU students must fulfill the condition for admission into the examination halls;
- (viii) the young ones would be attracted to e-examination because of their literacy in computer while the older ones would prefer pen and paper examinations because of their phobia for computer system;
- (ix) in ODL system students' levels are not well defined but this could be done according to registrable courses i.e. 100 level courses, 200 level courses etc;
- (x) test development belongs to the Schools while test administration falls within the purview of the DEA and the Study Centres. Supervision and marking of scripts also fall within test development.

The Sub-Committee deliberated extensively on these and recommended that there should be a stable calendar for orderliness and stability.

HOW THE PROBLEMS WERE ADDRESSED IN 2009/2010

Following the agitations that followed the release of the results of past examinations, particularly as it affected the over-scoring of some students and under-scoring of others in previous examinations conducted, this became a source of embarrassment to the University. Senate at one of its meetings in May, 2009 set up a Re-Computation Committee under the chairmanship of the Dean, School of Education to examine the examinations from 2004 to 2010.

A formula was developed to re-compute all the past students' results and the standardisation measures put in place was used to address the problems to the satisfaction of all students. To that extent, all agitations over the past examinations results were completely nipped in the bud. The Re-Computation Committee had recommended to Senate that standardisation of scores was necessary to address the problems of underscoring of some students and over-scoring of others.

The Chairman stated that the issue of re-computation and standardisation took care of missing data for some students which had in the past been difficult to resolve. He also stated that the examining bodies such as WAEC, NECO, JAMB etc. had a way of resolving the issue of missing data of examinees once they were satisfied that the examinees had sat for the examinations. He concluded that this method was used by the Re-Computation Committee to amicably resolve students' missing results in 2010.

POSITION OF NUC ON EVALUATION OF STUDENTS THROUGH e-EXAMINATIONS

Reacting to the issue of e-examinations, the Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies, informed members that no formal position had been taken by the NUC. He stated that though there were comments on the television by members of the public and newspaper publications on the subject matter, relying solely on e-examinations without supplementing this with pen and paper examinations for the evaluation of students would be counter productive. According to him, in the next five years, most of the students would not be able to construct simple complete sentence. He concluded that each university would need to determine whether or not e-examination could solve the problem of student evaluation.

The Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies listed some of the universities which had used a mixture of e-examination and pen and paper examination to evaluate their students. They include:

- (1) University of Ilorin;
- (2) University of Jos;
- (3) University of Ibadan;
- (4) Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife;
- (5) University of Agriculture, Abeokuta;
- (6) The Open University of UK also conducts examinations for all its 100 level courses on e-platform using objective items while at higher levels, it uses pen and paper examinations.

He was of the strong view that the NUC would not frown at the universities evaluating their students by means of e-examinations at the 100 and 200 levels. However, from 300 level and above, there must be elements of pen and paper examinations.

The Dean, SPGS assured members that necessary contacts would be made to some of the officials of NUC with a view to eliciting information on the official position of this regulatory body on the evaluation of students.

SUGGESTIONS ON THE WAY FORWARD

After considering the various submissions, comments and observations, the Sub-Committee made the following suggestions for future successful examination administration in the University:

- (i) there was need for a Directorate to oversee the conduct of examinations in the University for the purpose of liaising with all Schools, Study Centres and the Academic Office as well as keeping the records of examination results after approval by the Senate. The Directorate of Examinations and Assessment is very relevant in this regard;
- (ii) the Directorate would need to be strengthened in terms of human and material resources to enable it handle all pre and post examinations activities in conjunction with the Schools and the Study Centres;
- (iii) the DEA would need to be restructured into various component units to handle various issues connected with examination administration. This would minimise the problems associated with pen and paper examinations;
- (iv) there should be e-examination for students at 100 and 200 levels and this should be completed by pen and paper examinations from 300 level and above;
- (v) there should be a stable university academic calendar;
- (vi) the tutor marked assignments should be done on e-platform but the timeline on submission and assessment should be strictly observed;
- (vii) students could be encouraged to organise themselves into groups for tutorial/group discussion;
- (viii) the Schools must ensure that registrable courses and tutor marked assignments were ready and uploaded to the students portals so that the students would have the opportunity to register for their courses and at the same time attempt these assignments;
- (ix) there is need for training of Facilitators in respect of setting of objective and essay questions so that they would be adequately equipped for this assignment;
- (x) though expensive, conference marking at the Headquarters is being recommended for all future pen and paper examinations;

- (xi) the above (x) would necessitate an upward review of examination fees charged to the students by the University in order to cater for the organisation, supervision and administration of examination;
- (xii) there is need to recruit appropriate and qualified examiners from appropriate tertiary institutions. The examiners so recommended, would be cautious because they know that the affiliated institutions name and credibility would be on line;
- (xiii) taking cue from the University of South Africa (UNISA), NOUN would need to charge for facilitation instead of making it free. To that extent, instead of restricting facilitation to 100 and 200 levels, this should cut across all levels including the postgraduate diploma and masters students;
- (xiv) all fees including that of courses, examination and facilitation should be charged at the point of registration;
- (xv) some aspects of the guidelines for the examinations and compilation of results could form part of the recommendation;
- (xvi) there is need for the weighting of students' performance according to levels such as: 10 percent in 100 level, 20 percent, 30 percent in 300 level and 40 percent in 400 level, totalling 100 percent.

APPRECIATION

The Sub-Committee expresses its appreciation to CDD for giving members the opportunity to serve in this capacity.

Thank you.

Prof. Ganiyu A. Badmus	Chairman
Mr. Ukoha J. Igwe	Member
Prof. Israel F. Adu	Member
Prof. Thomas K. Obidairo	Member
Prof. Asif F. Ahmed	Member
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