NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY

Assessment Strategy of the autonomous organization of education "Nazarbayev University"

Category: Policy

Approval Date: 23.07.2025

Effective Date: 23.07.2025

Level of Access: Open to Public

Classification Number: 2.2 IE

Approving Authority: Academic Council

Registration Number: 35

Owner: The Center for Innovation in Learning and Teaching

Revision Date: 03.07.2028

Applicability: Nazarbayev University

Retired Documents:

Title: Nazarbayev University Assessment Strategy

Date: 30.06.2016

Registration Number: 30

Approving Authority: Academic Council

Section 1. Purpose and Application

1.1. This Assessment Strategy of the autonomous organization of education "Nazarbayev University" (hereinafter "the Assessment Strategy") establishes the expectations and principles guiding assessment at Nazarbayev University (hereinafter "the University" or "NU"). The expectations and principles are informed by the Bologna Process, to which Kazakhstani universities are signatories. Specifically, assessment must be in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Areas (ESG 2015), against which the University is seeking accreditation.

1.2. This Assessment Strategy applies to NU faculty, students and academic administrators involved in the assessment of learning and the administration of assessment in NU courses and programs.

1.3. Individual programs are required to meet the standards of other accrediting authorities, such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), and the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). The NU Assessment Strategy recognises the need to accommodate the requirements of diverse accrediting bodies.

Section 2. Terms / Definitions

2.1. The following terms and definitions are used in this Assessment Strategy:

1) Academic integrity violations – actions that breach the University's standards for honesty and responsible scholarship in assessment;

2) The Academic Quality Framework – a framework which establishes processes for setting, maintaining and assuring academic standards and academic quality;

3) Annual Program Monitoring (APM) – a component of the NU Academic Quality Framework, which requires annual reporting on the academic performance of schools;

4) Assessment – the method(s) and procedure(s) by which a student's academic progress and performance are measured in a course or program. It includes assessment for learning (formative assessment) and assessment of learning (summative assessment), applied to a wide range of learning activities including, but not limited to, coursework, examinations, group work, fieldwork, placements/internships, presentations, dissertations, theses and projects;

5) Center for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CiLT) – the unit responsible for faculty professional learning related to innovation, technology, learning and teaching;

6) Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) – a statement that describe what students should know and be able to do by the end of a course;

7) Criterion referencing – a system where assessment is based on specified learning outcomes and associated criteria, not on performance relative to others;

8) Formative assessment – an assessment for learning, designed to provide feedback that enhances learning during the learning process;

9) Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) – a statement that describe what students should know and be able to do by the end of a program;

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10) School Teaching and Learning Committee – a school-level committee charged with decision-making related to learning and teaching;

11) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Areas (hereinafter the European Standards Guidelines [ESG], 2015) – The guidelines against which the University is seeking accreditation. The guidelines identify 10 standards;

12) Summative assessment – assessments used to evaluate learners' understanding and knowledge of a topic or the development of skills and attributes after the learners have been taught the relevant knowledge, skills or attributes over a period of time. It is an end-point assessment;

Section 3. Main Provisions

3.1. Purposes of Assessment

3.1.1. Assessment is a highly significant component of students' educational experience. Within this Assessment Strategy, assessment is taken to embrace a wide range of activities including, but not limited to, coursework, examinations, group work, fieldwork, placements/ internships, presentations, dissertations, theses and projects. It includes formative and summative assessment – in other words, assessment for learning and the assessment of learning.

The primary purpose of assessment at the University is to enable students to enhance and demonstrate their intellectual, social and physical development by achieving course and program learning outcomes (CLOs and PLOs). Assessment enables students to reflect on their learning and their success in meeting the learning outcomes of courses and programs. The University's stakeholders must be assured that assessment activities provide a reliable and consistent basis for the recommendation of an appropriate grade and academic award.

3.1.2. The University expects assessment to:

1) Provide a fair and reliable measure of students' knowledge, skills and attributes against the intended learning outcomes of the course and program;

2) Include distinctive and diverse assessment practices, varied and contextualised according to the relevant discipline and the level of the study program (undergraduate and graduate study);

3) Differentiate between the performance of individual students;

4) Enable students to perform to the best of their abilities through assessment that is inclusive and supports their learning and future employment goals;

5) Encourage, motivate and engage students in active learning;

6) Guide students in their development, through timely and constructive feedback linked to the course and program learning outcomes;

7) Be subject to quality management processes to ensure that practices meet standards required by the University and accreditation bodies.

3.2. Assessment Principles and Review

3.2.1. Assessment at the University is designed according to the following principles:

1) Assessment is predominantly based on the principle of criterion referencing.

2) Assessment information will be explicit and accessible.

3) Assessment will be reliable and valid.

4) Assessment will align with course and program learning outcomes.

5) The volume and range of assessment tasks will be appropriate to the learning outcomes of the course and the credit load.

6) Assessment will be inclusive and equitable.

7) Assessment methods will be authentic, using tasks and materials that may be found in future work environments, when possible.

8) Formative and summative assessments will be included in each course.

9) Assessment methods and tasks will be designed to encourage academic integrity and discourage opportunities for academic integrity violations.

3.2.2. Assessment at the University is implemented according to the following principles:

1) Assessment will be accurate, consistent and verifiable; fair and transparent, based on consistent processes for the design, marking/grading, moderation and review/verification of assessments.

2) The feedback provided to students will be constructive, actionable and timely.

3) Assessment tasks will be subject to integrity checking using one or more methods or software sources.

4) Students have the right to request a review of an assessment mark or appeal a grade if there has been a procedural error.

3.2.3. As part of the APM process and the development of School Quality Enhancement Plans, assessment practices should be subject to review and continuous improvement, with good practice being identified and disseminated. Assessment at the University is reviewed according to the following requirements:

1) Faculty and Schools will develop procedures for and conduct regular reviews of assessment practice, incorporating the views of students, and the data on grades provided by the Institutional Research and Analytics unit.

2) Reviews of assessment will be reported in the *Program and School Annual Monitoring Reports*.

3) Through external review, by an accrediting body or international association, the School's program-level assessment practices and assessment activities will be evaluated against rigorous international standards.

3.2.4**.** Responsibility for the oversight of this Assessment Strategy and its implementation through the associated *Assessment Policy and Procedures* rests with the Deans and the Vice Deans of Academic Affairs of Schools, with the oversight of the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs. Some responsibilities may be delegated to Department Chairs and other positions, as deemed appropriate by the Dean.

School-level Teaching and Learning committees – whose functions are outlined in the respective Schools' bylaws – should give careful consideration to the following:

1) Enhancement of the alignment between teaching, learning and assessment;

2) Achievement of a balance of assessment tasks, including their timing and volume, across programs and courses of study;

3) Enhancement of feedback being provided to learners;

4) Enhancement of processes and procedures to ensure accuracy and consistency of assessment;

5) Increasing the authenticity and variety of assessments;

6) Utilization of technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of assessment and feedback practices;

7) Implementation of methods of assessment that minimize opportunities for academic misconduct;

8) Closing the loop by providing information to students about responses to assessment-related student feedback.

3.2.5. Professional learning opportunities to address issues identified within the School Quality Enhancement Plans should be provided by the Schools through collaboration and consultation with the CiLT or by organising workshops from the University faculty/administrators with expertise in the relevant areas.

Section 4. Waiver

4.1. Only the Approving Authority is eligible to grant a Waiver from a certain provision of this Assessment Strategy. A Waiver shall be granted only for a certain period and in the exceptional circumstances as defined in the internal documents of the University.

Section 5. Temporary Provision

5.1. Not applicable.

Section 6. Revision

6.1. This Policy shall be reviewed each year within three years after its approval and revised if necessary.

Section 7. Related Documents

7.1. Academic Quality Framework of the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University.

7.2. Academic Policies and Procedures for Graduate Programs of the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University.

7.3. Academic Policies and Procedures for Undergraduate Programs of the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University.

7.4. Annual Program Monitoring Policy of the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University.

7.5. Nazarbayev University Learning and Teaching Strategy 2023–2030.

7.6. Nazarbayev University's Response to Generative Artificial Intelligence in Learning and Teaching.

7.7. Regulatory Framework for Graduate Programs, Micro-Credentials and Courses of autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University.

7.8. Regulatory Framework for Undergraduate Programs and Courses.

7.9. Support for Students with Disability and Special Learning Needs Policy and Procedures of the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University.