

## Guidelines for Assessment and Course Transaction in MA Programmes

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The following guidelines for course registration, transaction and assessment consistent with the General Assessment Policy of AUD shall be followed in all SLS MA courses/programmes. The Evaluation and Assessment Committee of SLS is the proximate authority for interpretation and clarification of these guidelines.

- 1) A system of **continuous assessment** (i.e., assessment over the semester) will be followed in all courses *except for* 'thesis (research) courses' and associated workshops, where grading could be based on only one or two assessments as determined by programme faculty. Students should note the distinction between 'taught' courses, which involve regularly scheduled group meetings between students and teacher(s), and thesis/research/guided reading courses involving independent study and meetings between a student and her/his teacher ('research guide').
- 2) In a regular ('taught') course of four or more credits there should be no single assessment with weightage of more than 40 per cent, implying a minimum of *three* assessment components in any course. (Two assessment components may be allowed in 2-credit courses.)
- 3) **Assessment patterns** and conditions of completion of 'taught' and thesis courses should be agreed upon by the concerned faculty groups and communicated in programme documents, orientations, etc. Thesis courses are like regular courses with respect to repetition. University rules allow a higher passing grade for thesis courses than for regular courses. Note that in the MA History programme, students may undertake the fourth-semester Research Paper / Seminar Paper only if they have completed 40 credits of courses including all compulsory History courses.
- 4) The assessment pattern for a course may include a combination of exercises, including but not limited to in-class examinations, oral presentations, essays, term papers, book reviews, article-reviews, portfolios, photo-essay presentations, field-notes, field reports, laboratory assessments, and course participation grades (see 12 below).
- 5) *Whatever the assessment pattern decided for any course, it should be clearly laid out in a written **course syllabus** given to students at the commencement of the course*



*and not merely communicated verbally (or by email, other electronic means) to students.* Course coordinators/ teachers are expected to submit an up-to-date syllabus for each course to the School Office for reference. (The same course guide could be uploaded to ERP or an electronic learning management system for easy reference by enrolled students.) Minor deviations from the announced assessment pattern (e.g., submission dates, sequence of assessments) are allowable, but any significant changes made by teachers after commencement of teaching should be announced to students *and* to the Programme Coordinator. Students should not expect teachers to make adjustments to the stated assessment pattern (e.g., deadlines) once the semester is under way. (See also 10 below.) In instances where there are serious difficulties for *several* students in meeting deadlines, appeals should be collective and made through Student-Faculty Committees (or their student representatives).

- 6) Assessments may be **individual** in nature or may involve **group/collaborative work**, but group assessment activities should not exceed 20 per cent grade weightage in the assessment pattern of the course.
- 7) **Group assessment is not allowed for written submissions** (e.g., term papers, field reports, book reviews). Written submissions are expected to be individual assignments with grades awarded to individual students only.
- 8) **Instructions for assessments** to be completed or prepared outside of class (e.g., essays, oral presentations) are expected to be given to students *in written form* – for example in a descriptive ‘handout’ to students, or they could be described in the course syllabus. Assessments that are explained only verbally in class are subject to misinterpretation and possible quibbling in cases of non-compliance or poor performance of students.
- 9) Programmes shall issue **assessment calendars** giving details of due dates, etc. for assessments of some or all courses of the programme. As a matter of course, **end-semester examination calendars** shall be prepared by each programme. All reasonable efforts shall be made to avoid clashes in scheduling of end-semester examinations but it may not always be possible to avoid such clashes between examination timings of different programmes. A student who finds s/he has two or more end-semester examinations scheduled at the same time is expected to contact the teachers/coordinators of the courses well in advance of the examination date; the concerned teachers are expected to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that the student is able



to sit the examinations – such as allowing the student a special, individual timing for completion of an examination. A student having two examinations scheduled at different times *on the same date* is not an occasion for which teachers are expected to shift examination timings or to allow ‘special’ (additional) examination sittings.

- 10) Teachers are expected to apply **grade cuts in case of delay in submission of assignments** and students must accept failure on an assignment as possible consequence of late submission. Students should be informed in advance about the ‘grade cut policy’ of the course or programme. For their part, **teachers are expected to return students’ work to them (and communicate grades) in a timely manner.** Students may bring delays of this kind to the attention of Student-Faculty Committees.
- 11) Grade ‘AB’ is awarded for **non-submission, non-participation or absence** from an assessment situation. Students absenting themselves from assessment *without prior notice* can expect grades of ‘AB’. Special chances to complete an assessment could be considered **only** upon the student producing evidence of *unavoidable and unintentional* absence from the activity. Strict action, including cancellation of results (and award of grade ‘AB’), will be taken in the event that abuse of this provision is discovered.
- 12) **Grades cannot be awarded purely on the basis of class attendance.** There are no grade cuts for low attendance. However, a ‘course participation’ component of assessment could be designed that partly reflects a student’s attendance. A course participation grade should not exceed 20% of total assessment in a taught course.
- 13) The School shall announce from time to time **‘add/drop’ deadlines** – that is, dates beyond which students are prevented from registering for or changing registration of courses for the semester. The University (Student Services) may have stipulations about late payment of tuition fees. Course registration and fee payment are separate matters. Students who do not register or are not permitted to register by the School, but who do not officially cancel their programme enrolment, have a ‘zero semester’ and might therefore not satisfy requirements for promotion within their programmes.
- 14) SLS MA programmes have **credit norms**, identifying a standard number of credits students may carry at each stage (semester) of their programmes. A student may **‘over-register’** for as many as 20 credits in a semester, including



any courses permitted to be undertaken in other AUD Schools. Registration for 24 credits in a semester is allowed in *exceptional* circumstances recognized by the Programme Coordinator and the Dean. These limits include courses either compulsorily or 'voluntarily' repeated, or a combination of these. Undertaking 24 credits in one semester will not be allowed in order to accommodate 'voluntary' repetition (i.e., repetition of a course for which a student received a passing grade). Specific attendance requirements or participation grades could be waived in cases where a student is registered for 24 credits in one semester (and when s/he is registered for courses that overlap in timetables). Under no circumstances will a student be permitted to register for more than 44 credits over two consecutive semesters.

- 15) '**Under-registration**'--registering for fewer than 16 credits or whatever is the credit norm for the semester--could be allowed under two kinds of circumstances. First, at time of course registration a student could request (by consulting the Programme Coordinator) a reduced credit load if the student feels s/he is unable to cope with the standard credit load, perhaps due to poor academic performance in the preceding semester. Second, after due course registration, a student experiencing illness or other recognized crisis once the semester is under way could petition the Evaluation and Assessment Committee to 'drop' a course or courses. Students should not assume that such petitions will be entertained at the end of a semester; nor will retrospective appeals for course reduction be considered after conclusion of the semester. *Students carrying a reduced load of courses/credits for any reason are subject to the promotion requirements of their programmes.*
- 16) Course grades of '**Incomplete**' (I, IN, etc.) can be awarded under University rules. Conditions for completion/change of grade of 'Incomplete' will be strictly enforced. Students who are unable to complete the required (standard) number of courses in each programme semester, and who habitually accumulate grades of 'Incomplete', could be required to 'under-register' in subsequent semesters (see 15 above).
- 17) *Partial Repetition is not permitted in the MA programmes of SLS.* Only full repetition is allowed. Full repetition implies full participation in course activities and assessment (but see 14 re: registration for 24 credits).
- 18) *There is no provision for officially auditing courses in SLS*—that is, attending a course without assessment and award of course credits but with mention of the course on a student's grade card and transcript. Students may attend



courses for their own improvement, but without award of grades or mention of the course in an official transcript, upon permission of the course teacher/coordinator. The teacher/coordinator may deny a request for audit due to some specific critical condition, such as a very high number of students registered for the course.

- 19) Any **enrolment limits/ceilings** in courses shall be announced at time of registration and programme orientation. Enrolment/registration limits are intended to ensure quality of teaching and assessment, not to deprive students of access to courses. Priority of registration in any case is given to students for whom the course is either compulsory or required for that stage of their programme, or who could not complete degree requirements within that semester or year without the specific course.
- 20) The School has a **zero tolerance policy towards plagiarism**: possible penalties are failure on an assessment, failure of a course, or non-completion of a programme, per University rules.
- 21) Other rules concerning maximum enrolment periods, programme duration, temporary de-enrolment, etc. communicated from time to time by the University shall be adhered to.

{Issued under authority of the Evaluation-Assessment Committee and the Dean,  
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