



GUIDELINES FOR FINAL ASSESSMENT DEFERRAL, SEMESTER 2 2019/20

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The COVID-19 pandemic has been declared a public health emergency by the Government of Botswana, which has issued a number of directives declaring measures and regulations to prevent the spread of the virus and contain the pandemic. These measures include preventive regulations and practices, extreme social distancing (“lockdown”), phased lifting of restrictions and reinstatement of regulations. In this context, the circumstances in which BOU students live, work and study are characterised by uncertainty, anxiety, limited movement, and challenges of communication and internet access. The Botswana Open University seeks to comply with the Government’s regulations in order to protect the health and safety of its students, whilst also putting in place mitigating measures to ensure the completion of the 2019/20 academic year and the commencement of the 2020/21 academic year. In particular, the University recognises that venue-based sessional examinations cannot be held with social distancing restrictions in place and alternative remote forms of final assessment must be adopted for examinable courses.
- 1.2** The University has put in place a number of alternative modes of summative assessment as a substitute for venue-based exams. However, it is aware that students may face a number of challenges in successfully undertaking these remote assessments. These difficulties include reduced interaction with those responsible for academic support, difficult revision circumstances, unfamiliarity with the new assessment formats and IT challenges. The University wishes to ensure that no student is disadvantaged by the new final assessment arrangements and it has therefore adopted the following Guidelines.

2 GUIDELINES FOR SEMESTER 2 2019/20 FINAL ASSESSMENT DEFERRAL

- 2.1 In order to ensure conformity with the University's assessment standards, these Guidelines are anchored on the University's existing assessment policies and related procedures.
- 2.2 These Guidelines are only in force for Semester 2, 2019/20 and are for the sole purpose of mitigating the impact of COVID-19.
- 2.3 Deferral means an approved postponement of final assessment until the next assessment period (i.e. "special examinations"). In all cases, students may defer without penalty or additional cost and the deferred examination(s) will be considered as the first examination attempt. The provision for deferral is in line with the principle of Clause 7.3 of the *Assessment and Moderation of Student Learning Policy and Procedures* which directs that "Learners who could not sit end-of-semester examination because of a recorded and verified Special or Extenuating Circumstance (SorEC) will be required to sit a special examination".
- 2.4 Any student concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 situation on their ability to perform may request that they defer taking the final assessment for all of their courses or for specified individual courses. A formal request for postponement must be made **at least 3 days prior** to the final assessment due date using the *Final Assessment Deferral Form A*. No explanation is required. In the case of deferral, the mode of final assessment will remain the same.
- 2.5 Any student can apply for deferral for a specific course if they experience access problems, technical issues or IT failure during the final assessment. A formal request for postponement with a full explanation and justification must be made **within 3 days** after the final assessment due date using the *Final Assessment Deferral Form B*. In the case of deferral, the mode of final assessment will remain the same.

3 PROCEDURE

- 3.1 A student seeking deferral in accordance with paragraphs 2.4 or 2.5 above must complete the *Final Assessment Deferral Form* on the BOU website in the Student Centre.
- 3.2 The University shall ensure processing of the deferral requests within ten days of receipt to enable eligible students to register for the Special Examinations.