



THE BOU E-TUTOR MODEL

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** In November 2019 Council approved the *Strategy for Technology-Enhanced Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Student Support* (STELTASS). The Strategy provides a blueprint for how the Botswana Open University can achieve its Strategic Intent: “By 2023 BOU will be an innovative Open University recognized for its technology-enhanced programmes ...”. What had been envisaged in 2019 as a gradual process of change to a fully digital learning environment has been speeded up by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent restrictions on physical interactions. The University has therefore accelerated its efforts towards implementing STELTASS. One key to effective online learning, assessment and student support is part-time tutoring, which is a major component of BOU’s delivery system. The role of the Part-Time Tutor needs to be re-defined within the online learning environment, along with changes in the role of the students, the Schools, the Division of Student Services and various support departments. In the light of this requirement, the University has developed *THE BOU E-TUTOR MODEL* within the framework of STELTASS. The introduction and establishment of the model will be accompanied by suitable change management interventions.
- 1.2** The model is based on the assumption that teaching, learning, assessment and student support will henceforth take place primarily within the University’s Learning Management System, which is currently Moodle, supported by the Student Management System, which is currently ITS. *THE BOU E-TUTOR MODEL* elaborated below identifies clearly the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

2 THE BOU E-TUTOR MODEL

2.1 Part-Time Tutors

- 2.1.1** There will be new expectations of Part-Time Tutors in the new online learning environment. They will be expected to undertake tutorial activities within Moodle. The envisaged E-Tutoring will include activities such as chat rooms and

discussion forums. They will receive formative assessment work and mark it and provide feedback online. Part-time Tutors will be expected to capture the marks online, on ITS. They will also mark summative assessments online and enter the marks online on ITS. These activities will be clearly stated in the revised Tutor Contract and they will be paid for each of these activities. To be eligible for part-time work at BOU, Part-Time Tutors will be expected to have access to a laptop/computer. They will be given a monthly connectivity allowance for the semester the course is running.

2.1.2 The specific responsibilities of Part-Time Tutors are as follows:

- a) To conduct digital interactive sessions (“E-Tutorials”) with students within the Learning Management System (and other platforms where appropriate) as scheduled by the Division of Student Services and as designed with the School in order to:
- Clarify course content
 - Guide students on certain topics
 - Provide necessary information on challenging topics
 - Stimulate and facilitate online discussion
 - Ask and answer questions
 - Share supplementary learning content in different electronic media platforms

Information on the dates, times, frequency, nature and duration of E-Tutorials will be disseminated by the Director, Student Affairs and Welfare. The Tutor will produce an end-of-semester report on student participation and related academic issues (according to the template provided). The Manager, Tertiary will share this report with the Programme Coordinator and School/Centre Administrators.

- b) To be available at specified times and for a specified time to respond to content-related queries raised by students within Moodle and through other digital

platforms, such as WhatsApp, Google Meet and Microsoft Teams.

- c) To liaise with the Manager Tertiary/ Tutor Coordinator for Learning Analytics data to identify students at risk for the attention of Counsellors, School/Centre Administrators and Programme Coordinators.
- d) To conduct all modes of assessment online and to enter marks online, specifically to:
 - Mark continuous assessment assignments, provide comments as feedback within Moodle and enter the marks on ITS
 - Mark the summative assessments online and enter the marks on ITS

2.2 Students

2.2.1 THE BOU E-TUTOR MODEL creates new expectations for students who have been used to face-to-face tutorials and venue-based examinations. Henceforth all learning and assessment activities will be carried out on digital platforms. It is therefore the responsibility of students to ensure that they have access to appropriate digital devices and access to the Internet. (See the *Policy Guideline on Digital Gadgets for Tertiary Students.*)

2.2.2 Students will be expected to use the Student Portal on a regular basis to access learning materials and E-Tutorial activities, such as chat rooms and discussion forums. They will also submit and receive continuous assessment assignments online and undertake summative assessments online. Clear schedules will be sent out to students so that they know when they are expected to interact with their Tutors, when assignments are due for submission, and when final assessments will be taken.

2.3 Schools

2.3.1 The Schools have academic responsibility for the quality delivery of their programmes by Part-Time Tutors, including teaching, learning and assessment. This responsibility includes the recruitment of qualified Tutors, the design of E-Tutorial activities, the setting of continuous assessment assignments, the setting and moderation of summative

assessments, and the quality assurance of all activities by the Part-Time Tutors. The key people within the School to ensure quality programme delivery are the academics.

2.3.2 The specific responsibilities of the academics are as follows:

- a) To design digital interactive sessions (“E-Tutorials”) with Part-Time Tutors and ensure inclusion in all courses, and to quality assure their implementation by the Tutors.
- b) To upload moderated continuous assessment assignments and quality assure the marking and feedback by Tutors.
- c) To upload moderated summative assessments and quality assure the marking by Tutors, including reviewing the marks entered by Tutors.
- d) To receive Learning Analytics reports on students at risk from the Regions and work closely with the Managers Tertiary/Tutor Coordinators and Tutors to develop mitigating interventions.

2.4 The Division of Student Services

2.4.1 The Division of Student Services has administrative and welfare responsibility for the Part-Time Tutors and students. This responsibility is carried out by the Department of Student Affairs and Welfare at Headquarters and the Managers Tertiary and Tutor Coordinators (where applicable) at the Regional Campuses, whilst the Department of Academic Registry has responsibility for use of the Student Management System (ITS).

2.4.2 The Department of Student Affairs and Welfare has the responsibility to develop:

- Induction Guides for Tutors and students
- Welcome E-Tutorial letters
- The delivery schedule for E-Tutorials
- Psychosocial interventions for students at risk to mitigate challenges experienced during study.
- Develop brochures and videos for students on study skills

- 2.4.3** The Department of Academic Registry has the responsibility to:
- Train Tutors on the use of ITS for continuous assessment
 - Access, submission and return of continuous assessment assignments to students and marks entry by Tutors
 - Quality assure the continuous assessment mark input by Tutors
 - Oversee and quality assure the administration of summative assessments and mark entry by Tutors
- 2.4.4** The Manager, Tertiary at the Regional Campus (with assistance from Tutor Coordinators, where applicable) has the responsibility to:
- Assign Tutors to groups of students on completion of registration and send the lists to the Centre for Instructional Technology for uploading and linking
 - Send SMS reminders about the start and end dates of all E-Tutorial activities, the submission dates of continuous assessment assignments, and the dates of summative assessments to both students and Tutors
 - Direct students to E-Tutorials and monitor student activity levels within Moodle
 - Monitor Tutor activity within Moodle and verify Tutor payment claims and connectivity allowance eligibility emanating from these activities
 - Monitor Tutor adherence to assignment schedules and mark entry, and verify Tutor payment claims for the marking of assignments
 - Monitor Tutor adherence to summative assessment schedules and mark entry, and verify Tutor payment claims for the marking of summative assessment
 - Evaluate Tutor performance using online surveys and Moodle analytics

2.5 The Centre for Instructional Technology

The Centre will provide instructional design assistance and training to academics in the Schools with regard to the use of Moodle's interactive capabilities for E-Tutorials, the use of Moodle for online formative and summative assessment, and the use of Learning Analytics. It will train and induct Part-Time Tutors, Managers, Tertiary, Tutor Coordinators and Examination Officers into the use of Moodle with respect to both technical and pedagogical issues. It will also train Programme Coordinators, Part time Tutors and Tutor Coordinators on developing interactive educational content for communication through different electronic media platforms. CIT will link all students to their Course groups and assigned tutors.

2.6 Division of Corporate Services

2.6.1 Four departments within this Division have significant responsibilities for the effective and efficient implementation of the *BOU E-TUTOR MODEL*.

2.6.2 The Department of Information Technology is responsible for ensuring the efficient operation, integration and cyber-security of the two key platforms, namely the Learning Management System (Moodle) and the Student Management System (ITS). It is also responsible to ensure adequate bandwidth at all BOU facilities.

2.6.3 The role of the Department of Human Resources is to oversee the recruitment and appointment of Part-Time Tutors, including timely review and, where appropriate, prompt renewal of contracts. The Department is also responsible for ensuring the timely assignment of pin numbers to Part-Time Tutors so that they can access ITS, and for ensuring up-to-date Tutor records.

2.6.4 The role of the Department of Financial Services is to oversee the automated Part-Time Tutor payment system in the Regions and ensure accurate and prompt payment of fees and allowances to Tutors and timely issuance of advice slips and tax certificates.

2.6.5 The Procurement Office is tasked with identifying preferred service providers who will offer digital gadgets at a discount to students and Part-time Tutors of BOU.

3 IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.1** The implementation of the Model is primarily the responsibility of the Divisions of Academic Services and Student Services, with support from the Division of Corporate Services. The DVC-AS and the DVC-SS are therefore identified as the responsible officers. A responsibility matrix to support the Model will be developed.
- 3.2** The introduction of the Model will require some adjustments to existing Job Descriptions. This will be taken into account in the exercise to update job descriptions as part of the implementation of the *Due Diligence Study and Organizational Redesign Consultancy (2020)*.
- 3.3** It is envisaged that the budgetary requirements of implementing the Model in 2020/21 will be met through re-direction of some of the funds allocated for physical tutorials and venue-based examinations. For future financial years, appropriate budgetary allocation by different sections of the University will be made using activity-based costing. The *Academic Staff Allocation Formula for BOU* will be reviewed accordingly so that suitable academic staffing levels are included in budget estimates.

4 CONCLUSION

THE BOU E-TUTOR MODEL builds on the University's experience and is intended to replace face-to-face tutorials and venue-based examinations by undertaking these activities within the digital learning environment. It represents a significant change and it is part of the overall implementation of the *Strategy for Technology-Enhanced Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Student Support*.

5 REVIEW

The Model shall be reviewed every three years or earlier as necessary.