

Interim Amendments to Engineering Faculty Assessment Rules for 1st Semester 2021

Revision 1¹

22 July 2021

1. Background

This document is a major revision of its counterpart for the second semester 2020.

During this first semester of 2021, modules in the Engineering Faculty were offered in the ARTLA format, with most main assessments intended to be sit-down and invigilated. A1 assessments were completed in sit-down invigilated format. A2 assessments that took place from Monday 21 June until Sunday 27 June were completed in sit-down invigilated format. Scheduling of A4s were announced institutionally on Wednesday 23 June but excluded flexible assessment modules. A4s for flexible assessment modules offered in the Faculty of Engineering were announced on Friday 25 June. On Sunday 27 June 2021 (after the sixth day of the A2 assessment period), and in response to the Government's regulations related to the Covid-19 pandemic, the University decided that faculties must prepare to offer the remainder of A2 and A3 assessments in non-contact mode, and that further communication on the A4 opportunities should be expected. Subsequently, significant political unrest during the week of 10 - 17 July necessitated the broadening of access to A4 opportunities. Rules 3 and 4 below replaces previous communication about additional A4 assessments for modules in the Faculty of Engineering.

All of the interim rules are subject to further revision, if required as all faculties work towards aligning their processes for the first semester of 2021.

The modules offered by the Engineering Faculty will comply with the Faculty's normal Assessment Rules, with the following interim amendments that only apply to the 1st semester of 2021. Other faculties that offer modules primarily for BEng students are requested to also comply with the amended rules in those modules.

2. Interim Amendments to the Faculty's Assessment Rules

1. The A2 assessments that were completed in sit-down invigilated mode during the first six days of the A2 assessment period (from Monday 21 June until Sunday 27 June) should be marked and the results used. These will not be rescheduled in online format.
2. The normal rules for access to A3 apply, with the following adaptation: Students who missed both A1 and A2 will have access to A3 (and A4), provided that all other requirements for access to A3 are met.
3. Additional assessment opportunities (A4) will be scheduled, as sit-down invigilated or oral assessments, for all first semester modules for which an A2 and A3 were scheduled, unless specifically excluded in clause 4 below.

Access to these A4 opportunities will be as follows:

- a) All students who did not write A1, A2 or A3 **for any reason (no proof required)** will have access to A4, provided that the student had access to A2 or A3 (The rules for access to A2 or A3 are stated in section 3.1.4 of the Faculty Assessment rules.)

¹ Revision 0 of this document was approved by the Programme Committee, the Faculty Committee and the Management Committee of the Faculty of Engineering prior to its publication. Revision 1 updated the clauses that concern the additional assessment opportunities (A4) to align with the revised ICBC decisions communicated on 22 July 2021 made in response to political unrest.

- b) Students who wrote all main assessments (A1, A2 and A3) will **not** have access to the additional assessment A4.
 - c) Students who wrote none of the main assessments A1, A2 or A3 will **not** have access to the additional assessment A4, because students cannot pass based on one main assessment only.
 - d) Students who pass the module prior to A4 will **not** have access to A4, i.e. A4 may not be used to improve marks.
4. A4 opportunities will **not** be offered for: Modules that use project-based assessment, modules that use continuous assessment, Intercultural communication 113, nor Chemical Engineering 424.
 5. The normal formulae for calculating final marks apply, with the following adaptation: For students who wrote A4, in the final marks calculation the A4 replaces A1, A2, A3 or none, whichever option results in the highest final mark.
 6. The persons that mark assessments that contribute 20% or more to the final mark must comply with the Faculty's rules for persons marking summative assessments.
 7. Internal and external moderation should be done according to the normal rules.

Arrangements for online A2 and A3 assessments (mostly unchanged from semester 2 of 2020):

8. Between the time A2 or A3 quizzes or assignments are loaded on SUNLearn and the completion of the assessment, all users with facilitator privileges that are not examiners, moderators or staff that normally would have access to A2 or A3 question papers (e.g., student assistants), must be removed from the module's SUNLearn site. Also refer to Note 1 in the Appendix.
9. In the following paragraphs, a "project-type" assignment refers to an A2 or A3, such as a small project or take-home assessment, that is made visible to students at least 72 hours before the submission deadline (to accommodate students that may be writing two modules in close succession). Assignments with submission deadlines before the end of lectures are not considered here.
10. If A2 or A3 requires students to scan and submit handwritten parts, the submission deadline on SUNLearn should provide 30 minutes added to the normal writing time. The **submission allowance** is not affected by the length of the paper. It is applied in all A2s and A3s that contain handwritten submissions (irrespective of whether it contains a quiz too). If A2 or A3 only comprises one or more SUNLearn quizzes with no scanned in submissions, the submission allowance does not apply. The submission allowance is unchanged for students eligible for extra writing time concessions.

Refer to Note 2 in the Appendix for an example.

Staff setting papers requiring submission of scanned documents should limit the number of separate submissions required so that the above submission allowance will be sufficient. Preferably not more than three (3) separate scanned-in submissions should be required.

11. Students that are eligible for extra writing time concessions may add that extra time to the normal submission deadline, except that no extra time allowance is given for a project-type assignment.
12. The timing of a SUNLearn quiz or assignment in A2 or A3 should be set so that the "Open the quiz" or "Allow submission from" time is at the scheduled start time for the module's timetable slot (taking into account the staggered starting times, and provision for load shedding in item 20 below, where applicable), except that the submissions for project-type assignments may be opened for submission from the time the assignment is revealed.
13. For the parts of A2 or A3 that use SUNLearn's assignments for submission, the question paper can be added to the assignment's description as a pdf file. The "Restrict Access" function should be used to set the time that it becomes visible to students (click "Add Restriction" and then "Date"). The date and time must be set to the start of the module's timetable slot (taking the staggered starting times into account, and provision for load shedding in item 20 below, where applicable), unless it is a project-type assignment.

14. For all assignment types, the time from the start of the timetable slot to the "Close the quiz" or, for assignments, "Due date" should be the normal writing time plus the additional submission allowance (if applicable).

The "Time limit" (for quizzes) or "Cut-off date" (for assignments) need not be set, but if it is, it should allow for the maximum extra writing time concession on the class list², plus the submission allowance (if applicable). Staff may use the functionality provided in SUNLearn to override some quiz settings to set separate time limits for students without extra writing time concessions and for each group of students with a certain amount of extra writing time.

Refer to Note 2 in the Appendix for an example.

15. If students submit any part of (or the whole) A2 and A3 assessments after the submission deadline on SUNLearn (after taking into account the submission allowance and extra writing time concessions), that part of the assessment will be considered to be a late submission. Such late submissions will not be marked and will not contribute to the A2 or A3 mark. The time recorded by SUNLearn as the submission time minus 5 minutes³ will be taken to be the student's submission time. Submissions of other parts of the assessment on SUNLearn that are not late submissions, will be marked and will contribute to the A2 or A3 mark. Refer to Note 3 in the Appendix for an example.
16. Students who have submitted any part of an A2 or A3 assessment will be considered to have taken part in that assessment⁴ and that assessment mark will be taken into account in the final mark calculation.
17. Students that encounter legitimate problems when attempting to submit scanned answers to SUNLearn may email the scanned answers to submitENG@sun.ac.za, subject to the following provisions:
- a) This submission option does not replace the primary and preferred SUNLearn submission process for an assessment and no technical queries will be answered or allowed via this email address. This "emergency submission route" is only for students who experience technical difficulties when trying to upload their assignment onto SUNLearn.
 - b) The email submissions from students via this email account will only be considered if:
 - i. The submission via email is timestamped on the receiving (and not sending) email server before the submission deadline for the student (taking into account extra writing time concessions and, if applicable, the submission allowance).
 - ii. Evidence of the technical difficulty experienced is supplied as part of the email in the form of a screenshot to demonstrate the technical difficulty.
 - iii. The email's subject line gives the student's student number, module name and the assessment (e.g. 12345678; Economics 111; A3).
 - iv. The email body contains a clear explanation of the nature of the difficulty encountered when submitting to SUNLearn and attaching appropriate evidence (including but not limited to screen shots or photos of the error).
18. Students may email questions to the lecturer indicated on the SUNLearn assignment or quiz during A2 and A3, but lecturers are not obliged to reply. If students have any doubts about the meaning of a question in a handwritten part of A2 or A3, they should in their answers: state their doubt, add a reasonable assumption to resolve the doubt and complete their answers using their assumption. If students are uncertain about a quiz question, they should make reasonable assumption to resolve the doubt and complete their answers using their assumption. If the quiz presents an opportunity for students to state their assumptions, students should make use of that opportunity (staff are encouraged to add an open text, zero mark "question" at the end of a quiz where students can state their assumptions).

² The class lists downloaded from my.sun.ac.za give the extra writing time concessions.

³ Previous experience has shown that the submission time recorded by SUNLearn may be a few minutes later than the actual submission time.

⁴ In normal (face-to-face) assessments, a student entering the venue will be considered to have written the assessment. However, here as a concession for students with connectivity issues, the assessment will only "count" if a student has submitted a part or the whole of the assessment.

19. No further provision, other than that given in the preceding paragraphs, will be made for students who failed to submit all or part of their answers by the deadline, irrespective of the reason for not submitting. Lecturers should not make special arrangements with individual students in this regard because it can lead to unfairly helping some students and not others.

Systemic failures (e.g. major SUNLearn malfunctions) will be handled institutionally. Otherwise, students will have access to A3 if during A2 they had, for example, experienced disruptions, failed internet connections, religious objections or any other reason for not submitting. No further provision is made for students who were disrupted in A3⁵.

20. Main assessments will be made available 10 minutes earlier than the start time of the assessment to help mitigate the impact of load shedding on our students. Since load shedding typically starts on the hour, this concession is intended to allow students who may be affected by load shedding to download the assessment before they lose their internet connection due to power cuts to mobile towers and wifi networks. This concession shall be applied to all⁶ online BEng A2 and A3 assessments and is in addition to allowances detailed in items 10 and 11 above.

⁵ This arrangement is similar in face-to-face A3s where a student is prevented from writing the assessment by circumstances beyond the student's control, e.g. illness.

⁶ Although this concession makes less sense for quiz type assessment types, and it is acknowledged that load shedding may not necessarily occur, the benefit of applying a consistent Faculty wide approach is that students will know what to expect, reducing confusion and queries related to this concession.

Appendix A: Notes and examples

Note 1: Assistants on SUNLearn

It may be possible to leave student assistants as "non-editing facilitators", but we still need to confirm whether this role is blocked from seeing the contents of assignments and quizzes. Further instructions/advice will follow in this regard.

Note 2: Examples for submission deadline

Consider an A2 with a handwritten part and a quiz:

- 0,5 hr handwritten part and 2 hr quiz;
- start time for the module's timetable slot is 8:30;
- the student with the maximum extra writing time has 15 min per hr.

Then the submission deadline should be

- 8:30
- + 2.5 hr normal writing time
- + 30 min for submission allowance (irrespective of the length of the assessment)
- = 8:30 + 2:30 + 0:30 = 11:30

If a "Time limit" (for quizzes) or "Cut-off date" (for assignments) is set (which is an option, but not a requirement), it must be no sooner than

- 11:30
- + 2.5*15 min extra writing time
- = 11:30 + 0:37.5 = 12:07.5

Consider an A2 with only a quiz, with no handwritten and scanned submissions:

- 2.5 hr quiz;
- start time for the module's timetable slot is 8:30;
- the student with the maximum extra writing time has 15 min per hr.

Then the submission deadline should be

- 8:30
- + 2.5 hr normal writing time
- + 0 min for submission allowance (because it only comprises a quiz)
- = 8:30 + 2:30 = 11:00

If a "Time limit" (for quizzes) is set (which is an option, but not a requirement), it must be no sooner than

- 11:00
- + 2.5*15 min extra writing time
- = 11:00 + 0:37.5 = 11:37.5

Note 3: Example for late submission

Case 1: A2 is not a project-type assessment

- A student submits the last part of A2 at 22 min after the deadline (as recorded in the log downloaded from SUNLearn, where all events are listed with student number, timestamp and event type; or exporting the grades from a quiz);
- The student is eligible for 5 min per hr extra writing time (as listed on the class list downloaded from my.sun.ac.za), and the paper's total time was 3 hr;

- That part of the student's A2 is not marked because it is a late submission:
(22 min over deadline) – (3*5 min extra writing time) – (5 min for SUNLearn latency)
= 2 min

Case 2: A2 is a project-type assessment

- A student submits the last part of A2 at 12 min after the deadline (as recorded in the log downloaded from SUNLearn, where all events are listed with student number, timestamp and event type; or exporting the grades from a quiz);
- The student is eligible for 5 min per hr extra writing time (as listed on the class list downloaded from my.sun.ac.za), but this was a project-type assessment for which extra writing time is not awarded;
- That part of the student's A2 is not marked because it is a late submission:
(12 min over deadline) – (5 min for SUNLearn latency)
= 7 min