



BOCODOL
Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning

STUDENT ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK

2017

3rd Edition

**BOTSWANA COLLEGE OF DISTANCE AND OPEN LEARNING
[BOCODOL]**

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1.0. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

The terms listed and defined here have not been coined by the College, but the definitions given are as understood and used at BOCODOL. Other terms not listed but used here are of common use and shall mean the same thing as in their use elsewhere.

- i. **Tutor Marked Assignments [TMAs]:** These are assignments received with the study pack and are supposed to be answered after reading the study material and attending tutorials. The TMAs are then submitted on the scheduled dates for marking by tutors.
- ii. **Examination(s):** A written Assessment with fixed time-limit of no less than 30 minutes conducted under the control of the Examinations Officer in an Examination Venue in accordance with these Examination Regulations. The duration of an Examination shall be specified in multiples of 15 minutes.
- iii. **Practical-Based Examination(s):** An Assessment which assesses practical skill, such as a clinical examination, oral or recital, which is conducted in accordance with College Assessment Regulations but which is not under the control of the Examinations Officer and which is organized by the relevant Programme Department
- iv. **Supplementary/Re-sit Examination Period:** A period to be determined by the Academic Board in which candidates may be re-examined in failed Courses or units of study, and/or by the end of which candidates shall re-submit any Coursework Assessment and/or TMA and/or undertake Practical-Based Examination(s).
- v. **Coursework Assessment(s) or Project:** Any assessment which is not an Examination, Practical-Based Examination or TMA. This will normally take the form of a research where a write-up must be submitted at the end.
- vi. **Examination Period:** A period to be determined by the Academic Board which is set aside for the conduct of Examinations and Practical-Based Examinations following a specified period of study. The Examination Periods will be notified to all candidates through their Regional EA at commencement of their Programme of Study.

vii. Examination List:

A list of all eligible candidates who will be sitting for examinations in a particular Course. All students enrolled in a Course must register to write examinations when they are ready. Students who register must have satisfied all Course regulations and paid the examinations fee as required by the College.

viii. Examination Venue: A venue specified by the Examinations Officer as one in which an Examination may be held, this will normally be the Community Study Centre [CSC] or it can be any such designated place as so chosen by the Examination Officer or his/her representative in the Regional Centre.

ix. Examination Coaching Clinic: An organized tutorial session at which registered candidates for a particular examination are prepared to sit the examination

x. Piracy: The deliberate exploitation of the ideas from others without proper acknowledgement;

xi. Plagiarism: the copying of ideas, text, software or data (or various combinations thereof) without permission or acknowledgement; 'Passing off someone else's work intentionally or unintentionally as your own for academic benefit.'

xii. Misrepresentation: Any deliberate attempt to represent falsely or unfairly facts or the ideas or work of others, whether or not for personal gain or enhancement; also misrepresenting a case of mitigating circumstances.

xiii. Fraud: Deliberate deception, which may include the invention, fabrication, or falsifying of data, results or analysis or other work in the course of research, introduction of material into an examination for the purpose of cheating.

xiv. Protocols: Failure to follow established protocols if this failure results in unreasonable risk or harm to humans, other sentient creatures generally recognized in this context, or the environment, and facilitating of misconduct in research by collusion in, or concealment of, such actions by others;

- xv. Removal or damage:** Intentional, unauthorized removal of or damage to research-related property of another including apparatus, materials, writings, data, hardware or software or any other substances or devices used in or produced by the conduct of research.

- xvi. Special or Extenuating Circumstances:** Medical or significant personal circumstances, including close bereavement [death of parents, siblings, spouse or your own children]. N.B. A sick leave does NOT warranty missing an examination: the doctor must specifically state that the student is unable to write the examination. Otherwise the student can write at their place of confinement as shown under 9.0.

2.0 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS HANDBOOK

1. AC – Assessment Coordinator
2. BEC - Botswana Examinations Council
3. BGCSE – Botswana General Certificate in Secondary Education
4. BOCODOL – Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning
5. CA – Continuous Assessment
6. CSC – Community Study Centre
7. EA – Examinations Assistant
8. EO – Examinations Officer
9. G&CC - Guidance and Counselling Coordinator
10. GCAP - General College Assessment Procedure
11. JCE – Junior Certificate Examinations
12. LCC - Learning Centre Coordinator
13. LTC – Learner-Tutor Coordinator
14. RC - Regional Centre
15. SorEC - Special or Extenuating Circumstances
16. TMA – Tutor Marked Assignment
17. SRC – Student Representative Council

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This Handbook is intended to define the relationship between Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning [BOCODOL], herein after referred to as the College, and you as its student, wherever you may be located in all the 5 Regional College Centres on matters of assessment.

Whilst the Handbook does not constitute a legal document, your enrolment as a student onto a programme of study at BOCODOL implies a contractual arrangement whereby you are entitled to receive appropriate tuition and other support to assist you in completing the Course you have enrolled in. The College is entitled to expect certain levels of involvement and compliance from you. Thus you have both rights and responsibilities as a student and so does the College as the provider.

The Handbook is based on the accepted fundamental principles that guide and direct the methods and processes of assessment in higher education in Botswana and elsewhere. The purposes of assessment are to help staff; tutors and students monitor and improve learning, to provide a measure of student achievement and to help assure academic quality and standards. Assessment is at the heart of the students' experience; it shapes the curriculum and helps define what is important for them. Assessment is thus an integral part of all learning and teaching activities. This Students' Assessment Handbook is extracted from the College Assessment Policy which is the vehicle by which enhancement of assessment will be achieved.

Assessment at BOCODOL is based on three (3) principles, and these are;

1. Validity [i.e. assessment methods will assess what is intended to be assessed and be fit for purpose.
2. Reliability [i.e. assessment processes and procedures will be accurate, consistent and trustworthy and their broad outcomes will have the full confidence of all parties]
3. Explicit [i.e. assessment methods, processes and procedures will be accessible, clearly explained to and understood by all stakeholders (including prospective and current students, funding agents, academic and related staff, professional bodies and employers)].

The Students' Assessment Handbook provides guidance and direction based upon these principles in all areas of operation and must be quoted if there is need to resolve any point of clarification.

The Handbook covers the assessment of all students studying at BOCODOL, including those who may be preparing to sit for examinations administered by other Examining Boards. It relates to all forms of assessment including re-assessment.

4.0 METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

- a) Students will be assessed through tutor-marked assignments [TMAs], Class- Tests and final [Sessional] examinations. In some Courses a Coursework or Practical-Based Examination may be used.
- b) The average of the TMAs and or Coursework or Practical-Based Examination will be referred to as the Continuous Assessment [CA] and its contribution to the Final Mark will be as described on the programme specific regulations.
- c) Where a Class-Test contributes to the final average, it will be included as part of the CA where it will contribute 20% to the CA.
- d) The ratio of CA to Examination will be reviewed from time to time and may be altered without notice in situations where there is evidence that the candidate may have obtained unfair advantage.

5.0 SPECIAL CANDIDATES

The College will permit adjustments to the methods of assessment and arrangements for the conduct of Examinations, Practical-Based Examinations, Class Tests and/or Coursework Assessments for candidates with disabilities or other support needs to enable them to have the same opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of specific learning outcomes, without compromising academic standards or affecting prescribed standards of Professional Bodies.

- a) The arrangements to be made by the College for candidates requiring Specific Provision in Examinations, Practical-Based Examinations, Class Tests and/or Coursework Assessments are fully consonant with the requirements arising from the Special Educational Unit regulations from the Ministry of Education and Skills Development.
- b) Where an applicant or candidate has completed a declaration of disability, the Assessment of need shall include consideration of any adjustments required for Examinations, Practical-Based Examinations, Class Tests and/or Coursework Assessments as part of that process.
- c) Applications for Specific Provision should be made on the form made available to all candidates and should be supported by documentary evidence, such as a report by a Medical Practitioner, a needs assessment recognized for purposes of the counselors Report.
- d) Applications for Specific Provision in Examinations and/or Class Tests should be submitted to the Examinations Officer (EO). The EOs are permitted to disregard requests for Specific Provision which are not supported by appropriate documentary evidence.
- e) Where an application is made for an alternative form of Assessment, this will be referred to the Department for consideration. In such cases, any arrangements for adjustments to the method of assessment shall be subject to demonstrating the achievement of specific learning outcomes and shall not compromise academic standards or affect prescribed standards of Professional Bodies.
- f) Applications for Specific Provision can be made at any time but it may not be possible to process applications in time for an Examination, Practical-Based Examination or Class Test that has already been scheduled. To ensure that the necessary adjustments can be made for Examinations, Class Tests, Practical-Based Examination or Coursework Assessment that will be taken within the first 12 weeks of a Programme of Study, where a candidate's circumstances are known to be prolonged or permanent and identified prior to the start of the

Academic Year, the candidate should submit a written application to the EO and the Department, as appropriate, by the end of Week Two of the start date of the Programme of Study.

- g) Included in the list of special candidates may be those that are in confinement for medical or legal reasons. They may be allowed to write in their place of confinement. However the Chief Invigilator must be satisfied that the environment is conducive to conduct an examination and the candidate is fit to do so [in the case of a pregnant woman or a new mother, a doctors opinion must be sought first].

6.0 REGISTRATION FOR EXAMINATIONS

- i. Enrolment in a Course or Programme of study does not imply automatic registration for an examination in the Course or Programme, unless specifically stated otherwise.
- ii. The Examinations Officer will normally announce the Examinations Registration Period for all Courses, including those examined externally.
- iii. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they register on time on their own and at their own expense with the external examining bodies. The EA must be notified of such registration in order to assist in organizing Examination Coaching Clinics
- iv. A student who has submitted two-thirds of his/her assignments [with average of at least 50%] in the Course for which s/he wants to sit exams will be advised by the Regional Examinations Assistant [EA] through a letter to register for examinations.
- v. Candidates trained by the College to sit for external examinations must still satisfy this Continuous Assessment [CA] requirement and assignments submission.
- vi. In addition to iv) above the student may be required as per Course Guidelines, to have submitted all assignments before they could be eligible for registration.

- vii. The assignments considered in iv) and vi) above must be CURRENT i.e. not older than 1 academic year; assignments that are more than two years old and had been submitted before are not to be counted as coursework.
- viii. Students who are upgrading can only be allowed to register and upgrade only those Courses in which they had previously been examined and obtained a simple Pass [BGCSE – F or better, JC, D or better].
- ix. Outright Fail [BGCSE – G or U, JC – E] must be treated as beginners and must satisfy iv) above
- x. There may be separate examination fees set by the College or other Examining Board which change from time to time. The EA must communicate this to all registering candidates.
- xi. The registration process is not complete until the candidate has been given a Centre and candidate number which may or may not be the same as the Student Number.
- xii. The Centre and candidate number will normally be printed out on an examination admission letter or ticket [also called a Statement of Entry]. This is issued to all eligible candidates and specifies the name of the Course, date, time and venue of the Examination. This letter must be presented to the Invigilator with the proper identification at the Examination Venue.
- xiii. Examination Lists will be posted at each Examination Centre 3 weeks before the start of an Examination Period.
- xiv. Examination Lists are used to make Mark Sheets and any candidate not in the list will not be graded unless circumstances for his/her exclusion have been proved to be extenuating or erroneous.
- xv. If an eligible candidate does not appear in the Examination list, she/he must immediately inform the Regional EA who should be able to confirm whether it was an omission. Any omissions must be communicated to the Examinations Officer as soon as possible before the start of the Examination Period.

- xvi. No candidate will be allowed to change examination venue without prior written arrangement with their EA. Transfers may be charged a fee as determined by the College from time to time.
- xvii. Candidates must always show their exam admission ticket at the Examination Venue. Students who pitch up at examination centres they do not belong to will NOT be allowed in.

7.0 SPECIAL OR EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

- a) A candidate shall report in writing any Special or Extenuating Circumstances [SorEC] which may have an effect on his/her performance in the following; Examination, Practical-Based Examination, Tutor Marked Assignment [TMA] or Coursework Assessment to the EA as soon as the circumstances arise, and, where possible, before the Examination, Practical-Based Examination is due to be taken or the element of TMA or Coursework Assessment is due to be submitted.
- b) The report, which must be in the prescribed form, shall be supported by documentary evidence.
- c) If a candidate is unable to submit TMA or Coursework Assessment by the due date, and Special or Extenuating Circumstances have been reported as above, the EA shall either;
 - i. approve an extension to a submission date which shall be set such that the Coursework Assessment may be marked prior to the meeting of the Examining Board; or
 - ii. not approve an extension to a submission date on the grounds that:
 - 1. there is insufficient time to permit the Coursework Assessment to be marked; or
 - 2. the Special or Extenuating Circumstances as reported are not sufficient to warrant an extension.

- d) The EA shall inform the candidate in writing of his/her decision and report his/her actions to the Examinations Officer.
- e) No retrospective report of Special or Extenuating Circumstances will be considered after the publication of results or submission of the TMA or Coursework Assessment.
- f) If any Special or Extenuating Circumstances arise in an Examination Venue, the circumstances shall be reported by the candidate to the invigilator. The Chief Invigilator [EA] shall take a decision and report, in writing such circumstances and the action taken to the Examinations Officer.
- g) The Examinations Officer will present all cases of SorEC and absence from an Examination, Practical-Based Examination or non-submission of TMA or Coursework Assessment to the Examining Board which will decide whether the EA's decisions could stand or not. The Board may then;
 - i. permit the candidate to sit the Supplementary Examination/special examinations or Practical-Based Examination, or submit the TMA or Coursework Assessment, as a first attempt at the next occasion on which the Examination or Practical-Based Examination, or TMA or Coursework Assessment is scheduled to take place; or
 - ii. permit the candidate to progress without further Examination/Assessment, or where appropriate, recommend that the candidate be awarded the qualification without further Examination/Assessment [aegrotat].
 - iii. exclude the pending assessment from being used in the calculation of the final average
- h) If the Examining Board is not satisfied that there are reasonable SorEC it shall award a mark of zero for the Examination, Practical-Based Examination, TCA or Coursework Assessment.

- i) If a student has not submitted TMA or Coursework Assessment by a due date and no Special or Extenuating Circumstances have been reported, he/she shall be penalized according to the penalty imposed on such.

8.0 EXAMINATIONS SCHEDULING

College examinations will be scheduled to be administered during the week, weekends and or holidays. As an open and distance learning institution the College does not have facilities of its own and may depend on using shared facilities at times when those are not in use especially during weekends.

- a) The criteria for scheduling Examinations shall be applied uniformly to all candidates and all Regional Centres and Examination Centres.
- b) The College reserves the right to schedule all examinations and reschedule as it sees fit. Only nationally pronounced declarations can alter the Examination Timetable, and when such happens the affected papers will be re-scheduled accordingly.
- c) It is the duty of the student to obtain study leave from their employer. BOCODOL can only provide the Examination Timetable.
- d) Candidates will be expected to sit for written examinations of not more than 6 hours per day.
- e) Any timetable clashes must be reported immediately to the Regional Coordinator within seven (7) days of receiving the timetable. Failure to do so will imply that the timetable is acceptable to the student.
- f) Violation of the Enrolment Policy knowingly or otherwise and therefore leading to double registration on the timetable does not constitute a clash.
- g) The duration of an examination in an Examination Period shall be the same in all Examination Venues. Duration of the examination is as shown on the timetable, if an examination paper has recorded a different duration the one on the timetable shall be used.

- h) Deferred examinations will be scheduled with the rest of the examinations in the next available examination period.
- i) Special examinations if available will be scheduled to be written ten (10) days after the release of the results of the examinations which were missed.

9.0 EXAMINATIONS SAT IN DISTANT VENUES OTHER THAN SPECIFIED EXAMINATION VENUES

- a) The College will consider requests from candidates to sit Examinations in places other than specified Examination Venues. Candidates sitting examinations at the first attempt will only in very exceptional circumstances be permitted to sit Examinations in places other than specified Examination Venues.
- b) A request to sit Examinations in places other than specified Examination Venues shall be submitted in writing by the candidate to the Chief Invigilator [Regional EA] concerned for consideration. The candidate shall detail in his/her application the reason for submitting the request and in all cases supporting documentary evidence shall be supplied by the candidate.
- c) Acceptable reasons for requesting to sit examinations outside one's centre are of Special or Extenuating Circumstance (SorEC) in nature and are where the student has no control over the circumstances. Exigencies of their work or duty calls are normally acceptable. Going on leave and deciding to go and write exams at any other place that you may be at that is not your registered centre IS NOT a special case and will not be acceptable.
- d) The LTC/EA shall forward requests to sit Examinations in places other than specified Examination Venues to the LTC of the hosting Region, with a recommendation whether the request should be allowed or disallowed. The final decision shall rest with the LTC of the hosting Centre who must check if the centre is well resourced to cater for guest candidates.

- e) If the hosting Centre is outside the country it must submit evidence to show that it is a registered educational institution and complete and stamp an Invigilation Request Form.
- f) The hosting Centre informs the Academic Registry of the number of guests which it shall host for the examination so that packaging will take these numbers into consideration.
- g) The deadlines for receipt of applications by the Examinations Office for sitting Examinations in places other than specified Examination Venues are two (2) weeks (14 days) prior to the commencement of the Examination Period. For international Centres this deadline is set at one (1) month to allow all arrangements to be completed.
- h) The examination taken in other venues other than the specified Examination venue must be written at the same time as the examination being written at the specified venues. The Examinations Officer shall not approve the application where:
 - The Examination cannot be written concurrently with the other specified Examination Venues,
 - the safety of the examination cannot be assured,
 - a qualified invigilator is not appointed.
- i) The host LTC shall inform the candidate and his/her LTC/EA in writing of his/her decision and pass a copy of the communication (student's letter of request) to the Examinations Office.
- j) The candidate will bear the costs of paying for the venue and the invigilator. In exceptional circumstances the Examinations Officer may advise the candidate to submit a claim for the expenses through the Office of the Guidance and Counseling Coordinator.

10.0 ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION

- a) At the beginning of the year after enrolment the students are given study materials with self-test exercises and assignments and submission schedule or Delivery Schedule.
- b) Unless stated otherwise a tutorial will normally come before assignment submission of a particular Module of the Course. This allows the student to be familiar with the concepts so that it would be easy to work on the assignment afterwards.
- c) Assignments or Coursework must be submitted according to the submission Schedule.
- d) Assignments must be either in own hand writing or typed and submitted as hard copy (or electronic copy by email with prior arrangements). Those who submit by email must have faxed evidence to show that they are unable to physically reach the centre because of being away.
- e) Assignments must ONLY be submitted to the Centre at which the student is registered. Any other submissions must be by arrangements and the student must show why they are unable to submit to their registered Centre.
- f) Students can also send in their assignments through registered mail or by courier. However using this method is no excuse for submitting late; the time the assignment will take to reach the Centre must be considered.
- g) Any student who is unable to submit an assignment or Coursework that is due must communicate this to the Regional EA in writing. Reasonable grounds for failure to submit assignments/Coursework on time must be stated, and the student must duly complete and submit a Special or Extenuating Circumstances [SorEC] Form before the due date.
- h) In all cases the script must be marked, even if it is submitted late. The student will be reminded by the EA that a penalty will be imposed according to these regulations.

- i) The tutor must mark the scripts normally. It is the EA who imposes the penalties and award the scores as in l) below.
- j) In the event the student decides to take an appeal, the EA will submit all cases of SorEC to the Examinations Officer who will ask the Examining Board to decide on the final course of action.
- k) It is NOT the duty of any College official to remind students to submit their assignments or Coursework. The Submission Schedule must be strictly followed as the College will not make any exceptions or extensions.
- l) Penalties imposed on late submissions will be as follows;
 - 5 working days or less after submission date – award up to 50% maximum if no SorEC exist, award the actual score if substantial facts exist in the SorEC form.
 - Notwithstanding a., 0% will be awarded to any assignment that is submitted when other students' scripts had already been returned,
 - 10 working days after submission date – award a zero, if no SorEC exists, award up to 50% maximum if substantial facts exist in the SorEC form.
 - More than 10 working days after submission date – if SorEC still exists the student may be asked to attempt and submit a different assignment or calculate the final result without CA.

11.0 RESEARCH PROJECTS

In programmes or courses where submission of a researched piece of work or practical report must be submitted this must be done in the format as prescribed in the regulations. The following guidelines must be followed;

- a) Students must ensure that they follow the instructions of their assigned supervisor
- b) Students are not allowed to bypass their supervisors, and their work will not be accepted if it has not been signed by the supervisor assigned to them

- c) A student who still has not completed their project will NOT be allowed to graduate until they do so.
- d) All projects must be typed and presented in the format prescribed in the programme or course regulations.
- e) All students must print and sign an undertaking to show that the project is their own piece of work and no plagiarism has occurred.
- f) A failed Research Project can be repeated in the subsequent year for improvement. The repeat will follow the route of all retakes and the necessary fees paid.
- g) Any theory marks related to a research project may be banked ONLY for 1 academic year after which the student may have to redo even the theory part.

12.0 RESULTS, TRANSCRIPTS AND DISCLOSURE OF MARKS

12.1 RESULTS

- a) Results will only be released for publication after they have gone through the process of ratification and they have been signed by the Academic Board Chairperson and Head of Department to which the specific Course belongs.
- b) Only the grade classifications will be reported in the Results, raw marks or actual averages are not shown. The grade classifications are reported as per the Programme Regulations
- c) Results will be published on all College notice boards and website; phone in requests are not allowed. No officer is allowed to tell a student their results by phone, and the College will not take responsibility for any misinformation resulting from such.
- d) Students must know their College ID number in order to view their results.

- e) Each candidate will be officially informed of their performance in the examination through post in the form of a transcript 2 weeks after the end of the period of results appeals at the end of the academic year in July.

12.2 DISCLOSURE OF MARKS

- a) Each candidate is free to ask the EA to show him/her his/her CA marks.
- b) Marks are confidential and candidates can only view their own marks. However once the final examination has been written no marks will be shown to the candidates until the results have been released. However examination marks are never disclosed.
- c) No fee shall be charged for the disclosure of marks.

12.2 TRANSCRIPTS

A transcript is an official summary of a student's academic performance and progress to date. It will only include final marks as confirmed by the Academic Registry Department. A transcript may be needed for verification by prospective employers or by other educational institutions to which you may apply to.

- a) The transcript will be issued by the Examinations Office on the approved form - paper which has the College logo (and the partner institution for joint offering) and signed by the Examinations Officer.
- b) Only students who sat an examination in the current academic year will be issued a transcript.
- c) A transcript shall confirm the grade and overall average obtained in each Course.

- d) Transcripts are collected from the Regional EA and confirmed. It is the responsibility of the student to collect their transcripts on time and rectify any errors as necessary.
- e) Transcripts will be updated every year until the student completes their study in the programme and then it becomes a permanent record which cannot be altered.
- f) It is the responsibility of the completing student especially, to ensure that their names are correctly spelt before printing of the transcripts. Any requests for corrections thereafter shall be treated as a replacement and charged as (g) below.
- g) No fee will be charged for the issuing of a transcript. However a fee, approved by the College, will be charged for a replacement or requests made outside the period when these are normally printed.

12.3 CERTIFICATES

- a) All students who have completed their programmes of study successfully shall be issued with a certificate which is an award of their qualification by the College.
- b) The certificate shall carry the College seal (and that of the partner institution in the case of a joint offering and signed by the Executive Officers of both institutions.
- c) Certificates shall be issued during the award or graduation ceremony organized by the College annually.
- d) Students may graduate in person or in absentia in which case they would collect their certificates from their Regional Centre.

- e) Printing of certificates takes place after transcripts have been printed. The process follows a fool-proof procedure that ensures that no errors occur on the certificates. Students are expressly encouraged to take heed of calls to correct their names before certificates are printed.
- f) Certificates will be issued only once, and there will be no re-printing thereafter. Students who lose their certificates will only be issued with a certifying document after providing a sworn statement. The certifying document will be printed for a fee as determined by the College.
- a) The certificate and transcripts are security documents that must not be left lying around as they may tempt those who need but do not have the qualifications. **AVOID ALL CHANCES OF YOUR DOCUMENTS BEING FORGED.**

13.0 GRADUATION PROCESS

At graduation completing students from all levels of study; certificate, diploma to degree and masters will be conferred their academic qualifications. After all the hard work and sleepless nights during their period of study the graduation is intended to signify the value of education as well as celebrate the academic achievement. Graduation is a solemn process that must be followed religiously to instil the institution's values and traditions in its graduates.

- a) Completing students may graduate in person or in absentia. Due to the geographical dispersion of the students it is not a requirement that they must necessarily attend graduation in person.
- b) However because of the necessity of knowing exact figures of the number of graduands who will be attending graduation it is a requirement for the graduand to complete the Reply Coupon to show whether s/he will attend the ceremony in person or not. This is very important for planning purposes for catering and deciding on the venue.

- c) The deadline for submitting Reply Coupons is the last day of September every year. The Reply Coupon ascertains that the names of the graduand have been verified as correct and also whether they would be attending the ceremony in person or not.
- d) A student only qualifies to graduate after accumulating the minimum number of credits required for a qualification they had been studying for. This means that they must have completed successfully all the courses listed in the qualification and these have been recorded on the student's academic record or transcript.
- e) A student who has not fulfilled all their financial obligations in fees and or other charges may not be barred from graduating but their certificates may be withheld until they have cleared the debts.
- f) All students with complete academic records will be compiled on a graduation list by the Academic Registry and this will be shared with all Regional Centres for verification.
- g) A graduation invitation letter and the Graduation Information Booklet will be issued to all completing students when they collect their transcripts in August every year.
- h) The completing students are required to check and correct their names on the Graduation List before it is finalised for the graduation programme and printing of certificates.
- i) It is the duty of the student to ensure that the information on the academic transcript is correct and report all errors on time – before the set deadline. Completing students who have not been included on the Graduation List must report immediately to their Regional Coordinators.
- j) Any exclusion from the Graduation not reported before the last day of September may not be included on the Graduation List. Any students who make such a submission after the deadline will be charged a late registration fee as determined by the College from time to time.
- k) A completing student who has not been included in the Graduation List may not be allowed to submit their names for graduation on the second week of October or when the names have already been submitted for printing of certificates. In such a case the student would be included in the list for the next graduation.
- l) Any certificates found to have spelling errors on the names as a result of the student not correcting it at the right time will be charged on the student, otherwise the certificate would be re-printed if it was the printer's fault.

- m) Certificates are issued only once and would not be replaced if lost. A certifying document may be issued after the student has provided a sworn statement.
- n) Graduands who could not attend the ceremony may collect their certificates from their Regional Centres after the Graduation Day.

14.0 REVOCATION OF DEGREES AND OTHER AWARDS

The College has the right to revoke degrees and other awards of the College in accordance with its own procedures, except in the following instances when reference to the procedures is not required:

- a) Instances of administrative error in an award made under the appropriate quality assurance procedures, or
- b) Instances where subsequent to award, a Board of Examiners, having taken into account information which was unavailable at the time its decision was made, determines that a candidate's classification should be altered.
- c) On behalf of the College Board of Governors the Executive Director may revoke any degree, diploma or certificate of the College and all associated privileges.
- d) The Executive Director is authorized to revoke an award only after the procedure approved by the Board of Governors for consideration of allegations of irregularity in the events or circumstances leading to the grant of that award have been followed, except in the following instances when reference to the procedure is not required:
 - Instances of administrative error in an award made under the appropriate quality assurance procedures, or Instances where subsequent to award, a Board of Examiners, having taken into account information which was unavailable at the time its decision was made, determines that a candidate's classification should be altered.

15.0 ACADEMIC APPEAL REGULATIONS

An appeal relates to the outcome of assessment and is against a decision of a Board of Examiners, such as a grade, a classification or the termination of a programme of study. The only body vested with the power of decision on Examination results is the Academic Board. The Board also has the power to decide upon the action to be taken in respect of failed candidates.

Under certain circumstances, candidates may have grounds for appeal against an academic decision in relation to the following matters:

- a) The grading of a particular module, unit of work or course of study, including failure
- b) The award of a class of certificate/diploma or level of an award outcome
- c) The termination of a course of study or decision about progression
- d) The only grounds for appeal are as follows:
 - i) Irregularity in the recording or aggregation or collation or weighting of marks/grades, that the procedure for such has been incorrectly followed
 - ii) Irregularity in the application of assessment regulations
 - iii) Irregularity in the conduct of the assessment/examination which has had a demonstrated direct and detrimental effect on the student's performance
 - iv) When a student is in disagreement with a charge of academic misconduct or its sentence thereof. This appeal is normally routed through the Student Disciplinary Committee.
- e) Appeals will not be accepted against the academic and/or professional judgements of examiners.
- f) Appeals must be submitted by the candidate to the Regional Examinations Assistant, on the Examination Query Form, within 10 days of release of results. Exceptionally, appeals may be considered up to three months after the issue of results. The appeal must state the grounds on which the appeal is made and supply all the relevant evidence.
- g) It is the student's responsibility to check and confirm their results after every examination.
- h) Errors not queried during the appeals period cannot be raised after closing of the appeals period.
- i) Queries not raised during the period of appeals for the examinations on which the errors occurred cannot be raised during the next period of appeals.
- j) The EA on receipt of an appeal shall seek verification from the Examinations Officer. Verification, as appropriate to the grounds for appeal, shall establish whether:
 - i. the mark(s) and/or result as published is free from arithmetical or other error of fact; and/or,

- ii. any defects or irregularities in the conduct of the Examinations and/or other Assessments or in the written instructions and/or advice relating thereto were, in fact, reported to the Examining Board; and/or,
 - iii. any SorEC pertaining to the candidate were reported to the Examining Board.
- k) The Examinations Officer, shall inform the EA of the outcome of the verification in writing no later than seven (7) days following receipt of the appeal. If the verification procedure indicates that:
- there has been an arithmetical or other factual error;
 - SorEC reported by the candidate prior to the meeting of the Examining Board(s) concerned were not, in fact, considered at the meeting(s);
- l) The Examinations Officer will ask the Chair of the Examining Board to re-convene the Examining Board to review the case in light of the information presented in the appeal. The Chair of the Examining Board may take executive action on behalf of the Examining Board. The Examinations Officer will inform the candidate through the EA, of the outcome of the appeal.
- m) The Examinations Officer is required to disallow an appeal where it has been established, on the basis of the factual information provided through verification:
- that the mark(s) and/or result as published is free from arithmetical or other error of fact; or
 - that any Special or Extenuating Circumstances reported by the student have already been considered by the Examining Board(s) when the candidate's result was determined.
- n) Appeals will normally be dealt with in two (2) months of receipt of the appeal.
- Outcomes of the appeals would be published as results at the end of the appeals period, and students may not receive responses individually. Only appeals leading to a remarking or re-evaluation will be responded to individually.

16.0 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

This part of the Policy deals with academic honesty and the way that you as a BOCODOL student are expected to behave in relation to ANY assessment that you undertake. This may be quite different from the way you have conducted yourself at school or in other settings.

There are very strict regulations to make sure that the work that you submit for assessment is a result of your own efforts. If you submit work that is not your own, or has been produced with the help of others when you claim it to be your own, that will be considered to be an academic misconduct and is viewed very seriously.

At BOCODOL these issues of academic integrity shall be guided by the Academic Integrity Policy as described below;

16.1 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

This Policy describes academic integrity and the procedures for handling academic dishonesty at BOCODOL. The Academic Integrity Policy shall apply to any and all student learning experiences in which academic credit is awarded, such as courses, internships, practical work, theses, presentations, etc.

16.2 Rationale

Honesty and integrity are key preconditions for the exercise of academic freedom in institutions of higher learning. In turn, the high value the academic community places on academic freedom requires a commitment to correspondingly high standards of honesty and professional integrity and conduct in all academic work, including research, coursework, assessment, etc. For that reason, BOCODOL demands that all written or any other work which students submit must be (a) the product of their own efforts and (b) consistent with professional standards of this policy. Through this policy BOCODOL is expressing high intolerance of any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication and other forms of dishonest or unethical behaviour.

16.3 Policy Objectives

- a. To demonstrate the BOCODOL's disapproval of academic dishonesty;
- b. To guarantee a fair procedure for resolving complaints of academic dishonesty;
- c. To serve as a resource for all College staff and students on matters of academic integrity and dishonesty;
- d. To promote honest academic conduct among students and staff;
- e. To provide a framework for monitoring, adjudicating and assigning administrative sanctions to students and staff who have violated the academic Integrity requirements.

16.4 Definition of Academic Integrity

In this policy academic integrity is conceived as the extent to which academic work is undertaken honestly and ethically, and involves:

- a. taking full credit for one's work and giving full credit to others who might have helped or whose work was incorporated into the work that is being submitted;
- b. representing one's work honestly and accurately;
- c. cooperating with other students in academic exercises only where specifically permitted;
- d. reporting to the authorities information regarding academic dishonesty

16.5 Definition of Academic Dishonesty

A list of behaviours that constitutes academic dishonesty is presented below and definitions and explanations provided thereof are only illustrative, but not exhaustive, of various ways in which academic dishonesty can be committed. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, multiple submission, complicity and misconduct in research and creative work.

16.6 Cheating

Cheating involves the use or attempted use of materials (including information, notes, study aids, etc.) or other assistance in any academic exercise without authorization by the course coordinator and includes the following;

- a. Copying or attempting to copy from an assignment, test or examination of another student;
- b. use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices (including electronic gadgets) for a test, examination or academic exercise;
- c. engage or attempt to engage the help of another individual or entity in misrepresenting a student's academic performance;
- d. altering or attempting to alter or interfering with the grading process;
- e. unauthorized transmission of information to another person for a test, examination or academic exercise;
- f. sitting or attempting to sit a test, examination or academic exercise as a surrogate;
- g. unauthorised submission of work previously graded in another course;
- h. any other act that a student may commit on his, her or another's behalf which may defraud or misrepresent, including aiding or abetting any act of cheating;

16.7 Fabrication

Fabrication involves the use of falsified, invented, or counterfeited information or citation in an academic exercise, including tests, assignments, examinations, etc. A student may not use fabricated or falsified information in any academic exercise, including using "invented" data or reproduce a quotation from a secondary source and indicate that the quotation was obtained from the original source. Failure to acknowledge the actual source of information cited in any academic programme constitutes a violation of academic integrity;

- a. using “invented” information or data in research or practical work is a violation of academic integrity;
- b. providing or attempting to provide College officials with fabricated, forged, or misleading information on official records, or other records related to academic work of a student is an infringement of academic integrity.

16.8 Obstruction

Obstruction is an act or behaviour that limits or denies others access to educational resources and materials by deliberately impeding progress in their work. Examples of acts of obstruction that violate academic integrity include giving other students false or misleading information; stealing, changing, or destroying another student’s work; defacement, mutilation, and concealment of library materials; altering computer files that belong to another person. Therefore;

- It is a breach of academic integrity to deny others access to educational resources;
- It is a violation of academic integrity to deliberately impede the progress of another student or scholar;

16.9 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is intentionally or carelessly representing in an academic exercise the work of another person or source as one’s own without giving appropriate acknowledgment and/or submitting it to fulfil academic requirements of the College. What is presented below is indicative, but not exhaustive, of what might constitute and how to deal with plagiarism;

- a. it is a violation of academic integrity to represent all or in part another’s ideas or product, including verbatim, paraphrasing, charts, figures, illustrations, mathematical or scientific solutions, or research work, without citing the source in the text and in reference lists;

- b. using materials stored electronically or other medium, whether verbatim, paraphrased, abridged, constitutes plagiarism and is a violation of academic integrity if the sources are not appropriately acknowledged;
- c. material used to enhance the author's general understanding of the subject must be acknowledged by parenthetical citation in the text and bibliography;
- d. the seriousness and also subtlety of plagiarism requires students to consult their tutors when unsure of whether they are in violation of academic integrity;

16.10 Complicity

Complicity involves cases where a student deliberately or negligently allows his/her work to be used by another, assists or attempts to assist another in an act that violates academic honesty. The following list, though not exhaustive, represents examples of acts that violate academic honesty in the College;

- a. During any test or examination and assignment where collaboration is not permitted, students are not allowed to allow other students to copy from their work;
- b. In connection with any enquiry instituted by the College, students or staff may not provide false information that violates academic honesty;
- c. A student or staff member who deliberately or negligently provides another with information, material, or assistance that may be used in violation of academic honesty is guilty of academic dishonesty, even though the person has not personally benefitted from the act.
- d. Supplying or attempting to supply, without prior authorisation, a student with test or examination questions or material to be tested or examined later constitutes a violation of academic honest

16.11 Evidence of Violations of Academic Honesty

Many reported infractions of academic honesty often involve allegations that are not contested by the offender because they are based on clear evidence. Evidence for suspecting infraction of academic honesty may include, but not limited to, the following;

- a. Admission by the offender that an act of dishonesty was committed;
- b. Catching an offender in the act of committing an infraction;
- c. Testimony of others regarding commission of an infraction of academic honesty;
- d. Documentation of the source of material a student represented or attempted to represent without proper acknowledgement;
- e. Marked similarity in the work done by different students;
- f. A suspiciously marked difference in the writing style of a student;

16.12 Consequences for Violating Academic Integrity Policy

Any violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is a serious offence that calls for censure by the College, with penalties ranging from reprimand to expulsion. The consequences of violating academic honesty are both academic and administrative.

16.13 Academic Sanctions

Violations of academic honesty as a result of acts of dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, complicity, fabrication, etc. may result in a student not meeting all or some part of the academic requirements of a course or programme. The academic consequences of infractions of the academic honesty policy may include, but are not limited to the following;

- a. issuance of a written reprimand;
- b. a student repeating an academic exercise or submitting additional pieces of work;
- c. reducing the mark awarded to the piece of work in question up to zero;
- d. lowering a student's final mark in the course up to a failure;

16.14 Administrative Sanctions

Academic sanctions will be imposed on serious and repeated violations of academic honesty,(including but not limited to stealing, selling, and buying an examination, test or academic work, forging a grade, or falsifying academic transcript). The College may, in addition to academic sanctions, impose administrative penalties, including the following;

- ✓ suspension;
- ✓ expulsion;
- ✓ award withdrawal;

16.15 Procedures for Handling Incidents of Academic Dishonesty

The serious nature of the consequences of violating the Academic Integrity Policy requires that careful consideration be given to the evidence of the alleged dishonesty. An instructor who is satisfied by the evidence that it is likely than not that an infraction of the academic honesty policy has occurred is required to do the following;

- a. Communicate with and invite the student to meeting as soon as possible following the discovery of an infraction;
- b. present the student with supporting evidence and inform him/her of the consequences of infraction of academic honesty policy;
- c. consider the seriousness of the misconduct;
- d. impose one or more of the sanctions in 7.1 following a student's admission of misconduct;
- e. impose one or more of the sanctions in 7.2 if the evidence show that it likely than not that an infraction occurred;
- f. refer the matter to the Student Disciplinary Committee;
- g. complete a duly signed Student Academic Integrity Record Form
- h. staff is required to report to heads of department and departmental boards any violations of the Academic Integrity Policy and sanctions imposed as a result of such violations
- i. Heads of department and departmental boards will consider the seriousness of the misconduct and make recommendations to the college to impose one or more of the administrative penalties

16.16 Obligations in Implementation of Academic Integrity Policy

The College expects all those who cherish and depend upon the integrity of the College, its courses, programmes, and its academic awards to exercise responsible citizenship by upholding, at all times, high ethical standards of honesty and fairness and promoting the College's Academic Integrity Policy.

16.17 Obligations of Students under Academic Integrity Policy

Students are required to observe high standards of honesty, integrity and scholarship. The role and obligations of students under the Academic Integrity Policy include but not limited to the following;

- a. demonstrate high standards of honesty and integrity in all interactions, including class interface, assignments, tests, examinations, practical work and other academic work;
- b. familiarize themselves with the Academic Integrity Policy and the Examinations Administration Regulations and Procedures since ignorance of these requirements cannot be used as a form of defence;
- c. abide by the requirements of the Academic Integrity Policy at all times;
- d. refuse to aid or abet any acts of academic dishonesty;
- e. acquaint themselves with the consequences of violating the Academic Integrity Policy and related regulations and procedures;
- f. preserve academic integrity by informing appropriate College officials of violations of the Academic Integrity Policy and related regulations and procedures;
- g. consult their tutors and other academic staff when in doubt of any aspects of academic integrity;
- h. inform appropriate staff of incidents of academic misconduct;

16.18 Obligations of College Staff under Academic Integrity Policy

Since academic staff plays a key role in promoting and upholding academic honesty and integrity and in enforcing the Academic Integrity Policy when violations occur, it is their responsibility to be conversant with the policy and procedures for handling cases of academic dishonesty. The role and obligation of academic staff include, but not limited to the following:

- a. Inform students of the Academic Integrity Policy and the ethical standards required in courses and the permissible procedures in class work and/or examinations;
- b. enforce at all times the Academic Integrity Policy and Examinations Administration Regulations and Procedures;
- c. promptly deal with all infringements of the Academic Integrity Policy and suspected cases of academic dishonesty;
- d. protecting the anonymity of students who report incidents of academic dishonesty in accordance with College regulations and other requirements;

16.19 Maintenance of Academic Dishonesty Records

Copies of all students' academic dishonesty records shall be maintained by the Academic Registry office and may be released to any academic staff or College officials who may be investigating a student for violation of academic honesty.

17.0 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

BOCODOL strives to achieve high quality in all its interactions with its students. Inevitably, there will be times when students fail to receive that high quality of service and rightly wish to complain. We believe that students should be able to make their concerns known to us without fear of reprisal. We believe that arrangements for handling complaints, in line with the spirit of Vision 2016 should reflect the principles of natural justice; should be transparent and as open as confidentiality permits and include in unresolved cases an element of external, independent scrutiny.

The LTCs and Regional Managers handle all academic and non-academic related complaints which may impact on performance at Regional Level.

In evaluating the nature of complaints and their outcomes, care will be taken to ensure that recurrent issues, patterns of complaints and issues with institutional implications are referred to the appropriate place in the institution in order to inform and improve practice. The Head of Public Relations & Marketing takes the responsibility on behalf of the College Principal Officer of ensuring that all complaints are resolved amicably.

17.1 DEFINITION

A complaint is defined as an oral or written expression of dissatisfaction about a material aspect of a student's experience in pursuing a course of study as a student of BOCODOL, irrespective of location of study and irrespective of registration status. Complaints cover academic [relating to examination and assessment performance and outcomes] and non-academic matters. Note however that academic complaints – here referred to as Academic Appeals follow a clearly defined path and must be submitted during the set timelines.

17.2 TYPES OF COMPLAINTS

a) Anonymous Complaints

No action will be taken in respect of complaints made anonymously.

b) Third Party Complaints

No investigation of a complaint made on behalf of a student will be undertaken without that student's written agreement to the concerns raised and written consent for an investigation to be carried out. This includes complaints made by the parent or the spouse of the student concerned.

c) Complaints to the Examinations Officer

Any complaints received by the Examinations Officer will be redirected to the specific EA who will acknowledge it and ensure that it enters the procedure at the appropriate point. If no attempt has been made by the complainant to resolve the matter using the informal procedure, the complainant will be advised to take up the issues raised with the Study Centre or department concerned.

d) Group complaints

Where a complaint is brought by a group of students, one person should be prepared to identify him/ herself as spokesperson and correspondent for the purposes of the formal procedure and each member of the group must be able to demonstrate that he/she has been personally affected by the matter which is the subject of the complaint. In addition all complainants must agree in writing to the spokesperson acting on their behalf. In most cases this will be a member of the Student Representative Council (SRC).

e) Frivolous, Vexatious or Malicious complaints

If a complaint is found to be frivolous, vexatious or malicious otherwise unreasonable or not made in good faith, a student bringing such a complaint may be subject to the institution's student disciplinary procedure. A vexatious or malicious complaint is defined as a complaint which is patently unsustainable, having been put forward so as to abuse the process of the Complaints Procedure or, for example, to attempt to defame the name or character of another person.

17.3 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Complaints Procedure is ultimately the responsibility of the Academic Board, devolved to the Examinations Officer in respect of academic related complaints, and the Public Relations & Marketing in respect of non-academic complaints. The Exam Query Form must be used in respect of academic appeals, and Customer Feedback/ Complaints Form must be used for general complaints.

17.3.1 AIMS OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

To deal with all complaints in a fair and consistent manner

17.3.2 REASONS FOR THE PROCEDURE

To provide and continue to provide a first class level of customer service

17.3.3 OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To describe the formal procedure for dealing fairly and consistently with customer complaints;
- ✓ To inform customers of the route by which they can express a complaint;
- ✓ To inform staff of the complaints procedure so that they know what to do if a customer complaint arises.

17.4 PROCEDURE

Step 1 First of all the customer should **try to resolve the matter directly** with the member of the College who is responsible or who is involved in the problem.

Note: Students who are dissatisfied with the outcomes of internal assessments should refer to the Assessment Policy, not the Complaints Procedure.

Step 2 If Step 1 did not resolve the problem, the customer should make a **complaint in writing to the** Manager of Public Relations and Marketing (a Customer Complaints Form is available). If a department receives a formal complaint from a customer, the complaint should be date-stamped before passing immediately to the Manager of Public Relations and Marketing. The Manager of Public Relations and Marketing will log the complaint and acknowledge its receipt within 3 working days of receiving the complaint.

- ✓ The Manager of Public Relations and Marketing will pass the complaint, with a tracking sheet clearly identifying the timescales, to the relevant investigating manager who will conduct a full investigation, i.e. manager of the concerned department.
- ✓ An independent Director/Manager or any officer assigned the case may be asked to conduct the investigation if necessary.
- ✓ The investigating Director/Manager will, within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, provide the Manager of Public Relations and Marketing with the results of the investigation and a signed letter of reply for the customer detailing the outcome and actions arising from the investigation.
- ✓ The Manager of Public Relations and Marketing will send the

signed letter of reply from the investigating Manager, to the customer - normally within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint.

- ✓ The investigating Manager will inform the Manager of Public Relations and Marketing if s/he will not be able to meet the above timescale and the Manager of Public Relations and Marketing will send a holding reply to the customer.
- ✓ The Manager of Public Relations and Marketing will advise the Divisional Head of any investigations not concluded within the expected timescale.

Step 3 If the customer is dissatisfied with the response received, the customer may **appeal to the Executive Director of the College** within 15 working days of the date of the response letter. The appeal should be made in writing, stating the reasons and routed through the Public Relations & Marketing Manager. The customer will be notified in writing of the result of the appeal after all evidence has been reviewed. This will normally be within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.

If the customer is still unhappy: In the unlikely event that the matter is still not resolved to the customer's satisfaction, the customer is advised to seek guidance from the Manager of Public Relations and Marketing regarding any further appeal outside of the College.

The Manager of Public Relations and Marketing will monitor the progress of the complaint at all times.

The Manager of Public Relations and Marketing will provide an analysis of the number and nature of the complaints and their outcome to Senior Management.

17.5 WHO SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE

All customers - students

All staff

17.6 RESPONSIBILITY

The Manager of Public Relations and Marketing is responsible for ensuring that all customer complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently and in accordance with this procedure. The investigating manager is responsible for conducting a full investigation and providing a written response to the Manager of Public Relations and Marketing.

17.7 RECORD KEEPING & MONITORING

Records will be kept in relation to the nature of the complaint; the process and outcome of the complaint; the time taken to deal with it. All papers relating to the formal stages of the procedure will be managed by the Public Relations & Marketing Office and retained in that office.

Monitoring will ensure that appropriate support mechanisms are in place for students; that staff operating the procedure are adequately developed and supported; that staff and students understand the procedure and that the procedure meets its aims. It is important that students can make bona fide complaints without fear of any reprisal.

In evaluating the nature of complaints and their outcomes, care will be taken to ensure that recurrent issues, patterns of complaints and issues with institutional implications are referred to the appropriate place in the institution in order to inform and improve practice.

18.0 STUDENTS' DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

These are procedures to be carried out following a charge of misconduct on a student of the College. Misconduct occurs when one or more of the College regulations or rules of order has been violated, except assessment/examination regulations which follow a different process. However, a student charged with an academic offence is NOT excused from being called for a disciplinary hearing if need be, and that may lead to more severe penalties.

These procedures seek to ensure that student disciplinary matters are dealt with fairly and promptly at the appropriate level by those with clear authority from the College. All fully registered and former students of the College are governed by these disciplinary procedures.

Former students may only be affected by these procedures in as far as if investigations prove that the misconduct was committed while they were students at the College and that the misconduct relates to their award. The Office of Dean of Student Services handles all cases of misconduct and appoints the Chairperson of the Students' Disciplinary Committee (DC) to resolve issues put before it. All appeals must be made to the Academic Board which may institute a Panel to resolve cases referred to it.

Good student discipline ensures a conducive environment for learning, uninhibited minds and academic freedom. All students and staff must feel free to carry out their academic duties without interference, fear or favour. A breach of discipline includes, but is not limited to, failure to observe all College rules and regulations including local regulations for the governance of all sections of the College. A list, which is not exhaustive, is given below to guide on what may be classified as misconduct which may result in application of these procedures;

- a) disruption of, or improper interference with, the academic, administrative, sporting, social or other activities of the College, including offensive behaviour, whether on College premises or elsewhere.
- b) obstruction of, or improper interference with, the functions, duties or activities of any student, member of staff or other employee of the College or any authorised visitor to the College;
- c) behaviour which brings the College into disrepute;
- d) intentional or reckless damage to, or defacement of, College property or the property of members of the College and community;
- e) misuse or unauthorised use of College premises, facilities or items of property;
- f) failure to disclose name and other relevant details to an officer or employee of the College in circumstances when it is reasonable to require that such information be given;
- g) failure to treat others (students, staff, neighbours and other people in the community) fairly with respect. (This applies to all communication methods including personal contact, e-mail, written communication and social community websites.);

- h) acts of dishonesty, including theft, fraud, deceit, or deception in relation to the College, its staff or students;
- i) action likely to cause injury, impair safety or raise false alarm on College premises, e.g. acts involving damage to or discharge without just cause of, or other misuse of or interference with, a Fire Extinguisher or other Fire Safety Equipment; (such acts endanger the College community and are likely to result in severe sanctions.)
- j) harassment of any student, member of staff, or any authorised visitor to the College, whether sexual, racial or bullying, including defamation of character or slander.
- k) violent, indecent, disorderly, threatening or offensive behaviour or language whilst on or off College premises whether directed towards a member of staff, another student, professional service staff (eg Police, ambulance, fire crew) or a member of the public;
- l) conduct which constitutes a criminal offence where that conduct:
 - takes place on College premises, or
 - affects or concerns other members of the College community, or
 - damages the good name of the College or
 - itself constitutes misconduct within the terms of these procedures.
- m) For the avoidance of doubt, the College may proceed under Student Disciplinary Procedures notwithstanding the instigation of any criminal proceedings.
- n) obstruction of, or improper or fraudulent interference with, attendance monitoring of any student by the College;
- o) Permitting another student to copy, verbatim or in substance, formative or summative assessed coursework (this includes providing an opportunity for another student to copy work, even if it was not the explicit intention that the work should be copied). Being party to any act, otherwise than for a bona fide academic reason, allowing the sharing of any such assessed work on a website or in any other medium; the fact that work has already been assessed when it is so copied or shared shall not negate the offence. The Academic Integrity Policy

should normally be followed if the student subject to the offence has not received a confirmed mark for the work in question by the Board of Examiners at the point of investigation;

- p) Any other act or behaviour which may be reasonably interpreted as misconduct notwithstanding the lack of equivalent examples above.

18.1 PROCEDURE

- a) The College shall have the right to investigate any allegation of misconduct against a student, and may take disciplinary action where it decides, on the balance of probabilities, that an act of misconduct has been committed.
- b) Any investigation into an alleged act of misconduct, whether carried out under the Regional structures or Office of the Dean, Student Services, shall normally include in its early stages an interview of the student(s) concerned by the relevant authorised officer (relevant officer here means the HOD or Manager where the misconduct occurred or was first recorded).
- c) Failure to attend a disciplinary interview or provide a statement / response to alleged misconduct when requested to do so by the relevant person of authority, may result in the disablement of the student's ID card by Student Services thereby barring him/her from all academic activities. The student shall be notified in writing that they must engage within 7 days or they shall be excluded from their programme of study until they do engage.
- d) For cases where a student withdraws from the College whilst a disciplinary investigation is ongoing, the disciplinary case shall be concluded in the student's absence if necessary, by Student Service or the Students' Disciplinary Committee.
- e) The Students' Disciplinary Committee comprises of members of academic or administrative staff appointed by the Dean of Student Services who are qualified by reason of their experience on student welfare matters, and two students nominated by the Students' Union. The student charged with misconduct may invite his or her friend (also called a supporter) to the hearing. This supporter is NOT the student's legal representative and should not be involved in the case as a witness. The supporter's presence at the hearing is entirely for moral support.

- f) Not all cases of misconduct are referred to the Students' Disciplinary Committee as some may be resolved at the local level. All Heads of Departments and Managers are empowered to resolve cases of misconduct reported in their Sections but must record and report each case to the Office of the Dean of Student Services who may if the case has not been concluded pass it on to the Students' Disciplinary Committee for further investigation and resolution.
- g) All cases must be recorded on the appropriate Forms before being committed to the Disciplinary Committee. The record is maintained in the student's personal file for reference.
- h) The investigation which follows after the committal of the case to the Disciplinary Committee must record all witnesses to the case, gather evidence and weigh the gravity of the misconduct and decide on its action. The DC can then sit to conduct the hearing. If the case has not been referred already, the DC may instruct the Regional Manager to constitute a Panel to resolve the case at local level.

18.2 SCHEDULE OF PENALTIES

If it is determined at the hearing that the offence is not proven, no further action shall be taken against the student but if it is determined that misconduct has been committed, one or more of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- i. A warning, orally and in writing, advising the student about their future conduct. A formal warning represents a serious statement by the College on the gravity of the misconduct and shall be held on record for the duration of the student's studies. A warning may be disclosed in reference requests; this is at the discretion of the referee. Where a student has previously received a warning, or where the Committee deems fit, the student may receive a final warning.
- ii. A formal caution, in writing – this means that the misconduct is considered to be minor but such that the student is cautioned as to future conduct. The student should be informed that no further action will be taken but that the fact of the caution may be taken into account should there be a further act of misconduct.

- iii. A compensation payment for the direct cost of reparations to property.
- iv. A fine (e.g. for parking in areas designated as "No Parking" zones; or late return of library books).
- v. Suspended exclusion from the College. This means that exclusion has been determined in principle to be an appropriate sanction but that the sanction be suspended. Should the student be found to have committed further misconduct the student shall normally be excluded or expelled from the College.
- vi. Exclusion from the College or such part as may be specified for a determined period of time.
- vii. Expulsion from the College with immediate effect. A student so expelled shall not be eligible for an exit award and thus, relevant Boards of Examiners may not consider an award unless instructed to do so by the Student Disciplinary Committee.

A student expelled or excluded as a result of disciplinary proceedings shall have no right to a refund of fees.

19.0 CONDUCT OF CANDIDATES IN EXAMINATIONS

19.1 GENERAL

The following rules apply to all candidates of the College whilst taking examinations. They have been established to make sure that all students are treated fairly and equally during examinations. The rules also try to ensure that candidates take examinations in a quiet and pleasant environment. (Where candidates are taking the examinations of an external examining board e.g. BEC, they may be required to meet those other regulations and requirements). These rules will be issued to each candidate and posted outside each examination room.

19.2 ELIGIBILITY

- a. Only candidates enrolled in the Course are eligible to write the Examinations.
- b. Candidates must have submitted all their assignments or satisfied all their Coursework or CA requirements.
- c. All candidates must bring with them the letter of invitation to the Examination or the Statement of Entry.

19.3 ADMISSIONS TO AND DEPARTURE FROM THE EXAMINATION ROOM

- a. Candidates should arrive at the Examination Room in good time. (30 minutes prior to the start of the examination).
- b. Candidates may only be admitted to the Examination Room with the permission of the Invigilator.
- c. Candidates must display their student ID card and Omang card [or Passport for non-citizens] on their desk to enable the invigilator to compile a register of attendance. Candidates who are unable to produce their Omang card will be asked to produce an alternative form of identification, preferably with a photograph attached, but the student card is a must.
- d. Candidates may be admitted to the Examination room (at the discretion of the Invigilator) up to half an hour after the commencement of the Examination.
- e. Candidates who come late must make themselves known to the Invigilator, but will not be allowed extra time to complete the examination.
- f. No candidate may permanently leave the Examination Room until half the time duration of the examination has elapsed.

- g. Candidates wishing to leave the Examination Room temporarily must ask the permission of the Invigilator. Candidates will not be readmitted to the Examination Room unless s/he has been accompanied by an Invigilator (or a nominee of the Invigilator) during his/her absence from the Examination Room.
- h. Except in an emergency, candidates will not be allowed to leave the Examination Room at all during the last 30 minutes of an Examination.

19.4 ITEMS BROUGHT INTO THE EXAMINATION ROOM

- a. Candidates must not bring anything into the Examination Room except those items approved by the Invigilator for the conduct of the Examination.
- b. Bags, coats, briefcases, books, mascots, canned drinks etc. must be left at the place indicated by the Invigilator. Security of these items cannot be guaranteed and candidates are advised against bringing any valuable items to the examination room. Money and credit cards should be kept on their person.
- c. Mobile phones and other unauthorized items are not allowed into the examinations room.
- d. If calculators are permitted for the examination they must be cordless and noiseless. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that batteries are fully charged.
- e. No machines having alphabetic keys or the ability to store alphabetic characters will be permitted. Programmable calculators will be not be allowed.

19.5 CONDUCT OF CANDIDATES IN THE EXAMINATION ROOM

- a. All candidates will remain silent whilst in the Examination Room.
- b. Candidates wishing to attract the attention of the Invigilator should silently raise their hand.
- c. Smoking is not allowed in the Examination Room.
- d. No eating or chewing gum in the examinations room
- e. Candidates will not commence writing until instructed to do so by the Invigilator.
- f. Candidates must cease writing when instructed to do so by the Invigilator.
- g. Candidates may not receive assistance from another candidate; neither must a candidate give assistance to another.
- h. Candidates must remain seated at the end of an examination until all papers have been collected by the Invigilator and the Invigilator has given permission for them to leave.

19.6 EXAMINATION PAPERWORK

- a. Candidates must write their candidate number on all pieces of paper used and on any Answer Book provided.
- b. Candidates must only use the paper provided in the Examination Room.
- c. Candidates must not remove any papers from the Examination Room.
- d. It is a serious offence to be found in possession of an examination answer book used or not.

19.7 CHEATING

Any Candidate who is suspected of cheating (by communicating with other candidates), copying work, bringing unauthorised materials into the examination room or any other means, will be informed so by the Invigilator and be subject to procedures for Academic Integrity Policy.

19.8 FAILURE TO TURN UP FOR THE EXAMINATIONS

- a. A candidate who had registered for an examination and fails to turn up for the examination must inform the Chief Invigilator in writing within five (5) working days stating the circumstances that led to him/her missing the examination.
- b. A SorEC form must be completed and submitted to the Chief Invigilator with the letter and any supporting documentary evidence, if the circumstances fall within the examinations period, and the Chief Invigilator would pass these to the Examinations Office.
- c. A candidate who does not attend an examination without SorEC will be given a grade X (Incomplete) straight away and will not be invited to supplement, or take special examinations, and any examination fees paid will be forfeited.
- d. Examination fees can only be refunded if there is proof that the candidate was indeed incapacitated during the period of the examination. Only the subject fees will be refunded, but the registration fee will not be refunded in this case.

19.9 SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

If a student is unable to write an examination as scheduled on the timetable during the College Examination Period due to special or extenuating circumstances (SorEC), they may apply to write at some other time through special consideration. A Special Examination is set to cater for such students including those who may fall ill during the examination and fail to complete it. The examination may also be deferred to the next available session in which the papers missed will be offered. Students who are eligible for special consideration are those who may come across situations beyond their control (SorEC) such as listed below;

- acute illness
- loss or bereavement involving immediate family members (father, mother, sibling or child, father or mother-in-law).
- hardship or trauma.
- emergency services
- participation in national duty where it is clearly in the students every day line of work

N.B. students must know that it is an offence to give false information to an officer employed by the government. Therefore fraudulent claims of loss, illness, bereavement or of being on duty will lead to grave consequences. All students must make their employers aware that they are students and will need their support in terms of being allowed to go on study leave. Therefore deployment for duty can only count as SorEC if and only if it is an emergency (a matter of life & death) and has been proven as such. Trips or assignments for armed forces and the police do not constitute SorEC unless if it can be proven that they were an emergency.

Special consideration for Special Examinations is not automatically granted and students should not submit cases that they know they have/had control over. The Coordinator will normally accept and pass on to the Assessment Office cases that in their opinion stand a chance of being granted. All students seeking special consideration will be interviewed by the Counsellor before submitting their requests.

a. How to apply for special consideration

i. Before the exam (early applications)

The student must let the College know as soon as the SorEC presents itself. Other alternatives like changing the Examination Venue/Centre or applying to write in other places than the gazetted examination venues must be explored before settling on choosing to miss the examination. The student must apply no later than five (5) College working days after the date of the examination that they missed by submitting the supporting

documentation with the relevant form. However no retrospective applications will be accepted. The student must also write a letter which must be attached to these documents.

ii. During the exam

- If a student is unable to complete his/her exam due to illness or other eligible cause s/he must apply for special consideration using the Incident Form
- The incident must have occurred while more than 30minutes remain to the end of the examination duration. The Invigilator must be informed immediately and the time must be recorded on the form.
- On leaving the examination room the candidate must be transported to the nearest health facility where a medical check-up will be made and a report made accordingly.
- The candidate must submit a copy of the medical report/certificate to the Chief Invigilator within 2 days and make a request for special consideration. The report must indicate whether the student is able to continue with any papers that may still be outstanding.

b. Supporting documentation

The student will need to provide one or more of the following documents to support their application for special consideration. These must be attached to their letter and completed form;

- medical certificate, letter from a medical professional (Medical/professional certificates must state you were unfit to sit your exam or complete work for assessment on or before the relevant date)
- letter from a social worker or psychologist

- death notice or certificate and evidence of relationship
- police report
- letter + notification of an emergency from supervisor/ employer (police, defence or emergency services only).

19.10 COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION TO STUDENTS

Reliable lines of communication are an essential ingredient of good information flow. The College, specifically the Examinations Office will communicate with students through their Regional Centres or home address, by letter, e-mail, telephone or mobile phone as appropriate. This will be the address or number that they officially notified to the College at enrolment or as amended in written communication with the Examinations or Students' Registration Office.

The College will provide information about;

- a. Student's course, including aims, learning outcomes, teaching methods, structure, assessment methods, regulations and support mechanisms
- b. Student's timetable or Delivery Schedule
- c. Academic resources, including administration, Student Support Services, IT Services, Library or Learning Resources, facilities
- d. Procedures, in relation to mitigating circumstances, the use of unfair means, non-compliance with academic obligations, appeals and complaints.
- e. Student's progression status and eligibility for award.

The student will ensure that s/he complies promptly with requests for information and inform the College of any relevant changes to their situation, including:

- a. Address and telephone numbers
- b. Any significant illness, disability or changes in personal circumstance that may prevent them from sitting the examinations.
- c. Change of abode of a permanent nature which may result in them submitting assignments in a centre different from the one they registered in.
- d. Students must NOT transfer themselves but must visit the Regional Coordinator's Office and make an official transfer. Students must only

begin to use the services of the new centre only after they had been notified of the confirmation of their transfer.

- e. At all times the line of communication must start at the Regional Centre. The programme coordinator is authorised to keep record of all communications the student makes with the college even if these are complaints.
- f. No persons are allowed to communicate with the College on behalf of the student without explicitly written permission from the student. Where such permission is given in writing the action is limited to collection of items due to the student or completion of SorEC Form.
- g. Ignorance will not be an excuse for not registering or sitting for the examinations.

20.0 CONCLUSION

At the end of it all, assessment must be seen as an opportunity to gauge your academic abilities against the set standards. These rules and regulations are simply to guide you so that you could have an answer ready for any situation you might find yourself in.

Not all situations may be covered in this Handbook; therefore you must feel free to contact your Regional EA or LTC. Any grievance apart from academic must be taken up with other College structures such as the Counsellor, but your LTC must know first.

It is hoped you will have an enriching experience studying at BOCODOL; you have made the right choice.

20.0 REFERENCES

The following documents were used in preparation of this Handbook;

1. Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL): Assessment and Moderation Policy
2. Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL): Examinations Administration Regulations – 2011
3. Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL): Invigilators' Handbook – 2010
4. Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL): Academic Committee Structures – 2009
5. Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL): Academic Quality Assurance & Improvement Policy & Processes – 2009
6. Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL): Customer Complaints Procedures – 2008
7. Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL): Tertiary Level Enrolment Policy
8. Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL): School Equivalence Enrolment Policy
9. University of South Africa (UNISA): Invigilators' Manual – 2006/2007.
10. University of South Africa (UNISA): Examinations Information, Rules and Timetable – 2005.
11. Botswana Examinations Council (BEC): Examinations Preparation Guidelines for Private Candidates – 2012.
12. Examinations, Research & Testing Division (ERTD), Ministry of Education, Botswana: Examinations Procedures & Regulations - 2007.
13. University of Brighton: General Examinations & Assessment Regulations (GEAR) for Taught Courses, 2012-13.
14. University of Sunderland: Academic Appeals Procedure, August, 2011.
15. University of Botswana: Undergraduate Calendar – 2008-2009.
16. University of York: Guide to Assessment Policies and Procedures.



BOCODOL

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