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24ᵗʰ July 2024

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (ARC),

University of Daar-es-Salaam,

Daar-es-Salaam,

Tanzania.

Dear sir,

Summary of the External Examiner Report for the Academic Year 2023/2024 - Electronics and Telecommunications Engineering

Examination Moderation Overview:

The examinations across the various courses in the Department of Electronics and Telecommunications Engineering were generally set according to the UDSM undergraduate examination format. However, several areas were identified for improvement, particularly in the consistency of question formatting, mark distribution, and the evaluation of student responses.

Key Observations

1. Question Formatting: Lack of uniformity in the structuring of sub-sections within questions across various courses.

2. Marking Practices: Inconsistencies in mark distribution, with marks being lumped together in answer booklets rather than being distributed according to the marking scheme. This was observed in courses such as ES 115, ES 110, and ES 213.

3. Performance Concerns: ES 115 - Electromagnetism and Optics: Only 24% of students passed, indicating potential issues with curriculum difficulty or teaching methods.ES 110, 101, 120, and TE 101: General performance was good, but some courses, like ES 110, had a 20% failure rate.

4. Good Practices NotedIn some courses, such as ES 221, the distribution of marks was found to be even and well-aligned with the marking scheme.

5. Quality of Examination Content: In some courses, such as ES 311 - Electronics Measurement, the quality of questions was deemed inadequate for the level of students. The examination content did not always challenge students appropriately.

6. Student Support and Learning Outcomes: In courses like ES 105, the absence of failures was noted, but the overall performance remained average, suggesting students might need additional support.

7. Results Management: Examination results were difficult to retrieve due to disorganization.

8. Instructor Guidance: Instructors need to be cautious with the use of terms like "Explain" and "Discuss" for questions that attract minimal marks.

Recommendation:

1. Ensure standardization of question formats, with consistent sub-section structuring across all examinations to enhance fairness.

2. Marks should be clearly allocated for each part of the question and distributed based on the steps taken by students, not just final answers. This will promote fairness in grading.

3. Courses with high failure rates should undergo a comprehensive review to identify underlying issues and develop corrective measures.

4. Courses that demonstrate good practices should be highlighted and used as models for improving other courses.

5. Align the difficulty level of examination questions with student competencies and ensure the inclusion of complex, application-based problems to foster critical thinking.

6. Implement targeted student support initiatives, such as tutorials or study sessions, to enhance learning outcomes.

7. Sort results in alphabetical order or by student registration numbers to improve clarity and ease of retrieval.

8. Instructors should use terms like "Briefly explain" or "Highlight" for questions with low mark allocations to align expectations with the grading criteria.

9. Curriculum Review and Alignment: Conduct a thorough review of the curriculum to ensure that it remains relevant and aligned with industry standards and student needs. Incorporate emerging trends and technologies into the curriculum to keep students abreast of current developments in their field.

10. The mark allocation and the total mark for a question must give the students a clear sign of the time he/she should spend on the question and to what depth he/she should answer the question.

11. There should be consistency with the allocation of marks in terms of time required and/or length of answer.

12. The questions should be as simple as possible.

13. A question paper should start with questions which most of the candidates should be able to answer (the same applies to sub-questions within a question)

14. Questions which will take a long time to answer should be towards the end of the paper.

15. Questions in all the course should be sequenced in a specific order.

By implementing these recommendations, the university will help enhance the overall fairness, transparency, and effectiveness of the examination and assessment processes at the university, improve curriculum relevance, and can improve student performance across all departments.

Good Examination Practice

1. Overall, the examinations are set according to the UDSM undergraduate examination format. The examinations are instructions clear and relevant. The course contents are adequately covered. The course material given reflects the examination contents. The course contents relevant. The course contents adequately covered during the setting of the examinations. The course outlines and references relevant. The course references are current.

2. One notable good practice that stands out is the alignment of course content with examination materials, as observed in several courses like ES 312 – Digital Electronics III, ES 417 – Ultra Fast Electronics Technologies, and ES 514 and ES 560. The consistent performance and lack of failures in these courses show that the course design, instruction, and assessments are well-coordinated, ensuring that students are adequately prepared for evaluations.

3. Another commendable practice is the clear and relevant instructions provided in the examinations, following the UDSM undergraduate format. This clarity contributes to the students' success, as it helps them understand what is expected in their responses.

4. In terms of teaching, the effective methods seen in courses like ES 202 and ES 417, ... etc, which resulted in excellent performances, suggest that the instructors are employing strategies that resonate well with students. Recognizing the instructors of these courses for their efforts could encourage the continuation and dissemination of these practices across other courses.

General Comments and Suggestions for Improvement:

- Equitable Exam Experience: Standardize the number and structure of sub-sections across questions to avoid discrepancies in workload and fairness.

- Continuous Improvement: Regularly review curriculum difficulty, teaching methods, and student engagement to address any gaps in student preparation and assessment outcomes.

- Fair Assessment: Encourage step-by-step marking to ensure that students are assessed based on their problem-solving process, not just final answers.

Commendations and Acknowledgement

1. Prof. Baraka Maiseli, Head of Department: Acknowledged for his exemplary leadership and commitment to maintaining high academic standards. His efforts in ensuring alignment between course content, teaching methods, and assessments have positively impacted student performance.

2. **Faculty Members:** I acknowledge the contributions of the faculty members who handle these positive outcomes. Your commitments to high-quality teaching and assessment are applauded.

3. **University Management:** Recognized for their dedication to academic excellence, particularly in organizing a thorough and comprehensive external examination process. The commitment to upholding academic standards is evident in the structured approach to examinations and the fairness observed in many courses.

This report provides a summary of insights and recommendations aimed at enhancing the overall quality of education in the Department of Electronics and Telecommunications Engineering at the University of Dar es Salaam.

Lastly, I would again, like to recognize the continuous support provided by the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) and other stakeholders in ensuring that the examination process is conducted efficiently and effectively. Their contributions are invaluable in upholding the university's academic reputation and fostering a conducive learning environment.

I commend the Management of the University of Dar Es Salaam for organizing such an extensive and comprehensive external examination process. The thoroughness and attention to detail in the examination structure demonstrate a strong commitment to academic integrity and excellence. This level of organization ensures that the assessments are fair, well-rounded, and reflective of the students' knowledge and skills, contributing to the overall quality of education at the university.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to academic excellence.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Vice Chancellor of the University for the opportunity to serve in this role. I deeply appreciate your confidence and trust in me, and I am truly honoured and privileged to have been appointed for this responsibility.

I hope the insights provided in the report will contribute positively to the continuous improvement of the academic standards at the University of Dar es Salaam.

Yours sincerely,

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