

Ambedkar University, Delhi
Statement on Assessment and Academic Procedure
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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of assessment at Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) is to facilitate and promote learning with understanding. Providing feedback to students and teachers and thereby improving the learning environment is crucial. **Assessment** (see Glossary) will depend on both ‘continuous’ and end-of-course performance, but assessment shall not be so frequent as to put unnecessary stress on students or faculty. Tutorials and mentoring are important features of all courses. Assessment for **courses** is spread over the duration of the **semester**. Many courses shall contain end-of-semester assessment exercises that are ‘weighted’ more heavily than other exercises completed during the semester. Results of continuous assessment shall be communicated to students in a timely manner so that they have opportunity to improve their subsequent work. Certain opportunities shall be provided for students to improve grades, by repeating assignments during the teaching term and by repeating courses after course grades have been submitted (see Annexure II). **Evaluation committees** of the various Schools manage the processes by which students are evaluated and promoted through their programmes.

Teachers/course teams determine the nature, frequency and grade ‘weight’ of assessment situations. Assessment may be in the form of classroom presentations, participation in planned (teacher-mediated) discussions, essays or other written submissions, practical work, fieldwork, project work, quizzes, in-class or take-home examinations and so on. Ability to work in a group or design an investigative project may also be tested by the assessment procedure. The procedure may include peer assessment. In determining a final course grade, a teacher/course team may decide to take only the best [n] grades obtained by a student of the [m] assessment situations (e.g., four out of six assessments). This procedure shall apply uniformly to all students taking a course and must be announced at the commencement of the course. (Exceptions to the

principle of uniformity may occur in cases of ‘Remediation’: see Annexure II). In any 4-credit or 6-credit course, no assessment exercise may carry more than 40% of the total grade weight of the course, and there shall be at least three graded assignments/assessment exercises. In any 2-credit course, no exercise may carry more than 50% of the grade weight, and there shall be at least two assignments/assessments. In the case of an 8-credit ‘thesis course’, assessment could be made on the basis of a completed thesis with thesis defense, or on the basis of thesis writing *and* other learning exercises stipulated by the supervisor(s).

Schools and course co-ordinators may announce to students particular *participation and attendance requirements* for the conduct of assessment. Students absenting themselves from classes/learning activities could be prohibited from participating in subsequent assessment situations. A student who has stopped attending classes without explanation and who has not participated in multiple assessment exercises shall be reported to the School’s Dean. *A student could then be asked to explain his/her behaviour and the Dean could recommend, on the basis of that student’s response, a course of action which may include the student’s expulsion from the programme.*

[NOTE: This statement was originally formulated for the MA programmes in Development Studies, Environment and Development, and Psychosocial Clinical Studies. The specific provisions included here for academic promotion of students through their programmes apply to other MA programmes. The grading system described below (Section II.) shall apply to all MA and BA programmes.]

II. THE ‘11-POINT’ GRADING SYSTEM

Each evaluated exercise/assignment (henceforth ‘assessment situation’) and each course shall carry a **letter grade** in accordance with the table given below:

Letter grade	Grade points (for GPA)	Qualitative description of letter grade
A+	10	Exceptional: performance beyond expectations.
A	9	Excellent: demonstrating mastery of all learning or assessment situations
A-	8	Very good: demonstrating mastery of most learning or assessment situations.
B+	7	Demonstrating thorough competence in

		most situations.
B	6	Demonstrating moderate competence in most situations.
B-	5	Acceptable: showing moderate competence in some situations, minimal competence in others.
C+	4	Minimally acceptable: demonstrating minimal competence in most situations while showing considerable capacity for improvement.
C	3	Not passing but still showing capacity for improvement or development.
C-	2	Unsatisfactory performance, marked by lack of engagement or inability to apply concepts.
D	1	Complete lack of engagement or comprehension; also, frequent absence.
F and AB	0	F for non-completion of assignments or 'blank' responses on a test. Absence or withdrawal from a course should be indicated by AB.

The grade point average (GPA) for a course, for a semester and for an entire **programme** will be calculated as follows:

Suppose a set of 5 assessment situations is involved in a given course and the separate assessments are assigned the relative weights w_1, w_2, w_3, w_4 and w_5 , and a student is awarded grades whose grade points in the 5 assessment situations are g_1, g_2, g_3, g_4 and g_5 respectively. To calculate the student's grade in that course we need to calculate the weighted average G for that course of his or her grades:

$$G = (w_1g_1 + w_2g_2 + w_3g_3 + w_4g_4 + w_5g_5)/(w_1 + w_2 + w_3 + w_4 + w_5).$$

G will then be converted to the appropriate letter grade (A, B, C etc.) according to the table below. What shall be used in subsequent calculations is not G but rather the grade point corresponding to the grade within which G falls. Thus:

GPA	Letter grade	Grade points
Greater than or equal to 9.5	A+	10
Greater than or equal to 8.5 but less than 9.5	A	9
Greater than or equal to 7.5 but less than 8.5	A-	8

Greater than or equal to 6.5 but less than 7.5	B+	7
Greater than or equal to 5.5 but less than 6.5	B	6
Greater than or equal to 4.5 but less than 5.5	B-	5
Greater than or equal to 3.5 but less than 4.5	C+	4
Greater than or equal to 2.5 but less than 3.5	C	3
Greater than or equal to 1.5 but less than 2.5	C-	2
Greater than or equal to 0.5 but less than 1.5	D	1
Less than 0.5	F or AB	0

This process of assigning a letter grade to the average numerical value is called *coarse graining* and is done in recognition of the coarseness associated with all assessment.

For examples of how course grades and semester grades are calculated, see Annexure I.

A student shall be considered to have passed a course only if he/she has participated in a previously specified number or quantum of assessment situations, and only if he/she has participated in all specific assessment situations that the course team (or School) has declared to be compulsory.

The 'passing grade' for each course is C+. A student passing a course is awarded the full number of **credits** corresponding to that course. A non-passing course grade carries no credits.

In calculating a student's *semester average*, a weighted average of the grade points obtained by the student in the various courses is taken. In such calculation, weights are the credits assigned to each course. Courses are of 2, 4 or 8 credits. The 'credit load' carried by a student in each semester varies across the various programmes and across semesters of each programme.

A *cumulative grade* shall be calculated for a student's performance through the whole programme. The final/cumulative letter grade appears on the degree certificate or diploma along with statements about the range of grade notations, grade points and other essential details.

III. SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF SEMESTER / PROGRAMME

Successful completion of the *first semester of a programme* requires that a student have passed *all* courses required in that semester *with grades of C+, or better, in each course*. In each successive semester a student needs to pass *all* courses of that semester (but see ‘Determining Academic Progress’). ***MA students are required to obtain a cumulative grade of B- at the conclusion of the programme. Moreover, an MA student’s course grade for thesis work (4, 8 or more credits, depending on the programme) must be B- or higher.***

A summer internship/ practicum/ fieldwork following the 2nd semester is a required part of MA programmes in the schools of Development Studies, Human Ecology and Human Studies. Each School determines specific conditions of internships and criteria of evaluation. Either 2 or 4 credits are awarded for the internship, depending on the programme.

DETERMINING ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Students in MA programmes who do not successfully complete a semester (i.e., obtain passing grades in *all* courses) shall nevertheless *be allowed to register for the next programme semester* according to the following guidelines:

No minimum grade average or ‘quota’ of courses passed is required for promotion (permission to enrol) from Semester I to Semester II. The exception to this policy is that *students who fail most or all courses in any term due to complete absence or non-participation* may be expelled from the programme. The decision about expulsion will be made by the Dean of the School.

For promotion from Semester II to Semester III in MA programmes the following conditions apply:

- (1) A student can have *failed no more than 25%* of the course credits (i.e., 8 credits) for the MA programme courses of Semesters I and II (in the case of MA Psychosocial Clinical Studies, this amounts also to 8 credits, not 9). *Failing course grade in this context means a grade of C or less.*
- (2) Of the *remaining courses* of Semesters I and II, counting for 24 or 26 credits (depending on the MA programme), the student must have completed *all* courses with a grade in each of C+ or higher. Moreover, he or she must obtain in *these* courses an overall grade average equivalent to the letter grade B- (i.e. 4.5 or higher).

Non-completion of the summer internship shall not *in itself* be cause for preventing a student from enrolling in Semester III. However, completing a summer internship with a passing grade shall always be a necessary condition for completing a programme. Standing academic (evaluation) committees will determine how and when students should complete the summer internship if they fail to do so after their second semester.

Students may be given opportunities to repeat courses during the summer intersession, according to directions of the evaluation committees of the Schools. MA courses amounting to a maximum 8 credits may be repeated in such a manner, so that the student would not need to repeat those courses while simultaneously enrolling in the courses of Semester III and Semester IV.

Following completion of the Winter Semester, evaluation committees shall review cases of students and recommend means of course repetition where necessary. The committees could also recommend that students repeat during the summer courses in which they have obtained passing grades of C+. A committee could recommend that a student *repeat only a certain number of assessment exercises* of a course in lieu of repetition of an entire course, or that he/she complete assignments *comparable to* those required of the taught course. The results of these remedial exercises shall be declared before commencement of the Monsoon Semester. Students thus meeting the requirements of promotion from second to third semesters would then enrol in the courses of Semester III.

Students failing to meet the MA promotion requirements explained above shall attend classes and repeat courses of the first or the second semesters, as the case may be, *without yet undertaking the courses of Semesters III and IV.* When a student is to repeat the courses of Semester II only (having passed all courses of Semester I), he or she may be directed to take an ‘idle semester’ during the Monsoon Semester before repeating courses of Semester II during the Winter Semester. Evaluation committees may recommend other activities for students during an idle period — for example, completion of a summer internship if it was not completed the previous summer. The University determines the tuition fees to be paid by students repeating courses or engaged in activities (other than regular coursework) required for completion of their programmes.

For promotion from Semester III to Semester IV of an MA programme the following situation applies. An MA student who at the

conclusion of Semester III has not passed courses of that and previous semesters stipulated by the School may be prevented from conducting thesis work during Semester IV; he/she shall instead be directed to repeat courses of the previous semester(s). This decision is not made on the basis of a fixed number of credits completed by the MA student during Semester III; instead, an evaluation committee of a School recommends a student's promotion to Semester IV (i.e., thesis research and writing) on the basis of the student's performance throughout the programme. The student would accordingly conduct/continue thesis work after completion of pre-thesis course work, according to conditions set forth by an evaluation committee of the School.

Decisions of the aforementioned evaluation committees concerning academic progress /promotion/ fulfilment of degree requirements can be reviewed only by the Office of the Vice Chancellor.

TIMEFRAME FOR COMPLETION OF MA PROGRAMMES

The normal timeframe for completion of an MA programme is *two years* (four successive semesters and the summer internship period). A student might, for various reasons, find himself or herself unable to complete the course work for the MA degree in two years. Evaluation committees shall consider cases of students having to break their engagement with the required sequence of courses at any point between Semesters I and II, Semesters II and III, and Semesters III and IV.

A student in an MA programme shall be allowed *three years* (marked from the month of initial enrolment) in which to satisfy all academic requirements of the programme. Exceptional cases of students needing to take more than three years to complete a programme will be considered by the aforementioned evaluation committees. An evaluation committee may require a student to de-enrol (take an academic leave of absence) or to repeat courses without enrolling in the successive courses of a programme, as indicated in the previous section. In any case, an evaluation committee shall recommend a schedule for the student so that she/he can complete programme requirements within the three-year timeframe.

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA AS ALTERNATIVE TO THE MA DEGREE

Students *may* be able to earn a postgraduate diploma (PGD) as alternative to an MA degree. Evaluation committees shall examine throughout the

year cases of students who do not meet criteria of academic progress or who propose to voluntarily withdraw from an MA programme. The committees stipulate conditions according to which students may be awarded a PGD instead of an MA degree. Students may bring their cases to the attention of the committees of their Schools through formal application. In other cases, a faculty advisor, a Dean of a School, or a School-level administrator may recommend to an evaluation committee students who in their estimation should be awarded PGDs instead of degrees. Students thus selected shall be formally notified of the decisions of the evaluation committees.

IV. OTHER ISSUES

Tutorials and mentoring relationships are part of all AUD academic programmes. Special/ individual advising may be prescribed for the thesis portion of an MA programme, entailing an official supervisory relationship between a student and one or more faculty members.

Students shall have opportunity to formally ‘rate’ their courses and instructors in *evaluation forms*. This usually occurs near or at the conclusion of each semester, or at the conclusion of the modules taught by individual faculty members. Students are expected on these occasions to provide constructive criticism so that faculty can improve their teaching and the courses they teach. These evaluations are anonymous and access to completed evaluations is limited. Teachers see the evaluations only *after* they have submitted the students’ course grades.

All students, faculty, researchers, administrators and staff at AUD are required to abide by guidelines and policies formulated in order to create a safe, positive and supportive learning environment. Procedures are in place to deal with disciplinary issues and instances of misconduct, such as plagiarism, ‘ragging’ and sexual harassment. These procedures and guidelines are matters of public record and shall be available through the AUD website and other forums to all members of the AUD community.

V. GLOSSARY

Programme

A programme leads to a degree, diploma or certificate. MA programmes have a normal duration of four semesters and a summer semester (or inter-session). They involve taught courses of 2 or 4 credits, internship, and project work (carrying as many as 8 credits) leading to a dissertation. MA programmes may include non-credit workshops or activities. BA programmes shall have normal duration of 3 or 4 years (six to eight semesters), depending on the choice by students of 'Major' subject areas.

Semester

The teaching year consists of two major semesters of about 16 weeks each, the Monsoon Semester starting in August and the Winter Semester starting in January. A semester will carry a load of between 12 and 20 credits, depending on the programme. There is a shorter Summer Semester (or inter-session) meant for internships, project work and repetition of courses on 'independent study' or faculty guided basis. In each teaching semester there will be taught courses as well as seminar/workshop courses.

Course

Courses are assigned credit values of 2, 4 or 8 credits. In any MA programme there is a core cluster of courses reflecting the philosophy and disciplinary (or interdisciplinary) perspective of the School within which it is located. Elective course within the School may also be offered. Other courses fulfilling programme requirements may be offered from adjacent or related programmes. This is only a general statement and there may be programmes that depart from these norms.

Credit

Each credit in a taught course is equated to one hour of teaching or two hours of seminars/ group work/ laboratory work/ field-work per week for 16 weeks. Thus, a 4-credit course entails 4 hours of regular teaching per week or as much as 8 hours of teaching and other programme activities.

Assessment situation/ exercise

Any instance of assessment ('assignment', 'exam', 'field report', etc.) during a course will be known as an assessment situation or exercise.

Evaluation Committee

Evaluation committees constituted by the Boards of Studies of Schools monitor students' academic progress and guide students through revision and/ or repetition of course work so that they satisfy the academic requirements of their programmes.

Course instructor

Any individual involved in teaching a course or evaluating the work of students in the course. Course instructors usually hold official appointments as AUD faculty members. A **course co-ordinator** has supervisory authority in a team-taught course, when more than one instructor teaches a course.

Annexure I: Illustrations of Course Grade and Semester Grade Calculation

Consider a student in an MA programme who in one course appears in 8 unit tests to which have been assigned the weights 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, and 2 respectively. His/ her performance in these tests are B+, B, B+, A-, B+, A, B, and A. In order to calculate the student's performance in this course, the letter grades are first converted to their corresponding grade points. These are multiplied by the weights and the sum divided by the total weight to yield the grade point average and therefore the grade in that course:

Assessment	Weight	Grade	GP	Wt x GP
1	1	B+	7	7
2	1	B	6	6
3	1	B+	7	7
4	2	A-	8	16
5	1	B+	7	7
6	1	A	9	9
7	1	B	6	6
8	2	A	9	18
Total				76

Thus the grade point average for the course for this student will be $76/10$ (remember 10 is the total weight) = 7.6, and he/she will get the grade A- (see table on pp. 3 - 4 above).

To calculate the student's performance in a full semester, a similar exercise is carried out. Suppose the semester consists of five courses,

three of 4 credits each and two of 2 credits each, totalling 16 credits, and suppose the student in question has obtained the grades B+, B, A-, A and B+ in these courses. Then the calculation of the student's grade for the semester will proceed as follows:

Course	Credit	Grade	GP	Credit x GP
I	4	B+	7	28
II	4	B	6	24
III	4	A-	8	32
IVa	2	A	9	18
IVb	2	B+	7	14
Total				116

Thus the semester grade point average of this student is $116/16 = 7.25$ (remember that the total number of credits and therefore the total weight is now 16), and the student will be awarded the grade B+ for the semester (see table on pp. 3 - 4 above).

The student's performance in the entire programme is calculated similarly on the basis of his/ her performance in each semester (and an internship, if applicable).

Annexure II: Penalties for incomplete work, 'Remediation', and course repetition

LATE SUBMISSIONS AND INCOMPLETE WORK.

There may arise situations, such as illness and emergencies, preventing a student from completing on schedule a major assignment such as a term paper or end-of-term examination. *Each School and programme shall announce grading penalties for assignments missed or submitted late.* In emergency situations, a student must contact the concerned teacher/ course team as soon as possible and explain the circumstance(s) preventing completion of an assignment or assessment exercise. A teacher or course team may devise means for a student to complete a major assignment or examination outside of the scheduled timeframe. In such *rare cases*, the teacher/ course team *may* decide to award the student a temporary grade of 'Incomplete' pending his/ her completion of the assignment(s). If the student does not abide by the approved conditions for completing a course, the temporary grade shall within a prescribed time period be automatically converted to the grade of 'F' for the entire course (not only for the incomplete work). *Students should not expect the automatic award of a temporary grade of 'Incomplete' due to supposedly unavoidable absence from a final examination.* In cases of inability to

complete thesis work as scheduled, standing evaluation committees (not individual teachers, supervisors or course teams) shall decide on a course of action.

REMEDIAL WORK AND REVISION

Under circumstances of a student doing unsatisfactory work (work which foretells a non-passing grade for the course), a teacher or course team may permit a student to revise or repeat certain assignments *before the end of the semester examination period*. The teacher or course team shall make an assessment of the minimal quantity and quality of work the student needs to revise or repeat in order to pass the course. The student shall then be promptly notified of the conditions (e.g., due dates) for completion or revision of work. On occasion, *revision may entail doing work not originally assigned that is comparable to the original assignments*. In cases of remediation/ revision before completion of the teaching semester, the teacher or course team shall submit with the student's final course grade a statement of the terms and results of revision, indicating the grade weight (percentage) of the revised, repeated or substituted assignments.

'Revision' may be allowed in cases where a student's work in a few assignments or assessment situations has been evaluated as unsatisfactory or insufficient for passing a course. 'Revision' is *not* a voluntary opportunity for a student to improve upon a number of assignments or assessment situations already designated satisfactory (i.e., C+ or better). Revision-during-semester is not to be understood as an escape route or a means for students to complete assessment situations they have missed due to non-attendance. Teacher/ course co-ordinators identify the circumstances under which revision before term-end is allowed; they shall normally identify the *minimum number* of assessments to be revised or repeated in order for a student to pass a course. A student who repeats assignments could still receive a non-passing course grade, in which case he/ she must repeat the course (see 'Repeating a Course').

REPEATING A COURSE

Courses not passed must be repeated. Passed courses may be repeated to improve grades. However, students may *elect* to repeat a passed course or courses *only with approval of the evaluation committee of the School in which they are enrolled*. The limit on elective repetition of courses is *one-eighth of the credits of the MA programme*.

As indicated above, an evaluation committee may direct a student to repeat only certain assessment situations that were required in the taught

course. A student may be directed to repeat a course on the next occasion it is taught or as an ‘independent study’ (i.e., without significant formal teaching). The latter means may be prescribed for the summer intersession or during the regular ‘teaching’ terms.

As a rule, a student *required* to repeat 8 credits worth of courses from a semester in order to pass those courses will not be permitted to *electively* repeat — during the same period — a passed course for improvement of the grade.

Whenever a student electively repeats a course, he/ she accepts the second grade, even if it is lower than the grade obtained on the first occasion. A student repeating a course agrees to abide by all academic conditions stipulated by the course instructor or co-ordinator. The latter may waive certain conditions (e.g., of attendance) or modify assignments in order to accommodate demands presented by the student’s other work.

Not all courses involving formal teaching can be replicated. In certain cases of practical difficulty in replicating a course an ‘independent study’ course of equivalent credits may be devised by a course co-ordinator with the approval of the Dean of the School. In all cases, the evaluation committee of the school/ programme in which the student is enrolled determines whether he/ she is making a reasonable and practical demand for repetition of a course.

No course grade may be changed once it has been submitted without explicit written approval of the Dean of the School in which the student is enrolled.

Annexure III: Situations of Course Repetition

There are three occasions for repetition of courses: (1) repetition of a failed course, (2) repetition of courses in order to satisfy requirements of an MA programme (i.e., to achieve an overall grade average of B-), (3) ‘elective’ repetition for improvement of a passing grade.

1. Repetition for those who have failed a course (grade of C or less).

There are two ways of doing this:

- a. The student will repeat the course the next time it is offered and go through all assessment situations *or* a subset thereof specified by the course team.
- b. Subject to the approval of an evaluation committee of the School concerned, during the summer intersession between

Semesters II and III or following Semester IV, the student shall go through a number of assessment situations stipulated by a course team.

2. Repetition for students who have passed a course but want to repeat it because they have not earned the requisite minimum cumulative grade of the programme. A student can do this after Semester IV (or at another time designated by an evaluation committee) in one or both of the following ways:

- a. During the summer intersession following Semester IV, the student shall go through a number of assessment situations that the course team stipulates in not more than two courses (amounting to 8 credits or less).
- b. The student shall enrol in an additional semester or year of courses (Semesters V, VI) to repeat all assessment situations (or a few of thereof specified by the course team) of the courses whose grades are to be raised.

3. Repetition for those who have passed a course but would like to improve, or those who have been recommended to improve upon a passing grade by an evaluation committee. A student can do this subject to the following conditions:

- a. The number of courses that he/ she can elect to repeat for this purpose shall not add up to more than *one-eighth* of the total credits of the programme concerned.
- b. The student accepts the grade obtained after repetition, even if it is lower than the grade earned previously.

There are two ways of repeating a course for improvement of grade:

- a. The student will take the course the next time it is offered and go through all assessment situations (or a few thereof specified by the course team) of the taught course.
- b. Subject to the approval of an evaluation committee, during the summer intersession between Semesters II and III or following Semester IV, the student shall go through a number of assessment situations that the course team (with approval of the evaluation committee) stipulates.