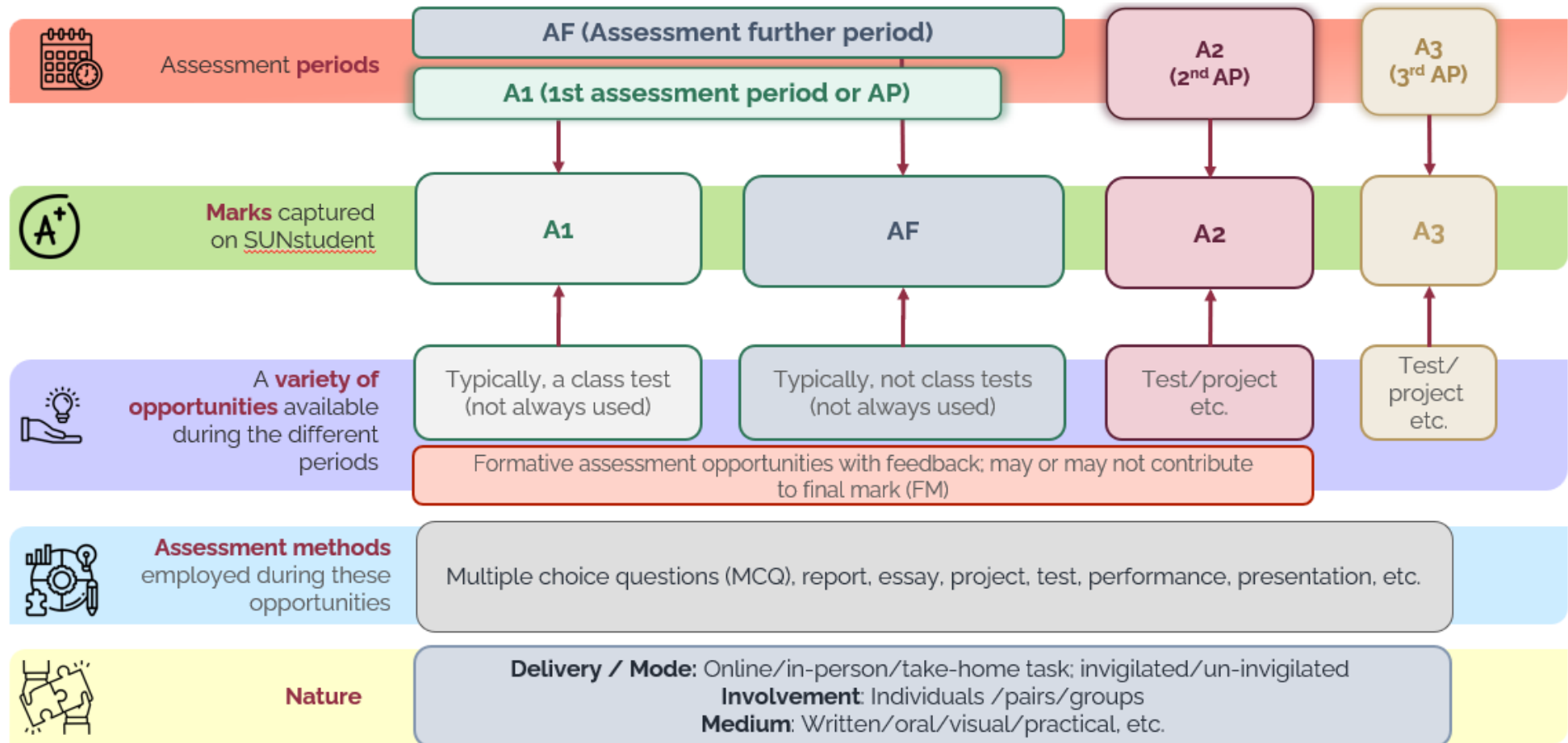









# Assessment Terminology Annexure








Please note: The Stellenbosch University (SU) Assessment Policy (2021) and the Assessment Rules (General Calendar, Part 1) are the main source documents for any assessment-related matters. Each faculty and centre is also required to formulate further assessment rules, specific to the faculty and centre concerned, which are herein referred to as the "applicable assessment rules".







## Graphic overview of the various assessment terms used at SU:








## Assessment periods, opportunities and marks captured on SUNStudent




Key		<p><b>Period:</b> A defined time frame during which multiple assessment opportunities are available; i.e. a specified calendar block identified for or set aside for assessments such as the dates for A2 included in the SU almanac.</p>	 <p><b>Opportunity:</b> A specific instance or occasion when students have a chance to demonstrate their knowledge, skills or abilities through an assessment. It represents a single attempt to assess performance or achievement. For example, in the A2 period, a student may have two (2) assessment opportunities if they write two (2) assessment papers.</p>		<p><b>Marks captured on SUNstudent:</b> The mark may be determined by multiple assessment opportunities.</p>
<p>AF Assessment further period</p>		<p>From the start of the semester up to the end of the semester's lectures. The AF period overlaps with the A1 period. Some modules do not use AF at all.</p>			
		<p>Marks that are determined by further assessments during the teaching period; i.e. <b>assessments not scheduled during a test week nor in an evening time slot allocated by the Timetables Office.</b> The contribution of AF to the final mark (FM) can vary from low to high, as determined by the assessment strategy for the module and as allowed by the applicable assessment rules.</p>			
		<p>Small to large percentage contribution to final marks, but usually not using large tests as the assessment method. This can include summative or formative assessment opportunities that contribute to the final mark. Typical examples are small or large assignments, laboratory work, short tests during tutorial periods, online quizzes and fieldwork.</p>			
		<p><b>Formative assessments:</b> Assessments that are primarily intended to be formative may (but need not) play a summative role too and can contribute to AF (for example, short tests during tutorial periods).</p>			

A1 First assessment period		<p>The <b>A1 period</b> is the first formal assessment period. A1 is <b>from the start of the semester up to two and a half weeks before the end of the semester's lectures</b>. In those cases where A1 assessments are scheduled after the A1 period, the dates should be as soon as practically possible after the A1 period, unless applicable assessment rules allow the assessment to be scheduled in the final week of lectures due to the method of presentation of a specific module.</p> <p>For programmes where it is feasible, A1 assessments may be scheduled over a shorter period while regular contact sessions in these programmes are suspended, subject to the agreement of the affected faculties and centres and the availability of venues; for example, Engineering Test Week. A1 assessment opportunities are conducted and administered by the home faculty/faculties. This includes venue reservations, the printing of question papers and invigilation. Additionally, the home department/centre is responsible for accommodating the special needs of students; e.g. writing time concessions. Some modules prefer to use only AF and not use A1 at all.</p>
		Marks are normally determined by one or two major mid-semester summative assessments during the A1 period. The contribution of A1 to the final mark can vary from low to high, as determined by the assessment strategy for the module and as allowed by the applicable assessment rules.
		Typically a class test <b>completed during a formal assessment period</b> (i.e. during a test week or in an evening timeslot allocated by the Timetables Office). If A2 is also offered in a module, the assessment method in A1 will normally be similar to the assessment method in A2 to give students an indication of what to expect in A2.
Mark-to-date (MTD)		A combined mark of all assessment opportunities completed before A2. This mark provides students with an indication of their standing before writing A2. This term <b>replaces</b> the previously used <u>class mark</u> or <u>predicate mark</u> in modules that used the examination assessment system.
A2 Second assessment period		The <b>A2 period</b> is the second formal assessment period. A2 follows directly after the completion of the teaching period. Where postgraduate lectures, tutorials, practicals or seminars are scheduled during this period, assessment opportunities scheduled by the Timetables Office take precedence. No undergraduate academic activities other than assessments are scheduled during this period.
		Marks are determined by assessment opportunities <b>during the A2 assessment period</b> . If two or more papers or assessment opportunities are used, the results of these papers must be combined into a single A2 mark. The contribution of A2 to the final mark can vary from low to high, as determined by the assessment strategy for the module and as allowed by the applicable assessment rules.
		The most typical assessment method is a test (written or in a computer user area [CUA]). Where the A2 assessment in a module uses more than one assessment method, including mode and medium (e.g. one summative written in-person test and one summative in-person practical test), all these should be completed within the A2 period for the A2 mark to be awarded, unless another arrangement is explicitly given in the applicable assessment rules. Otherwise, the marks for the assessment contributions that were completed, will lapse.

<p><b>A3</b> Third assessment period</p>		<p>The A3 period is the third formal assessment period. A3 follows directly after the A2 period. Where postgraduate lectures, tutorials, practicals or seminars are scheduled during this period, assessments scheduled by the Timetables Office take precedence. No undergraduate academic activities other than assessment opportunities are scheduled during this period.</p>
		<p>Marks are determined by assessment opportunities completed during the A3 period. If two or more papers or assessment opportunities are used, the results of these papers must be combined into a single A3 mark. The A3 mark may be used as a supplementary assessment mark or to compensate for missing an earlier major assessment, as allowed by the applicable assessment rules.</p>
		<p>Similar to the arrangements for A2. Please note: Final-year students who, irrespective of the reason, make use of an assessment opportunity in a module during the A3 period in November, cannot receive a qualification that requires the particular module during the graduation ceremonies in December of that year. The earliest that the student can receive the qualification is in March or April of the following year.</p>
<p><b>A4</b> Fourth assessment period</p>		<p>The A4 period is scheduled directly after the A3 period into January and February of the following calendar year. This assessment opportunity may only be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• honours and master's programmes;</li> <li>• modules in undergraduate programmes using projects; and</li> <li>• specific undergraduate modules for which express permission was given in the applicable assessment rules.</li> </ul> <p>These assessments are not scheduled or administered by the Timetables Office. Dean's concession assessments are also scheduled during this period.</p>
		<p>Marks are determined by an assessment opportunity scheduled in the A4 period. The A4 mark is distinct from the mark obtained in the dean's concession assessment.</p>
		<p>Similar to the arrangements for A2 and A3.</p>

Dean's concession assessment (DCA)		<p>The following students in undergraduate modules may be considered for the dean's concession assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• final-year students in arrears of 33 credits in at most two (2) modules for a degree after the A3 period; or</li> <li>• final-year students in arrears of any credit allocation in at most one module for a degree after the A3 period;</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• who obtained a FM of at least 30 in each of the modules in arrears during <u>that academic year</u>; OR</li> <li>• met the requirements for admission to the DCA stated in the assessment rules of the programme's home faculty.</li> </ul> <p>Please note: In the case of a programme offered by multiple faculties, a mutual decision must be made on how DCA rules will be applied.</p> <p>The DCA is completed in January or February of the following year in accordance with both the SU and faculty-specific DCA rules. Before a student is given access to a DCA, the home department or centre of a module in arrears must indicate that it is <b>reasonably practicable</b> for the student to pass the module by doing the DCA. Every faculty may make faculty-specific rules regarding the DCA. All DCAs must be internally moderated; however, if the module is externally moderated, the DCA must also be externally moderated. DCAs are not subject to re-evaluation.</p>
		The DCA mark must be captured on SUNstudent. In addition, a student's mark on the DCA will be used to determine a final mark as specified in the assessment rules of the module's home faculty. The final mark must also be captured on SUNstudent.
		The home faculty and department of the module determine the requirements for and nature of a DCA. These can differ amongst faculties.
Final mark		The final mark for the module is calculated according to the assessment plan. This is the <b>only mark</b> that is shown on the student's academic transcript. It is also the only mark that is used for meeting normal or passing prerequisites. This term replaces the term 'performance mark' (prestatiepunt)A
Subminimum requirements		The value awarded to the final mark is determined by the AF, A1, A2, A3, A4 and DCA marks, as well as any other requirements given in the applicable assessment rules. For example, a student's final mark may be limited to less than 50 if they failed to complete certain outcomes (e.g. laboratory work) or meet certain accreditation criteria. Some modules could also require a specified minimum mark for students to be allowed entry into any of the assessment opportunities or require a subminimum mark for specific assessment opportunities to successfully complete the module.

Each module should differentiate between:

 <p><b>Assessment Strategy</b></p> <p>The assessment strategy describes <b>how</b> assessment will be used and <b>why</b>. The assessment strategy for the programme or module should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the purposes of assessment;</li> <li>• the different assessment methods used; and</li> <li>• how these support the constructive alignment of learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria with teaching events, learning activities and assessment methods.</li> </ul> <p>The flexible assessment approach is aimed at being flexible during the design phase, but not during implementation. This is underpinned by ongoing reflection in the spirit of academic renewal.</p> <p>The assessment strategy should also consider the following:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="103 667 1115 895"> <tr> <td><b>Mode of delivery</b></td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online/in person</li> <li>• Synchronous/asynchronous</li> <li>• Invigilated/uninvigilated</li> <li>• Take-home assignments</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Medium</b></td> <td>Written/oral/visual/practical etc.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Involvement</b></td> <td>Individuals/pairs/groups</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Mode of delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online/in person</li> <li>• Synchronous/asynchronous</li> <li>• Invigilated/uninvigilated</li> <li>• Take-home assignments</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>	Written/oral/visual/practical etc.	<b>Involvement</b>	Individuals/pairs/groups	<p><b>vs</b></p>	 <p><b>Assessment plan</b></p> <p>The assessment plan entails a description of <b>what</b> will be used for assessment purposes and <b>how much</b> of it will be used. The plan should therefore provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a summary of the different assessment methods that will be used to assess student performance in keeping with the assessment purpose;</li> <li>• a short description of the assessment methods selected for the particular module;</li> <li>• the number of assessment opportunities that will use this method;</li> <li>• the number of assessment opportunities that will contribute to the final mark; and</li> <li>• the weighting of each assessment method that contributes to the final mark.</li> </ul> <p>Scheduling of the assessment plan will be done according to the assessment rules of the faculty and the assessment periods provided above.</p>
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online/in person</li> <li>• Synchronous/asynchronous</li> <li>• Invigilated/uninvigilated</li> <li>• Take-home assignments</li> </ul>							
<b>Medium</b>	Written/oral/visual/practical etc.							
<b>Involvement</b>	Individuals/pairs/groups							
 <p><b>Assessment Method</b></p> <p>Assessment methods are the mechanisms used to evaluate student performance. These are also called the <u>types</u> of assessment. These methods can be categorised according to the assessment mode, medium or involvement.</p> <p><b>It is possible to use a variety of assessment methods within each module.</b> It is necessary to consider which assessment method would be most appropriate to evaluate whether a student has met the identified outcomes on the required National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level.</p> <p>Examples of assessment methods:          MCQ /report/essay/project/written test/written examination/oral examination/performance/presentation</p>	<p><b>vs</b></p>	 <p><b>Assessment Opportunity</b></p> <p>An assessment opportunity refers to a specific instance or occasion when students have a chance to demonstrate their knowledge, skills or abilities through an assessment. It represents a single attempt to assess performance or achievement. For example, in the A2 period, a student may have two (2) assessment opportunities if they write two (2) assessment papers.</p> <p>A flexible assessment approach should ideally allow for various assessment opportunities (using different methods) to ensure that student learning is assessed throughout the duration of the module instead of assessing the student only upon completion of the module.</p>						



## Purposes of assessment

<b>Diagnostic</b>	Diagnostic assessment is <b>assessment to evaluate</b> students' prior knowledge and skills before instruction; e.g. as a pre-assessment for a module (academics most often refer to this as baseline assessment). Diagnostic assessment is aimed at helping lecturers to find ways to teach towards students' strengths or weaknesses, and to decide what action or approach may be required of the student and/or the lecturer.
<b>Summative assessment</b>	Summative assessment is <b>assessment of learning</b> and informs decisions and findings on students' progress; e.g. for promotion or certification, or to make value judgements about students' performance. Summative assessment is interested in finding out whether the student has mastered the work well enough to progress to the next level. These are seen as high-stakes assessments for students, as they contribute significantly towards their marks. Here it is critical that judgements can be made with certainty and that final judgements are valid. The validity of judgements is impacted by several factors or principles (more about these later in this document). Summative assessment may be more useful for student learning when combined with formative and sustainable assessments.
<b>Formative assessment</b>	<p>Formative assessment is <b>assessment for learning</b> and serves the learning process primarily by offering students an opportunity to develop the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes with the aid of learning-centred feedback. The purpose here is not to judge, but rather to <u>provide feedback to students</u> on how their current knowledge or performance compares with the expected assessment criteria. These criteria need to be communicated and made clear to the student. The focus is on the provision of feedback, and the scaffolding of learning opportunities and follow-up assessments, where students can use the feedback to enhance their learning.</p> <p>Essentially, formative assessment is aimed at improving learning through feedback. Unlike summative assessments, formative assessments are regarded as <u>low-stakes assessments</u> where the focus is on the process of learning. Formative assessments usually do not contribute to the final mark, but if they contribute, they only contribute minimally (e.g. tutorial participation and attendance for the entire year contributing 5% toward the final mark).</p>
<b>Sustainable assessment</b>	Sustainable assessment entails preparing students to become lifelong learners, who will be able to judge their own performance in a workplace with no formal assessments after graduation. Lifelong learning has become crucial in an ever-changing and increasingly complex world where critical thinking and reflection skills are required. Sustainable assessment is <b>assessment as learning</b> , focusing more on the process than the product of assessment. Self- and peer assessment can also promote sustainable assessment, as these require students to engage with the assessment criteria.
<b>Assessment for evaluation</b>	This form of assessment happens when results from the assessment process, along with other information, are used to inform assessment practices and to evaluate the quality of a learning and teaching event, module or programme. If students performed poorly, it does not necessarily mean that the assessment was poorly designed. When that happens, it provides the opportunity for stepping back and asking, "What happened, where are the gaps and how can the assessment be improved or structured differently?"



## Assessment terms not in use anymore

Class mark	This term is not in use anymore, except for students' results determined by means of the examination system before 2023. The term was applicable during the period when the 'examination' assessment system was used at SU (prior to 2023). The class mark (CM) was determined using all the assessments completed before the written or practical examination during the first and second examination periods. The class mark was used for admission to examinations for modules with prerequisites. For admission to an examination, a CM of at least 40 was required. A faculty's assessment rules may allow modules to use mark-to-date(MTD) thresholds for admission to A2 and A3.
Examination mark	This term is not in use anymore. The A2 and A3 marks are used to record a student's performance in the A2 and A3 periods.
Performance mark	This term is not in use anymore and <b>'final mark' should be used instead.</b>
Second opportunity	This term is not in use anymore. An A3 assessment can be similar to the 'second opportunity' offered in the previous examination system, but A3 is also used as a supplementary assessment opportunity for A1 in some modules.