

ASSESSMENT IN FOCUS

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ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA



Assessment in Focus is dedicated to the dissemination of information and developments at the Testing Center, as well as to shed light on aspects of educational measurement and evaluation issues that would assist in the development and maintenance of up-to-standard and quality education at SMU, and at similar institutions of higher learning in Ethiopia.

Editor's Note

The current issue of the *Assessment in Focus* Newsletter discusses the types of exam and their format, and the kinds of tests being carried out at SMUs Testing Center for internal consumption and for external customers on request.

In higher education institutions, the standard of the exams prepared by the assessors needs to be highly commendable to be administered to the students intended to be tested. To do so, as practiced at SMU, the Testing Center in particular, has always been striving to design trainings for its instructors, assessors, preparatory, high school and government school teachers. What is important is not a matter of knowing the types of exams; rather their effectiveness to produce efficient graduates who can discharge their responsibility at any level.

The aim of the training is to enable the concerned bodies to prepare quality exams. In the attempt to produce a qualified manpower, St. Mary's University Testing Center is making every possible designs of recognized instruments such as Comprehensive Degree Exit Examinations (CDEEs) for degree programs for both Regular Division and CODL, in addition to the list of information found at the back of this newsletter. To supplement, St. Mary's University is on its advantage to achieve a valid, reliable and fair method of measuring the educational outcomes of the students.

As this effort of continuous training advances, the cumulative effect is expected to be a quality output in terms of efficient and competing graduates at a national level and beyond. Accordingly, the issue of quality education will be realized as one of the top achievements of St. Mary's University in the near future.

Presently, exams are set and administered for different purposes at St. Mary's University (SMU) Testing Center. The first category of exams is prepared and

administered for SMU'S internal consumption for regular and College of Open and Distance Learning (CODL) students, while the others are utilized for external customers.

These are international tests like TOEFL, GRE, and placement/recruitment tests.

Among the customers served are NGOs, government organs and other enterprises SMU's Testing Center is always at the customers' disposal to deliver its professional testing services.

Assessment in Focus highly emphasizes the need for introducing technology enhanced assessment and feedback. Here, challenges accompanied by the technologies are inevitable and need proper utilization headed by the proper professional personnel.

Needles to mention, computer-assisted assessment needs to be practiced and implemented. As a matter of fact, this is believed to reduce the workload of the respective beneficiaries and definitely enhance the teaching learning process.

* INSIDE *

➤ Editor's Note	1
➤ Different Activities Carried out at TC	2
➤ Some International Tests	4
➤ St. Mary's University Employment Tests and Its Customers	5
➤ Introducing Technology Enhanced Assessment and Feedback	6
➤ The Benefits and Hazards of Paper and Pencil Tests (PPBT)	8
➤ Sitting for Exams	9
➤ Quotes Corner	11

Activities Carried Out at the Testing Center

By Abera Hunde, SMU Testing Center

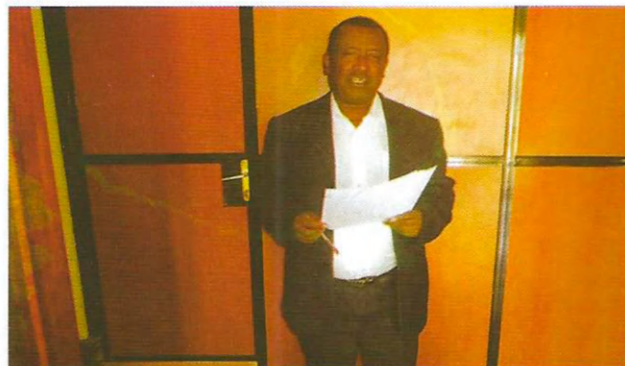
Testing center carries out different activities among which preparing exams, assignments and projects for CODL and regular program, conducting different trainings related to measurement and evaluation (for SMU's internal purpose as well as for external customers), giving international tests like TOEFL and GRE, providing employment (placement) tests for outside customers, etc are the major ones. Accordingly, the TC has done numerous activities in the last 6 months.

1. Trainings Given by TC



Giving training for SMU's internal purpose as well as for external purpose is one of the duties of TC. Pertinent to this, the TC has given the newly recruited permanent and part-time assessors of TC 5 trainings on Item Development, and Test Blue print Preparation from July 2014 up to January 2015

Similarly, 12 Regular Program and TC staff members were given training on the Preparation of Entrance Exam for the students who join degree program from TVET or after preparatory completion. The training was given by Dr. Wubishet Shiferaw. Other two trainings on Criterion Referenced Assessment, Test Planning and Test Item Development were given to regular program instructors by Dr. Wubishet Shiferaw and Ato Shenkute Mamo, respectively.



In the same manner, Kidist Mariam Schools (KMS) teachers were also trained twice on Planning and Preparation of Items Specification and the Development of Model Exams for Grades 8, 10 and 12.

CONTINUED —————

Dear readers, we here by appreciate your genuine and constructive comments and suggestions for they will add substantial improvements so that we can remain your service givers .

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P.O. Box 1211 Website : www.smuc.edu.et

2. International Tests Conducted

TOEFL is one of the international tests given by the TC. In the last 6 months, 17 sessions of TOEFL tests were run and about 196 students were tested.

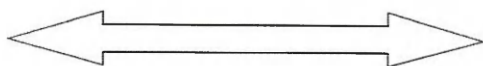
GRE is another international test delivered by TC. It was introduced during the last 6 months. Following the introduction, 8 exam sessions were conducted for 76 students. In addition, ACCA, which stands for the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, is also a leading international accountants' training carried out at SMU under the supervision of TC. In the last 6 months, different ACCA registration and conduct of ACCA Tuition had been carried out.

3. Employment (Placement) Exams

Among the services provided by the TC for outside customers is giving employment (placement) tests to governmental and non governmental organizations on request basis.

Accordingly, exams were administered to a total of 170 candidates of Development Bank of Ethiopia for the position of 'Trainee Junior Accountant' and 'Junior Accountant'; in the months June and December 2014 and January 2015

Other employment (placement) exams were given to a total of 14 candidates of HERQA for the positions of 'Head for Information and Communication Technology Service'.



OBITUARY



Ato Fekadu Begna was born in 1940 E.C. from his mother W/ro Askale Amare and his father Ato Begna Oda in Addis Ababa. He attended his elementary school at Teferi Mokonnen and his secondary school at Be'ide Mariam school. After he completed his secondary school, he joined the then Kedamawi Haile-Sellase University (now Addis Ababa University) and graduated with BA in History.

Ato Fekadu had served at Bahir-Dar high school, W/ro Sehen Comprehensive Secondary School in Dessie, Tikur Anbessa High School in Addis Ababa as a history teacher. He got his MA in history from Addis Ababa University while he was teaching at Tikur Anbessa High school. He had also served in history curriculum design and text book preparation with the request of the Ministry of Education.

Starting from 1995 E.C, he had served as a history teacher, Social Sciences Dep't Head, Teacher Education Faculty Dean of Distance Division (now College of Open and Distance Learning), and Director of St. Mary's University Testing Center until his death on January 19/2015 (Tir 11/2007)E.C.

Ato Fekadu Benga was a person who earned a great honour from the SMU community for his industriousness and being an exemplary person. He was a highly respected scholar in the university. Being under treatment at Yordanos Hospital for a short while, he was taken home and died at his residence and was buried at Raphi Medhanialem Church on January 20/2015. He has always been and will be remembered by his co-workers for his commitment and hard work.

Hence, words seem inadequate to express the sadness we feel about him. The University's staff thoughts are with him and his family during this difficult time of sorrow!



Some International Tests

By Tarekegn Newut, SMU Testing Center

What is a test?

Test or examination (informally, exam) is an assessment intended to measure a test taker's knowledge, skill, aptitude, physical fitness, or classification in many other topics (e.g. beliefs).

A test may be administered verbally, on a paper, on a computer, or in a confined area that requires a test taker to physically perform a set of skills.

Tests vary in style, rigor and requirements. A test may be administered formally or informally. Formal testing often results in a grade or a test score and this test score may be interpreted with regard to a norm or criterion or occasionally both.

Types of Tests

Tests are classified into two: standardized and non-standardized tests.

Standardized tests are tests that are administered and scored in a consistent manner to ensure legal defensibility. They are often used in education, professional certification, psychology, in military and many other fields.

In the case of military tests, they were used to determine the mental aptitude of the recruited to the intended job. In some cases, they were used to measure the IQ of soldiers.

Non-standardized tests are usually flexible in scope, format, variables in difficulty and significance.

In contrast to non-standardized tests, standardized tests are widely used, fixed in terms of scope, difficulty and format and usually significant in consequence. Standardized tests are sometimes used by certain countries to manage the quality of their educational institution. Standardized testing is a very common way of determining the current intelligence of students. To this extent, standardized tests are sometimes used to compare the proficiency of students from different institutions or countries.

What are some of the Global Tests ?

Different countries give tests to students internationally. Some of these tests are:

1. **Scholastic Aptitude Test /SAT/** is a standardized test widely used for college admission in the USA.
2. **Graduate Management Admission Test/GMAT/** is a computer adaptive test (CAT) which seeks to assess a personal analytical writing, qualitative, verbal, and reading skills in standard written English in preparation for being admitted to a graduate management program, such as an MBA.
3. **Graduate Record Examination /GRE/** is a standardized test used as an admission requirement for most graduate schools in the United States.

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4. **Test of English as a Foreign Language**

/TOEFL/ is a standardized test of English language proficiency for non native English language speakers wishing to enroll the US universities.

5. **International English Language Testing System**

(IELTS) is an international standardized test of English language proficiency for non native English language speakers.

6. **Law School Admission Test (LSAT)** is a

half-day standardized test administered four times each year at designated testing centers throughout the world.

7. **International General Certification of Secondary Education**

/IGCSE/ is an academically rigorous, internationally used, and specialized English language curriculum which is offered to students to prepare them for an international Baccalaureate, A level and BTEC level 3 (which is recommended for higher tier students).

8. **Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate**

Leaving Certificate is the final examination in the secondary school system.

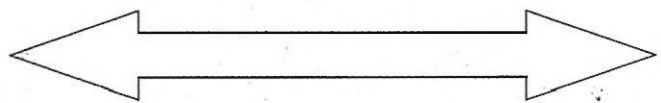
Junior Certificate is an educational qualification awarded in Ireland by the Department of Education and skills to students who have successfully completed the junior cycle of secondary education, and achieved a minimum standard in the junior certification examinations.

International Baccalaureate Diploma

Program is a two-year educational program primarily aimed at students aged 16-19.

Among the above international or global tests, St. Mary's University currently gives TOEFL, GRE and recruitment tests for ~~governmental~~ and non-governmental institutions in Ethiopia.

Source: *en. Wikipedia. Org*



St. Mary's University Employment

Tests and its Customers

By Fekadu Begna (Late Director, Testing Center, SMU)

Among the multivariate services, that SMU renders as part of its outreach activities, are employment (placement) tests that it administers, on behalf of enterprises, organizations, NGOs and Government Organs, which started three years back and the tests are administered by the University's Testing Center (TC) with the concomitant security required in place.

Among its customers which have been served to their satisfaction, the TC counts private enterprises, (banking, transport, manufacturing, service industries) etc. agencies (educational training, etc.), NGOs, (relief, aid, etc.) and government organs (~~telecommunications~~ telecommunications, transport, educational organizations etc)

Continued -----

According to the needs of customers (based on job descriptions and other details like type' and years of experience, kind and level of education required), tailored tests are prepared and administered by the TC at the University's Campuses, in Addis Ababa. The tests administered are written and/ or practical tests. Generally, however, all tests include knowledge and practical parts. They gauge the capabilities of candidates' skills, knowledge and attitudes required for a job.

The types of jobs for which the TC has given tests among others include: senior database management, computer programming, computer networking, ICT head, secretarial science and office management, accountancy, marketing management, salesperson, librarian, archivist, finance management and human resource management. But, the TC offers tests for more jobs than those mentioned above. See the back cover page of this current issue of *Assessment in Focus*, which you are reading, for a complete list of the jobs for which tests are available. The TC prepares and administers tests on request. Tests are prepared, administered and results communicated to customers with utmost security for reasonable fees.

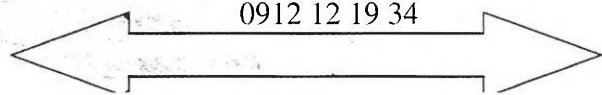
On the test day, the customer is allowed to send to the test room, an observer, who witnesses the proper conduct of the test and attests the same to the concerned official of the organization (of the customer).

Customers have highly benefited from our professional testing services. They have entrusted the task of giving professional tests to their candidates for employment and placement to the university, which has served them well. We look forward to the continued partnership with our customers-old and new!

Come and Be Served by Professionals!

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0912 12 19 34



Introducing Technology-Enhanced Assessment and Feedback

By Maranatha Belay, SMU Testing Center

Technology, although still under-utilized in assessment and feedback practices, offers a considerable potential for the achievement of these aims. However, benefits are accompanied in some cases by challenges. Hence, wider understanding is still needed of how the application of technology can enhance assessment practices, and when there is a business case to support such innovations. For example, if designed appropriately, computer-assisted assessment (such as, but not exclusively involving, multiple choice tests) offers a number of benefits that can enhance learning and reduce the workload of administrators and practitioners. Online assessments can be accessed at a greater range of locations than is possible with paper examinations, enabling learners to measure their understanding on

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their own choice; immediate expert feedback delivered online in response to the answers selected by learners can rapidly correct misconceptions; and the time saved in marking can be used in more productive ways, for example, in supporting learners experiencing difficulties. The outcomes of assessments can also be more easily collected and evaluated for quality assurance and curriculum review processes.

Technology-enhanced assessment and feedback refers to the practices that provide some, or all of the following benefits:

- greater variety and authenticity in the design of assessments
- improved learner engagement, for example through interactive formative assessments with adaptive feedback
- choice in the timing and location of assessments
- acquiring wider skills and attributes not easily accessed by other means, for example through simulations, e-portfolios and interactive games
- efficient submission, marking, moderation and data storage processes
- consistent and accurate results with opportunities to combine human and computer marking
- immediate feedback
- increased opportunities for learners to act on feedback, for example by reflection in e-portfolios
- innovative approaches based on the use of creative media and online peer and self-assessment
- accurate, timely and accessible evidence on the effectiveness of curriculum design and delivery.

When deployed at scale, however, especially in summative assessment, computer-assisted assessment requires commitment at an institutional or departmental level to ensure an appropriate technical infrastructure and physical estate, and a sustainable approach to skilling up academic staff and learners. Thus, quality issues in relation to test design and delivery also require a close scrutiny. In this respect, technology can add value in other respects such as improving the experience of assessment and feedback. As a result, there is a considerable potential for multimedia technologies to make a feedback richer and more personal and for a wider range of learner-skills and attributes to be demonstrated through assignments involving, for example, e-portfolios, blogs and wikis. In addition, online tools can support peer and self assessment in any location and at times to suit learners – the value of peer and self-assessment in developing learners' ability to regulate their own learning is increasingly recognized.

However, technology provides only the potential for enhancing assessment and feedback. To illicit, transformative effects are

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more likely when there is a clear educational purpose behind the proposed innovation (for example, to increase learners' autonomy, to enhance the quality of feedback or to improve teaching efficiency), and when the use of technology is skillfully contextualized within the academic and wider social context. To sum up, despite the greater scope provided by technology, the principles underpinning good assessment and feedback still apply.

Source : [http://: team project, Blogspt.com](http://teamproject.blogspot.com)



The Benefits and Hazards of Paper and Pencil-Based Tests (PPBT)

By Senait Getahun, SMU Testing Center

Tests are used to accurately and scientifically measure the knowledge and competence of an individual. By delivering a test, one can use the information provided by the test in making a decision about the individuals taking the test. Tests can be administered: via paper and pencil-based (PPBT) or computer-based testing (CBT) method. Paper-and-pencil instruments refer to a general group of assessment tools in which candidates read questions and respond in writing.

The possible range of qualifications which can be assessed using paper-and-pencil tests is quite broad.

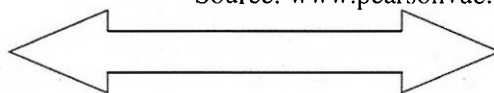
PPBT is more suitable for most developing countries as it requires less infrastructural development regarding information communication technology on one side and is

more suitable for candidates which are less aware in computer usage on the other. It is also a good method for large, one-time administrations like national examinations because a considerable number of candidates can be accommodated for a specific scenario. On the other hand, there are a number of difficulties while conducting Paper-Based exams. It has a long and difficult administrative process from test preparation to result information to candidates. PPBT involves the transportation of tests to those involved in their delivery. Each paper copy of a test and each handoff in the process carry a risk that the test may be exposed or leaked. The need to keep track of all printed copies of the test is also a major challenge in PPBT testing.

PBT is relatively poor in testing knowledge and skills in more authentic ways. For example, if you want to conduct a medical test in which candidates view an X-ray image and then are asked to identify the abnormality. Or, a language test in which candidates listen to an audio clip and then are asked to translate the words.

PPBT testing fails to capture a great deal of information that can be used to make informed decisions about the testing. For instance, timing analysis on how long it takes candidates to respond to questions or the test as a whole can provide information about whether the time allowed for the test is appropriate or needs to be adjusted.

Source: www.pearsonvue.co.uk



Sitting for Exams

By Yonas Zerihun, SMU Testing Center

One of the experiences that students do not forget is sitting for exams. Sitting for exams creates different emotions such as anxiety, tension, and nervousness. Students would develop different behavioral reactions to cope with these exam-related behavioral changes. Some of these reactions can be taking too much stimulant substances such as coffee, tea, soft drinks, 'chat' or students may resort to praying and traditional-superstition-based activities.

These behaviors and actions will intensify especially as the examination date gets nearer; students will change their daily routine as if the season is changed. But, this total behavioral change is not observed in all students, there are students who seem to be unaffected by this pattern. And, if we closely observe these students, we will quickly notice that there are the students who are found most of the time intensively engaged in their studies. While on the contrary to these students, there are students that are not much involved in their studies; and mostly, the exam-related hyperactivity is observed on these students.

Let me tell you about the two students that were in dormitory with me when I was studying in the university. Of the two, one was a hard working student while the other was busy in "non-educational" activities.

The hardworking one was very concerned with his study and would always attend class and never missed a single one even if he had been drinking the previous night till 12 o'clock; he would study in the library after class or read or work on assignment. You would always find him with some books or handouts, and going to library or 'space'. At another time, you would find him reading in dormitory. Besides that, he would always talk about the lectures he attended or the topic he learned that day or his study plan. When the exam date arrived, you wouldn't see any nervousness on him as it was observed on most students. On the contrary, he was optimistic about the exam and the grade that he would get. And, you would see him doing the same things he was doing before without much change.

The lifestyle of my other roommate was totally different. This guy, most of the time, did not attend class or study seriously. He used to spend most of his time hanging out with his friends, taking 'chat' or drinking in the evenings, in general, not doing much expected from a student. Though he would say he was going to study or going to class, he would not do any of them. But, when the exam date came closer, especially, the last week before the exam date, well... that was when this guy suddenly woke from his daydream to realize that he was a student.

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All of a sudden, he would get nervous and his anxiety would start to increase as the date came closer. He would be seen photocopying handouts or other student's book, talking and asking about the classes they attended and about the courses. Or, he would be seen going from one library to another library or 'space'. His sleeping pattern would change; you would see him holding a handout in the middle of the night in the dormitory unusually; because, at other times, he would be out. In general, his behavior would change.

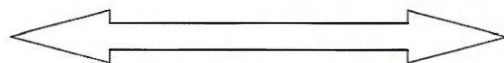
Normally, this guy was talkative and outgoing, but during the exam week, he wouldn't talk much and would get depressed. He would also get a little bit anxious and start talking about what he would do if he failed the exams and got dismissed. And, when his anxiety reached extreme level, he would start devising different schemes to cheat the exam such as preparing 'aterera' or going to campus clinic on examination date and applying for a sick leave to forfeit the exam etc. Some other idiosyncratic behaviors he showed include getting into depressive mood and start thinking about the worst case scenarios.

His financial expenditure would get out of control due to exam related expenses, and he would borrow from his friends because his consumption for soft drinks, 'chat' and other stimulants would increase abnormally. Sometimes, his anxiety would become too much and he would not take the exam. And,

for each and every eve of the exam, he wouldn't sleep for a minute, and most of the time, he would sit for an exam without sleeping the previous night; the way he studied on the last days was unbelievable and one would feel that if this guy studied like this, he could be one of the top students. But, it would be impossible to cover a semester course in a few sleepless nights studying.

Eventually, this guy would fail half of the courses and would get a passing grade for the rest, and after few years of repeating courses and taking readmission every semester, he got tired and left the university.

Though the hardworking roommate mentioned earlier did not get distinction grade, he finished his studies on time with an adequate point, while the latter one did not even finish. Hence, the moral of the story for other students is that by devoting a little time every day, students can avoid exam related anxiety. Thus, though it needs a lot of effort to be a distinction student, by taking small steps in the right direction everyday, students can get good results.



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Quotes Corner

Some lecturers really are terrible, to the point that the best way for the majority (perhaps even all) of their students to learn the material they teach is to avoid all of their class and spend the time doing self-study.

Laurence A. Moran

I think that anonymous evaluations are inconsistent with what a university is all about. By the time you get to a university, you are supposed to stand up for what you believe in and defend it .

Laurence A. Moran

Instructors are certainly better at evaluating the content of their courses, but good teaching is a lot more than content.

I think we are not very good at imagining our courses from the students perspective especially since we were almost certainly very atypical students.

Rosie Redfield

The pure and simple truth is rarely pure and never simple.

Oscar Wilde

Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count, everything that counts can not necessarily be counted.

Albert Einstein

The only man who behaves sensibly is my tailor; he takes my measurement anew every time, while all the rest go on with their old measurements and expect me to fit them.

George Barnard Shaw

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The Testing Center of St. Mary's University provides testing services for employment / placement to both private and government organizations and enterprises in the fields indicated below.

Why not use the testing services offered and lighten your burden by letting professionals do the job for you?

Some of the test services given by the TC are in the following fields:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Accountancy | 8. Accounting Clerk | 14. Procurement and Supplies Mgt. |
| 2. Auditing | 9. Personnel Management | 15. Secretary |
| 3. Cashier | 10. Human Resource Management | 16. Archives Management |
| 4. Finance Management | 11. Business Administration | 17. Customer Service |
| 5. Finance Officer | 12. Project Management | 18. Database Management |
| 6. Marketing Management | 13. Risk Management | 19. Computer Programming |
| 7. Salesperson | | 20. Software Engineering |
| | | 21. Computer Networking |

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