

Guidelines for the evaluation of programs /courses for granting exemptions

1. INTRODUCTION

Faculty of Engineering Technology of the Open University of Sri Lanka has been practicing granting exemptions from the courses of its programs based on the prior qualifications of new applicants /or exiting students who obtained some other qualifications while following a program of the faculty. This is according to the policy of the university to have flexibility in multiple entrance/exits to/from its programs.

Even though the faculty has been practicing granting exemptions for many years, the procedure adopted in granting exemptions has not been properly documented. In addition, certain suggestions were made by the review teams of the Institution of Engineers in Sri Lanka (IESL) on the exemption procedure of the faculty. This document has been prepared to address both above-mentioned aspects.

This guideline document is meant for those who are involved in the evaluation of exemptions and may be helpful for the potential applicants who seek exemptions from the courses of the faculty programs. The document also provides the transparency of the exemption procedures adopted by the faculty.

Generally, the exemptions are of two types: Individual Exemptions and Common Exemptions. When the exemptions are granted based on the several qualifications of an applicant, such exemptions shall be applied only to the applicant and is considered as Individual Exemption. When the exemptions are granted based on a single qualification, such qualification can be considered as Common Exemption and is applicable for any other applicant who possesses the same qualification. The Common exemptions shall be listed in the Students Guidebook with details of the year of revision / etc.

Individuals or institutions can apply for exemptions from the courses of the faculty programs. The faculty reserves right to review its decision on the exemption of courses for any qualification in subsequent years.

2. Procedure on granting exemptions

1. An applicant who wishes to apply for exemption shall submit a duly filled application form together with the relevant documents which are listed below. The applicant also should make a nominal fee for the exemption evaluation before submitting the application. The application form and details of payment are available in the student's guidebook and the faculty web page.
 - I. The duly filled application form together with a certified copy of the certificate(s) of the qualifications and transcript.
 - II. Employment record after obtaining the qualification.
 - III. Students prospectus /guide book – or any other relevant document which includes details of the institution /technical college/university, its facility, rules, and regulations, etc.
 - IV. Detailed curriculum containing list of courses/ course details /credit system / etc..
 - V. Receipt of payment for exemption evaluation.

Notes:

- If a university/ institution/ /technical college seeks exemption for its study program, items I & II are not required. Instead, the head of the institution shall make a written request to the dean of the faculty.
 - Items III & IV should be on the year of obtaining the qualification. In case if the documents are the latest to the qualification, evidence of curriculum revision should be provided.
2. All the applications are received by the assistant registrar of the Faculty of Engineering Technology and submit to the chairperson of the exemption committee one week after the closing date of the applications.
 3. The applications are reviewed by the exemption evaluation committee. If the qualifications mentioned in the applications are suitable for consideration, the documents are forwarded to the relevant departments for course evaluation. At this stage, the committee also can decide on need for a visit to the institution before the course evaluation by the departments. The details are given in section 3
 4. The department shall evaluate the courses and submit the outcomes of the evaluation to the committee by filling the form given in this document. The details are given in section 4.
 5. Upon receiving the outcomes of evaluation of exemptions by the respective departments, the exemption committee scrutinizes the evaluations and submits the outcome of the evaluation to the faculty board.
 6. The decision of the faculty is submitted to the Senate for its approval and decision of the senate should be conveyed to the chairman of the FQEC by the senate representative.
 7. The final decision of the university on exemptions is conveyed to the applicant by the faculty qualification evaluation committee (FQEC), and the document is made available to the chairperson of the registration committee and the department representative of the FQEC should make arrangements to update the OMIS.

3. Process of Evaluation

The evaluation process consists of two main sections A & B.

- A. **Program Evaluation:** This should be carried out by the exemption evaluation committee. The evaluation committee assesses the suitability of the program to grant exemptions. This includes recognition of the institution (state, private, foreign) / standard of the program /study system/ human and physical resources, etc.
 - I. If the committee is satisfied with the program, a detailed evaluation shall be carried out by the relevant departments.
 - II. If the committee decides the need for a visit before the desk evaluation, then that should be informed to the relevant institution. Details of the visits are described in section 7.
 - III. If the evidence provided in the documents is not sufficient or more details are required, the committee refers the document back to the applicant or institution for resubmission.
 - IV. If the committee is not satisfied with the suitability of the program for granting exemptions, a detailed evaluation is not necessary.

The program evaluation is carried out according to the form given in appendix A.

- B. **Course Evaluation:** Course evaluation shall be carried out by the relevant departments. The academic coordinator/course team of the relevant course of the department is expected to carry out the exemption evaluation. In case, if the academic coordinator is not a senior academic, involvement of a senior academic in the relevant field of expertise is recommended. The academic coordinator/course team also can recommend to the committee need for a visit before making the final decision regarding exemptions. Exemption of a course may be based on more than one courses of a program that seeks the exemption. Department representatives to the committee must make sure that the course evaluation is carried out within stipulated time.

Course evaluation shall be carried out using tables given in appendix B.

4. Maximum number of exempted credits

The maximum number of credits of the exempted courses that can be considered for the award of qualification is only fifty percent (50%) of the total credit requirement of a program. In addition, each program can have category-wise and level-wise credit restrictions. These limits are given in regulations of the relevant degree program.

5. Validity period of prior qualifications

Generally, any qualification is considered for the exemptions, only if the time gap between the effective date of that qualification and the date of application for the exemptions is not more than ten (10) years. However, granting exemptions for an older qualification also may be possible based on applicant employment/ experience. This can be decided by the exemption evaluation committee with the consultation of the respective department/ academic coordinator.

6. Effective date of exempted courses

Courses that are exempted up-to-the OCAM date of a given academic year shall be considered for in that particular academic year. Any course exemption beyond the OCAM date shall be effective only for the subsequent academic year

7. Evaluation of foreign qualification

In case of evaluation of foreign qualification, recognition of the program by UGC or accreditation of the program by a professional body (acceptable to the faculty)/institution can be considered as a benchmark. Evaluation of such a program is carried out without any site visits.

8. Site visits

The need for a site visit is decided either at the program evaluation level or course evaluation level. The purpose of a site visit is to have an idea of the facilities available in the institution. The focus will be mainly on the physical resources of the institution which seeks exemption. The main focus in such visits must be laboratory facilities available and methods of conducting and assessing lab practicals.

If the program has undergone a program review of QAAC of the UGC or has recognition from IESL or has obtained NVQ level, the outcome of such evaluation can replace the site visit.

The site visit must take place with a mutual understanding between the faculty and the institution concerned. The evaluation committee chairperson can initiate the communication with the institution concerned for the site visit as goodwill. In the case of individual applications, the applicant or group of applicants are asked to be the facilitator of such a site visit.

The team of the visit can comprise a minimum of three senior academics of the faculty suggested by the evaluation committee. The exact number of the team depends on the number of specializations to be evaluated. The team shall submit a report based on the site visit to the committee describing the availability of the facilities to grant exemptions.

No specific payment for the site visit is required. However, facilities required during the site visit (Transport, food, and lodging etc..) need to be agreed upon with the institution concerned prior to the visit. These requirements can be shared by the institution concerned and the faculty.

The Chairperson of the exemption evaluation committee liaise with the institution concerned and agreed upon the date/s and other details of the visit

Site visit for a particular institution is carried out once in five years.

9. Grades of exempted courses

All the exempted courses shall be awarded only C grade

10. Not exempted courses

Any course at the levels six or above of a study program shall not be considered for the exemptions

Appendix A

PROGRAM EVALUATION

1. Title and abbreviation of the program :
2. Qualification : Certificate / Diploma /Higher Diploma/Degree
3. Nature of the program : Engineering/ Technical /Science
4. Method of delivery : Inhouse / Franchised
5. Program has been recognized /accredited by an external body : Yes/No
(Evidence: certification of the relevant external body)
Program description (aim of the program) : adequately described / Not adequately described
7. Program outcomes : Clearly identified / Not clearly identified
8. Teaching Staff : Adequate/Not adequate
(evidence: staff qualifications given in students prospectus / URL of web page)
9. Facilities available
labs, workshops : Adequate / Not adequate / A visit is necessary to make the decision
(Evidence: list of labs / lab equipment / lab schedules /photos given in guidebook/ web page /.)

Study facilities : Adequate / Not adequate /A visit is necessary to make the decision

Decision of the evaluation committee

Standard of the program is suitable for granting exemption : YES/ NO

If YES

Forwarded for course evaluation

Name of the Department

If NO, whether reapplying is possible with more details and evidence : YES/NO

If YES, provide the details of evidences, which are further required

(a).

(b).

(c).....

State whether a visit is necessary before the course evaluation : Necessary/Not necessary

Any other observations

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Chairperson of the exemption evaluation committee

Date :

Appendix B

COURSE EVALUATION

Title and code of courses / subjects / modules :

(List the courses which are considered when one to one mapping is not available)

Title and code of the course (OUSL/FET) from which the exemptions are requested :

State whether the course details are presented in outcome based format : (YES/ NO)

If YES please fill the table 1 , otherwise table 2 (for each course there should be at least one table/ if number of courses are considered, there should be a separate table for each course)

Table 1

Item	Criteria	Good (3 marks)	Average (2 marks)	Unsatisfactory (1 mark)	NO evidence (0 marks)	Comment
1.	Learning Outcomes					
1a	All the learning outcomes (LOs) are matched					
	Overall Judgment					
2	Coverage of the content					
2.a	Main topics (similar to units)					
2.b	Depth of the coverage (evidence: course plan/ lecture schedule)					
2.c	Subtopics (similar to lessons)					
2.d	Dept of coverage (evidence : lecture schedule / lecture notes/ presentations etc..)					
	Overall judgment					

3.	Teaching – Learning method					
3 a	Notional hours for each activity have been clearly identified					
3.b	Direct teaching hours are sufficient (evidence: Lecture schedule / (similar to session breakdown)-					
3.c	Tutorials /					
3.d	LMS activities (evidence: URL of LMS/ copy of LMS activities -screen shots)					
3.e	Self-study hours are sufficient					
	Overall judgement					
3.	Assessment					
3.a.	Activity mapping table (LO versus activity) is available					
3.b	All the LOs are assessed through activities					
3.d	Standard of the questions in the assignments (questions are challenging/ it improves the skills) (evidence : marked student work)					
3.f	Standard of mini project / design project (evidence: marked mini project reports etc)					
3.i	Assessment through LMS - (such as quizzes)					
3.j	Contribution to the overall mark					
	Overall judgement (Based on the assessments of the respective course in OUSL program)					
4	Lab Based activities					
4.a	Learning opportunities are sufficiently provided					
4.b	Standard of lab practical (depth of coverage/ equipment used/number of students per groups)					
4.c	Method of assessment (evidence: marked lab reports)					
4.d	Contribution to the overall mark					
	Overall judgement					
6.	Final examination					
6.a	LO are sufficiently covered					
6.b	Standard of questions (depth/duration) (Evidence: question papers)					
6.c.	Standard of marking (evidence: marked answer scripts)					
6.d	Contribution to the overall mark					
	Overall judgement					

Table 2 : (Syllabus and course details are NOT in outcome based format)

Give your judgment on following sections

Item	Criteria	Good (3 marks)	Average (2 marks)	Unsatisfactory (1 mark)	NO evidence (0 mark)	Comment
1	Coverage of the syllabus					
1.a	Main topics (similar to units)					
1.b	Depth of the coverage (evidence : course plan/ lecture schedule)					
1.c	Subtopics (similar to sessions)					
1.d	Dept of coverage (evidence : lecture schedule / lecture notes/ presentations etc..)					
	Overall judgment					
2.	Teaching					
2.a	Direct teaching hours are sufficient (evidence: Lecture schedule / (similar to session breakdown)					
2.b	Tutorials /					
2.c	LMS activities (evidence: URL of LMS/ copy of LMS activities -screen shots)					
	Overall judgement					
3.	Continuous Assessment					
3.a	Coverage of topics /subtopic of the content though take-home assignment (Evidence: homebased assignment)					
3.b	Standard of the questions (Questions are challenging/ it improve the skills) Evidence : marked assignments					
3.c	Topics of Mini project / Design project / Case study (Evidence: Min project description)					
3.d	Standard of mini project / design project (Evidence: marked mini projects etc)					
3.e	Topics covered in Test (midterm test) – under controlled conditions					
3.f	Standard of the questions					
3.g	Assessment though LMS - (such as quizzes)					

3.f	Contribution to the overall mark					
	Overall judgment (Based on the assessments of the respective course in OUSL program)					
4 Lab Based activities						
4.a	Topics covered in labs					
4.b	Standard of lab practical (depth of coverage/ equipment used/number of students per groups)					
4.c	Method of assessment (evidence: marked lab reports)					
4.d	Contribution to the overall mark					
	Overall judgment					
6. Final examination						
6.a	Coverage of the syllabus					
6.b	Standard of questions (depth/duration) (Evidence: question papers)					
6.c	Standard of marking (evidence: marked answer scripts)					
6.d	Contribution to the overall mark					
	Overall judgment					

Summary table

	Criteria	Overall mark* (%)	Comment
	Coverage of the syllabus		
	Teaching		
	Continuous Assessment		
	Lab Based activities		
	Final examination		

Overall mark is calculated as

$$\text{Overall mark (\%)} = \frac{\text{Sum of marks under the criteria}}{\text{Number of sub sections} \times 3} \times 100$$

Overall judgment of evaluator:

exemption granted (YES/NO)
State whether general or person to holder (GENERAL/ PERSON TO HOLDER)
Provision for reapplying with more evidence (YES/NO)

Comment (if any):

Name of the evaluator (Course team chair/ academic coordinator)
Signature of the evaluator

Approved by
Head / Department of

Recommendation of the exemption evaluation committee

Table 3 Summary

Course title and code	Relevant course/s of OUSL	Exemption granted / not granted

Chairperson of exemption evaluation committee
Name
Signature
Date

Name and address of the applicant <i>(With the given reference No.)</i>	Expected study program and the specialization at OUSL as per the application	Exemptions requested for individual courses (Give the course codes and titles)	Exemptions granted for individual courses (Give the course codes and titles)	Considered qualification/s for the granted exemptions (Give the qualification, Name and the address of the institute, year of the award)	If the applicant does not have the qualification to enter to the mentioned program, can the requested exemption be considered as the entry qualification

Representative/FQEC

HOD