Student Assessment at Universitas Terbuka Indonesia

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Abstract

This paper addresses experiencesof student assessmentand examination at Universitas Terbuka (UT), the open universityin Indonesia. UT applies both formative and summative assessment.Formative assessment is provided in the form of tests included in written materials of every learning unit of the course materials or modules. Summative evaluation is conducted at two levels, at course level and program level. Assessment at course level is determined on the basis of combined achievements in semester examination, tutorial assignments, teaching practice performance and other practical works outcomes. Assessment at program level includes completion of required courses, including a written comprehensive assignment at undergraduate level, and thesis and oral defence at graduate level. Each assessment contributesto the final grade of the course.

To measure the student's mastery of the course, UT implemented examination system that conducted at regional offices twice a year. Examination items are selected using a computerised item banking systemon the basis of test blueprints, and the result of generate the items are examination manuscripts. The manuscripts are then printedand duplicated intothe examination papers using digital printing system. This exam papers distributes to regional offices that conducting semester examination.Students' answer sheets are packaged by staffs in the regional offices and sent back to the Examination Centre,for further processing , namely the process of assessing student answer sheets using a computer system and grading process.   UT implemented online examination system as well in order to provide a solution to the students who face problems such as have conflicting course schedules or inability to attend the paper-based examination.

Keyword: item banking system,digitalprinting system, online examination, examination centre.

Introduction

Universitas Terbuka (UT) is a state university and the only open and distance education in Indonesia that responsible to provide higher education to Indonesian.UT offers more than 1170 courses delivered through 34 study program in four faculties: Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP), Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, and Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Studies (FKIP) and one Graduate Program. In 2014., UT has 333.501registered students, comprising 85.828 for non-primary teacher programs, 246.078 for primary teacher programs, and 1.595 for graduate programs. To support operational activities, UT has 39 Regional Offices (ROs) that responsible ranging from registration services, distribution of learning materials, learning support, examination, to certification services.

Student assessment at UT are formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment is provided in the form of tests included in written materials of every learning unit of the course materials or modules. Summative evaluation is conducted at two levels, at course level and program level. At course level, assessment is determined on the basis of combined achievements in semester examination, tutorial assignments, and teaching practice and other practical works performance. Assessment at program level includes completion of required courses, including a written comprehensive assignment at undergraduate level, and thesis and oral defence at graduate level. Each assessment typecontributes to the final grade of the course.

In general, the UT examination system begins with development of test items, preparation of examination manuscripts, reproduction of examination papers, administration of examination, and processing of examination results. Development of test items is the responsibility of the Faculty in Head Office (HO), while preparation of examination manuscripts, reproduction of examination papers, and processing of examination results are done and coordinated by the Examination Centre at HO. The administration of examination is the responsibility of the Regional Offices (ROs).

Type of Assessment

Semester Examination. Semester examination is conducted to assess the student learning achievement along one semester, generally in the form of either the multiple choice or essay type, but for some courses, semester examination are assessed using oral test. The three types of tests are developed, reviewed, and validated by content experts either from UT or other universities. The process of item development in UT is guided by a standardized procedure. Both multiple choice and essay type items which meet the quality are then stored in a computerized item bank system and ready for retrieval.

There are two types of semester examination, paper-based examination and online examination.Online examination is offered to accomodate students who for some reasons are unable to take the semester examination in the paper-based examination at the scheduled times, or have conflicting examination schedules, or need to take the early examination result for the student who repeat the exam. The online examination is an alternative means of examination, is not meant to replace or substitute the paper-based examination.

The contribution of semester examination minimum 50% to the final grade of the course. This contribution will 100% if there are no tutorial's score. To pass the semester exam, student has to get score minimum 30 (scale 0-100).

Tutorial Assignments. Tutorial assignment is provided to assess student learning progress.The tutorial is not compulsory, but rather it is complimentary as a student learning support.Aspects assessed in the tutorial is performing tasks or assignments and participation in the process of tutorials.

Tutorial assignments are developed by tutors based on guidelines made by the course managers at UT HO. Assignments are given to the students at the time of tutorials and after that these assignment are evaluated and scored by the tutors which are later combined with the semester examination score for the course.

There are two types of tutorial, face to face (f2f) tutorial and online tutorial. The contribution of f2f tutorial assignments and participation are 50% to the final grade of the course, while online tutorial are 30%. The score of tutorial assignments and participation are contributes if the minimum passing grades for semester examination are achieved.

Teaching Practice and Practical Work. Teaching Practice and Practical Workis done to assess student's ability to applyconcepts, principles, and procedures in a factual situation or in a simulation.In addition to the teaching practiceorpractical works, students are alsorequired tomakea reportwhichwill be gradedbythe supervisors or instructors. So, the aspects assessed in the teaching practice or practical work is performing or demonstrating teaching practices or practical works, and reports.

The contribution of teaching practices or practical works and reports are 50% to the final grade of the course. The score of these assignments are contributes if the minimum passing grades for semester examination are achieved.

Written Comprehensive Assignment. Written Comprehensive Assignment is done to assess student's competency after the student completion all the courses in degree program. Written Comprehensive Assignmentis a program final assignment. These assignments are usually in form of case study that require higher cognitive level. TheWritten Comprehensive Assignment developed by a team of content experts from UT or other universities based on a standardized procedure.

The contribution of Written Comprehensive Assignmentare minimum 50% to the final grade of the course. The score of these assignments are contributes if the minimum passing grades for semester examination are achieved.

Oral Defence Examination. Oral Defence Examination is conducted to assess graduate student's learning performance after they completion all the graduate courses. Before the examination, graduate students required to conduct a research and write a thesis. This process is guided by two advisers from UT and other university. The graduate students are allowed to take the exam if they have complete their thesis. The minimum passing grade of this exam is B.

To measure the student's mastery of the course, UT implemented examination system that conducted at regional offices twice a year. In general, the UT examination system begins with preparation of examination, reproduction of examination papers, administration of examination, and processing of examination results. The management of examination is responsibility of HO and RO

Preparation of Examination

Preparation of examination begins with development of test item that coordinated by the faculties and graduate program. Test items are written based on test blueprints and then

reviewed by content experts.After the review process, test items for both multiple choice and essay items are submitted by the Faculties and graduate program to the Examination Centre for entry and storage into the computerized item banking system. Through the item bank system, test items can be retrieved according to testspecifications and constructed into test sets. Now, the number of test items stored in Item Banking system are over 430.000 test items for more than 900 courses. Each semester is produced approximately 1.860 test sets that we call examination manuscripts. The quality of the examination manuscript is ensured through a careful review and validation process by the course managers for each of the manuscript. For online examination, preparation includes creating a pool of test item which will be retrieved upon activation of the online examination process.

The next step of preparation of examination is printing and reproduction of examination manuscripts into examination papers. All examination papers are reproduced by the Examination Centre at HO using the digital printing technology. This technology has the capability to produce examination papers and answer sheets with individual student identity include student personal data, identity of the course, examination schedule, characteristics ofthe examination, use ofmicro-textand security systemin the form ofa barcodeonevery examination paper, and seat number for individual students taking the examination.In addition, examination papers and answer sheets havealso been systematically wrapped and packed per examination room, location, and site, then they are sent to ROs through UT couriers and regular secured mail services. Each semester is produced approximately 1.630.000 examination papers.

ROs also have to make preparation because the administration of examination is conducted at ROs. The preparation includes identification of examination sites and locations, recruitment of proctors and supervisors for the examination committee, and the scheduling of meetings and briefing for the committee on matters related to the rules and regulations of examination. For the online examination, preparation includes the scheduling of examination dates, the setting up of necessary facilities such as rooms, computers, technicians, and proctors.

Administration of Examination

Examination administration is one of responsibility of the ROs. As explainedpreviously, there are two types of semester examination, paper-based examination and online examination. Paper-based examinations are conducted simultaneously throughout Indonesia at the end of each semester. Students have to sit for the semester examination in certain designated locations and rooms. Online examination is conducted only in ROs office at the end of each semester.

During the examination period of 2014.2, there were 317.247 students taking the paper-based examination at 1.123 examination locations. The UT examination also involved almost 13.000 proctors. And for the online examination system, there were 575 students taking the online examination at 37 ROs with more than 600 courses being offered.

Processing of Examination Results

After the examination administration,the answer sheets (results for the multiple choice test) are then sent back by ROs to the Examination Centre; while the answer booklets (results for the essay tests) are sent by ROs within a region to designated ROs, referred to as *UPBJJ Sentra*, responsible for the scoring process.
The processing of examination results begins with verification of the validity of the examination results to assure that the accuracy of information about the examination results.

Valid answer sheets are further processed, while invalid ones are put away to be filed as unprocessed results that need to be explained by ROs.

Further processing of examination results are different for multiple choice tests and essay tests. Multiple choice test results are processed through a computerized system at Examination Centre at HO. Examination answer sheets are scanned, scored and graded to produce final grades for students for each courses. Essay examination results are marked and scored by markers in designated ROs, and the results will be delivered to the Examination Centre for grading process.Grades for each course assessed by calculating composite scores which are combinations of scores from semester examinations and other assignments. Students will pass a course if they attain grades at or above the passing grade which is predetermined by faculties. The grading process is done through a computerized system at the Examination Centre. In the examination period of 2014.2, the number of scores that was processed by Examination Centre were 1.627.382. Course grades can be announced via various methods including through UT website, and ROs within 7 weeks after the examination date.

Conclusion

Student assessment is one of important aspect in managing distance education. The assessment of student learning at UT is based on semester examination, tutorial assignments, teaching practice and practical works performance, written comprehensive assignment, and oral defenceexamination. These components reflect students' overall learning achievement and contribute to the semester final grades of the students.Especially in managing examination, UT realize that there are some challenges in terms of number and variety of courses, number and characteristics of students, geography of students location, examination sites and location, and human resources involved. For those, a number of procedures have been developed and implemented, and regularly reviewed to ensure the quality of examination activities.

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