

Principles and practice of *high stakes assessment*



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Department of Examinations Sri Lanka

Title

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF HIGH STAKES ASSESSMENT

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Department of Examinations, Sri Lanka

Introduction

CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT (CA) is a Department of the UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE which is designing and delivering assessments to over eight million learners with over two thousands and two hundred employees in hundred and seventy countries. CA is a not - for - profit organization. It is committed to ensuring that all its assessments are fair, have sound ethical underpinning and operate according to the highest technical standards.

CA has a NETWORK to provide professional development programmes and expert training for assessment professionals and organizations in the U.K and internationally. It conducts exams through three main bodies which are CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS(CIE), OXFORD CAMBRIDGE and RSA EXAMINATIONS (OCR) and CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH (CE).

Purpose of the programme

The Department of Examinations, Sri Lanka (DOE) is a national organization of conducting examinations for schools, Agencies and foreign institutions. As a stakeholder of development of this country, the department of Examinations plays major role on selecting the essence of human resource for every sector. In terms of contemporary changes of the world, it is mandatory to restyle and reread the process of DOE as soon as possible. On the other hand, new approaches, new practices are needed on assessing the success of recent curriculum changes. Based on the mission of the DOE, testing and evaluating level of students, analyzing performance of them and guiding for the further development of education are the key activities which taken place all over the year to accomplish the vision. Hence, the employees of DOE should be streamlined into the system by empowering the knowledge, skills and practices. Especially, United Kingdom is the most appropriate country for fulfill this purpose due to the Education system and Examination process that we adopted from there.

Title of the Programme

"Principles and Practice of high stakes assessment"

Content of the Programme

The programme was designed on two main ground which are Assessment design and Assessment Administration.

- * Purposes and principles of Assessment
- * Assessment and the Curriculum
- * Test Development
- * Standard settings
- * Principles of Marking Scheme Design
- * Using stats for test Construction



Assessment design

- * Exam Administration and security
 - * Malpractice and compliance
 - * Technical and vocational Education
- 
- Assessment Administration.

1. Test Development

The short term training programme was covered the following areas under the above topic.

- * Question paper production
 - Item banking
 - Paper setting

- * Question writing
 - Developing tests and items
 - The principles of question writing
 - Question types and formats
 - Writing mark scheme

- * Setting and maintaining standards in educational assessment

- * Quality assurance through expert judgement
 - Expert judgement and statistical evidence
 - Quality assurance and expert judgement
 - The role of statistical monitoring
 - The use of national statistics

- * Introduction to using stats for test construction
 - Classical theories
 - Rasch model

- * Higher order thinking skills into qualification design
- * Assessment for formative purposes
 - Formative uses of assessments

Even though, the educational system of Sri Lanka is very similar to educational system of United Kingdom, it has certain remarkable unique features.

- * **Cambridge English** is one of the exam boards under the **Cambridge Assessment** which using item banking for setting question papers to conduct examinations. Moreover, the item banking approach is the best model for language tests as well as for setting objective type questions.
- * Question paper setters send question papers through a special network in the process of paper setting.
- * Teachers are the setters or writers of question papers of O/L (GCSE) and A/L Examinations and the paper setting process typically takes two years of time period.
- * Question papers will be standardized before the exam.
- * Two levels in GCSE (Foundation tier and Higher tier).
- * The Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) of A/L consist of four distracters only.
- * GCSE and A/L exams are held twice a year.
- * In addition to GCSE and A/L exams, AS levels exam is conducted for 1st year A/L students.
- * The online marking system is followed for answer scripts marking. For this purpose, a special software is used and the paper marking takes place at residence of markers.
- * Rasch is one of the latest models which is used to measure the difficulty & facility of an item as well as the ability of the candidate.

Suggestions relevant to our Department

- * Maintaining Item banking model is a best practice for the question paper setting with objective type questions.
- * Time allocation for the paper setting process should be increased at least up to six months.
- * An Expert Judgement board is needed to standardize the question papers.
- * Number of distracters of MCQs for A/L question papers would be reduced from five to four.
- * Moreover, measuring facility index, difficulty index of a question paper and ability of candidates also would be measured by using latest software models such as Rasch.
- * Pass mark would be decided by using matrix method [a relationship between outcomes for a qualification (e.g. A/L) and candidates' prior attainment (e.g.A/L)] to maintain standard grading.

2. Setting and maintaining standards in educational assessment

Standard setting is the proper following of a prescribed, rational system of rules or procedures resulting in the assignment of a number to differentiate between two or more states or degrees of performance.

Standards of assessment are maintaining based on two special methods which are

- Angoff method
- Bookmark method.

Setting cut scores

- Criterion referencing
- Norm referencing
- Cohort referencing

The aim maintaining standards

- * To maintain the relationship between prior attainment and outcomes by using comparable outcomes approach. (The examinations regulator in England (OFQUAL) has adopted a statistically driven approach to maintaining standards over time.)

Suggestions relevant to our Department

- * It is essential to start a setting standards in assessment process.
- * Make assurance the quality of assessment through the expert judgement before the examinations.

3. Exam Administration & Security

Essential Documents Regarding Exams

Cambridge hand book (relevant to the specific year), exam time table, guide to making entries booklet are important documents of Cambridge assessment.

Cycle of Examination

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|---|
| * Preparations | ----- | Getting ready the series a head. |
| * entries | ----- | entering candidates for Cambridge Examinations. |
| * Teacher Assessment | ----- | Internal assessment, submitting samples and marks. |
| * Before the examinations | ----- | preparing for every day, rooms, invigilators, storing confidential materials. |
| * Exam Day | ----- | what to do before, during immediately after each exam. |
| * Result & Certificate | ----- | results day, enquiries, access to scripts and appeals. |

The above cycle of examination basically runs electronically. In the meantime, the question paper producing activities are going on concurrently.

Conducting Examinations

CA has formed six time zones in the world to conduct exams internationally. According to the time zone pattern in the world they conduct the examination in 170 countries with maintaining the security and confidentiality of examinations.

During examination series team of over 90 consultant inspectors make unannounced visits and they look at time tabling of exams, security of materials and exam conduct. Inspectors offer guidance and support and provide schools with written report. Compliance unit follow up with written feedback. The quality of exam ensures through the above mentioned activities.

Additionally, they checking websites to see if candidates are attempting to share or solicit others to share confidential exam information and malpractice cases opened where evidence found.

Post Exam Activities

Soon after the examinations all answer scripts are collected and sent for marking. Team leader of subjects scaling the answers and deciding Grades by experts is another major activity in post examinations. Moreover, they issue the results at the end of the online marking process. finally, they issue the certificate for relevant candidates.

New Ideas to adapt to the Department of Examinations

- * Usage of high level technology is major factor of all exam administration and security activities.
 - Exam entries
 - Entry confirmation
 - Entry amendments
 - Sending Admission Cards
 - Issuing Results
 - Receiving Compliance
- * using bar code label in question papers, question papers packing and all dispatch activities.
- * Using Bar code label for answer scripts.
- * Storage confidential documents in a locked metal container (metal Safe) in coordinating centers.
- * Internet monitoring for exams

8. Marking scheme design

- * Online marking system should be introduced for answer scripts marking. Therefore, special automated technical system should be established for scanning answer scripts.

9. Technical and Vocational Education

Purpose of Technical & Vocational Education

To acquisition of knowledge and skills for the world of work specially prepare the adults to the labour market which needs for Economy.

Constitutes:

- Provides more than just development of narrow occupational skill.
- reinforces foundational skill.
- supports development of transferable skills.
- develops sector / industry specific knowledge and skill required by the labour market.

Ensuring the Technical and vocational education

- Established three main angles which are Curriculum - Assessment - Pedagogy
 - Developed the partnership with employers, other industries -specific experts and educational experts.
 - Provide opportunities for students to acquire and develop foundation, transferable and technical skills.
 - Incorporate a significant core of knowledge and theoretical content with broad- ranging applicability.
- * **Characteristics of Vocational Qualifications for 14 - 16-Year-old in the UK.**
 - at least 120 Guided learning hours
 - Publicly recognized by employers, Professional or trade bodies, or National Licensed Professional registration schemes.
 - 40% of the content of the qualification must be externally assessed.
 - * **Characteristics of Vocational qualifications for 16 - 19 -Year-old in the UK.**
 - At least 150 Guided learning hours
 - Publicly recognized by employers
 - 25% of the Content of the qualification must be externally accessed.
 - require all students to undertake meaningful activity involving employers during their

* **Assessment**

- Internal assessment (SBA)
- External assessment

* **Increasing reliability of T&V internal assessment Marking**

- Marking Criteria
- Marking Guidance
- Internal Standardizations

while ensuring the inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning they are looking forward to overcome following target by 2030

- ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
- ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, Vocational & tertiary education, including university.
- Substantially increase the number of youth & who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

The three kind of skills:

- Foundation Skills
- Transferable
- Technical & Skills

They are doing a careful combination of external & internal assessment to allow valid and reliable assessment of learning outcomes synoptic assessment.

To Make Contribution employers, they do project based learning, Meaningful activities. Master classes and expert witness.

There are two different characteristics of vocational qualifications for two different age group. one is for 14 - 16 years & other is for 16 - 19 Year olds.

* **Relevance to education system**

- Develop vocational education at schools incorporate with external technical organizations.
- Implement the practical sessions and continues assessments instead of final practical examinations at GCE(O/L) and (GCE A/L).
- Continue the vocational education with training concurrently at the university level.
- Establish the valid training courses for teachers.

10. Conclusion

The programme for officers designed under the two major concepts which enclosed the necessary tasks of DOE. Though, it was only two weeks programme which given a deep enthusiastic experience and fashioned a smart passion to implement the modern approaches. However, the officers need to get more deep knowledge and skills on the above mentioned areas for comprehensive success of DOE.

Expectation from Ministry of Education

- * To Develop the Computer Literacy (regarding operation system of exam administration & security) of all executive officers and all management assistants.
- * To get further training for the comprehensive knowledge and skills on online exam administration & security (at least 02 or 03 months).
- * To establish automated technological system (indispensable)