

ASSESSMENT IN FOCUS

Quarterly Newsletter of the Testing Center (TC)

St. Mary's University College

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Assessment in Focus is dedicated to dissemination of information to the SMUC community, public and private organizations and institutions, and the public at large about events and developments at the Testing Center, as the Center endeavors to assist in the development and maintenance of up-to - standard and quality education at SMUC.

EDITOR'S NOTE

This is the maiden issue of "Assessment in Focus" which is a quarterly newsletter of the Testing Center of St. Mary's University College (SMUC). The Testing Center has been established to realize into fruition the firm belief that quality based- tests and exams need to be administered , in order to produce able and efficient educated and trained manpower in line with the national educational and training policy. Indeed, the FDRE Higher Education Proclamation No. 650/2009 lays particular emphasis on the importance of assessment in Higher Education. Part Three, under Article 41, Sub-Article 5 of the Proclamation states that in every Higher Education Institution (be it a university, university College, etc.).

" There shall be institutionally recognized and well defined student assessment and examination methods and systems at academic unit levels to which any academic staff shall adhere, and have been made known to students."

This, of course, is mainly aimed at achieving required standards and excellence. The Center is engaged also in other assessment and evaluation related activities and services it renders to the public at large. Those are training in measurement and evaluation, preparing and administering employment tests for candidates on commission by employers, and administering TOEFL iBT (USA).

The Testing Center has launched this newsletter, so as to communicate to the UC community and the public at large about events and activities of the Center. In addition, the newsletter aims to create awareness among individuals, and both public and private organizations and institutions of the Center's services, so that they could make use of them. We believe that the newsletter may also serve as a forum for discussion on topical issues of assessment and evaluation. Contributions to the newsletter in the form of short articles, commentaries, etc., particularly related to measurement and evaluation, are most welcome.

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IT ALL STARTED ON OCTOBER 22, 2008

Under the umbrella of the College of Open and Distance Education Division (CODL), then known as Distance Education Division, of St. Mary's University College, on October 22, 2008 (Tikimt 12, 2001 E.C.) a new office was founded, by the directive and close follow up of the President's Office, in order to make need and market studies, and recommend the opening of new academic departments and programs. The office was quartered at the Midir Babur Campus. The foundation of that office, called New Programs Coordination Office, as a matter of fact, was the genesis of the present Testing Center of SMUC.

Within months of the office's foundation, with a total staff of 11 members, including secretaries, it was agreed that the office should also prepare assessment tools (assignments, projects and exams), so as to complement the work of the Editorial, Tutorial and Assessment Unit of CODL (still known as the Distance Education Division). Although the assessment tools preparation by the office continued, the tools prepared were only first put into use for Term III of 2008/09 (2001 E.C.).

Simultaneously, need and market study reports and recommendations for opening new departments at CODL and new post-graduate

programs at the Regular Division for 2009/10 (2002 E.C.) were submitted to the President of the UC (and only the first to the then Dean of the Distance Education Division). The second report to the President included recommendations to open a post-graduate program at second degree (MA/MSc/LLM) level. The recommendations were discussed and some of the departments recommended have seen the light of day at CODL and in due time SMUC has also found itself on the threshold of launching its own post-graduate programs.

Starting from the end of 2009 (beginning of 2002 E.C.), the appellation of New Programs Coordination Office was dropped, and the office was reorganized to concentrate on the preparation of assessment tools, and was renamed the Testing Center. In addition to the preparation of term assessment tools for CODL, it was given specifically, the task of working to develop digitized test item bank. The bank is intended to serve both CODL as well as the Regular Program of the UC. Its purpose is to help ensure that up-to-standard quality education is provided to students/learners and trainees by the UC, by shifting from the norm-referenced assessment paradigm to a criterion-referenced one. In fact, this is one of the *raisons d' être* of the Testing Center, and helping ensure that SMUC graduates are of high quality is one of the Testing Center's primary objectives.

The Testing Center is engaged in other types of assessment activities, too. Those are several. It is engaged in training SMUC academic staff – its own staff and instructors of the Regular Program – in test item and test blueprint preparation and item analysis. It also tries to buttress the efforts of the teaching staff of the UC in the deployment of TVET assessment schemes, so as to help ensure that they are in line with the purposes, aims and modalities of the nation-wide TVET Program. Indeed, the Testing Center helps train TVET instructors in assessment methods, and assists them to execute both the training they provide and their assessment work according to the stipulations of the national TVET Program.



Testing Center, SMUC

The Testing Center also engages in research work in the area of measurement and evaluation. To date, it has produced a study on CODL preparation of assessment instruments and recommended improvements, which have started to be put into work. Thus, marked improvements have been noted in the preparation of assessment tools, both in terms of quality and speed of delivery, for CODL.

Under the Testing Center is also managed the administration of the internet-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOFEL) of the Educational Testing Service, New Jersey, USA. This is an international test, which is accepted as a test of English required for admissions, by over 6,000 colleges and universities in more than 130 countries all over the world, including the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States of America and Canada. TOEFL iBT administered by the Center is the only one of its kind in Ethiopia for its being internet based. Results of tests taken are released online, with privacy intact, a fortnight after a test is taken.

In addition, services such as tests for employment and placement are also provided to private and government organizations and ministries by the SMUC Testing Center. Results of tests outsourced to the Center are delivered to those who have made the commissions, in a matter of no more than three days after the administration of any particular test depending upon the number of candidates who have taken the test.



The TOEFL iBT Center

Likewise, short-term trainings on educational measurement and evaluation are also given by the Testing Center, SMUC, to private and public organizations, as well as educational institutions, which desire such trainings for their staff. Such service is prompt and effective.

So far, the SMUC Testing Center has been able to shoulder its responsibilities guided by the motto, “ Good is not enough, when better is expected !”. It aims high in all its endeavors in the future.



COC – STYLE TESTING

As part of its on-going program to assist in making TVET training and testing at SMUC align with the national TVET Program, the Testing Center of SMUC has given a training on TVET Certificate of Competence (CoC) – Style Testing to the UC’s Regular Program staff and professionals from the world of business and industry on August 31, 2010. Consequently, those trained individuals were deployed to give CoC-Style Tests to the UC TVET graduates of 2010/11, from September 17 to 18, 2010. The objectives of the Tests were to help graduates of the Regular Program identify their areas of weakness and fill gaps to make themselves better prepared for the world of work, and also to assist the efforts of the UC to improve its TVET training.



*Ato Wondwosen Tamrat (Asst. Professor),
Founder and President of the UC, Opening an
Academic Staff Training on CoC –Style Testing
for Regular Program*



Staff Training on CoC-Style Testing



Graduates Taking CoC-Style Test



Graduates Taking CoC-Style Test

A refreshment program based on the study of identified weaknesses was conducted by TVET instructors of the Regular Program of the UC for those who took the CoC-Style Tests. Those graduates, who participated in the whole exercise of CoC-Style Tests and the refreshment program, have expressed the usefulness of what they had undergone. Such exercises will also continue in the future, and above all will be geared towards ensuring that all TVET testing contributes to making the TVET training effective.



TRAININGS AT THE TESTING CENTER

In 2010/11 academic year, the Testing Center carried out the following major short-term trainings presented underneath (I – III), in order to enhance the assessment tools preparation capacity of the academic staff of the UC, and assist in raising the quality of assessment tools and thereby help to improve the teaching-learning process.

I. Training on Test Blueprint Preparation for Assessors of the Testing Center

As part of its ongoing program of trainings, three separate trainings, were conducted for the academic staff of the Testing Center with focus on test blueprint preparation. The trainings were

held in November 2009 and, January and March 2010. It was Dr. Wubshet Shiferaw and Ato Alemayehu Berhanu, Testing Center's experts on educational measurement and evaluation, who conducted the trainings. Participants were a total of 43, and composed of fulltime and part-time staff. Those who underwent the trainings expressed the great value of the exercise in sharpening their abilities of test planning. The Testing Center believes that the improvements of the staff in test planning has helped to upgrade the quality of exams set by the staff (assessors) of the Testing Center.



Dr. Wubshet Shiferaw Conducting Training for Testing Center Staff



Testing Center Staff on Training

II. Test Item and Test Blueprint Preparation Trainings for Academic Staff of the Regular Program

Four rounds of short-term trainings on test item and test blueprint preparation were given to a

total of 51 Regular Program academic staff of the Faculties of Business, Computer Science and Law by the Testing Center, in November and December 2009, and April 2010. Dr. Wubishet Shiferaw, Ato Alemayehu Berhanu and Ato Shenkute Mamo of the Testing Center were the trainers. Both the participants and the Testing Center agree that the trainings were useful in introducing proper test items and test blueprint preparation to the staff who had not had such a training before. The trainings proved to have had positive impact on the preparation of test blueprints subsequently carried out after the trainings.

Center’s assessors. The training was given to 23 assessors. It was conducted, so as to enable assessors perform proper item analysis on term-end exams conducted by the College of Open and Distance Learning of SMUC. The participants considered the training of great practical value. For the Testing Center, item analysis of exams is a stepping-stone to the creation of its digitized test item bank, planned to be effected in the near future.



Regular Program Academic Staff on Training



Regular Program Academic Staff on Training



Training on Item Analysis, Testing Center staff



Training on Item Analysis, Testing Center staff

QUOTES CORNER

Some Popular Sayings

Chance favours a prepared mind.

A man is himself plus the book he reads.

We all have ability; the difference is how we use it.

The day we stop learning is the day we die.

III. Training on Test Item Analysis for Testing Center Staff

In June 2010, experts of the Testing Center conducted training on test item analysis for the

ADMINISTRATION OF TOEFL

SMUC has partnered with the Educational Testing Service, New Jersey, USA, in order to administer the latter's Test of English as a Foreign Language. The administration of the Test of English as a Foreign Language, the Internet-Based Test, (TOEFL iBT) is carried out by the TOEFL Administration Center, under the Testing Center, SMUC.

Between June 2010, the beginning of TOEFL administration at SMUC, and September 2010, the end of SMUC annual plan period for the academic year 2009/10 (2003 E.C.), a total of five test sessions were conducted for 43 test takers. The test takers expressed their satisfaction with the impeccable service they were provided with by the TOEFL Administration Center.



BEST THOUGHTS FOR

EVERYBODY

- Best Teacher = Experience
- Best Student = Attempt
- Best Book = Life
- Best Lesson = Patience
- Best Friend = Praise
- Best Sport = Duty
- Best Food = Thought
- Best Dress = Smile
- Best Shelter = Truth
- Best Medicine = Laugh
- Best Manner = Courtesy
- Best Hobby = Service
- Best Religion = Humanity
- Best Insurance = Good Deed

Editorial Committee

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**SERVICES OF THE TESTING CENTER
AVAILABLE FOR OUTSIDE
CUSTOMERS
(ORGANIZATIONS,
INSTITUTIONS,
GOVERNMENT ORGANS,
INDIVIDUALS, ETC.)**

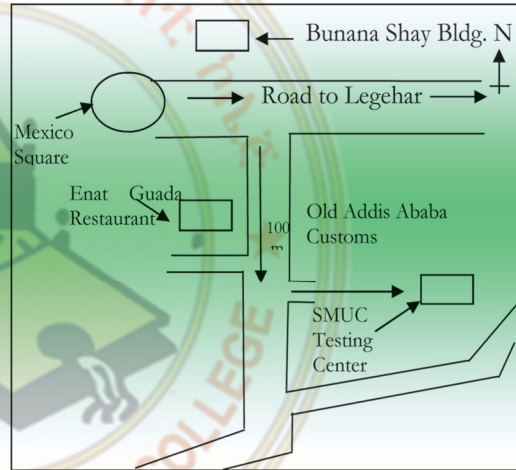
Services that are available to outside customers include:-

- ❖ Screening tests for:
 - Employment
 - Placement
 - Etc.
- ❖ TOEFL Internet-Based Test (iBT)
- ❖ Training on measurement and evaluation.

The Testing Center is located opposite Bunana Shay Building near Mexico Square. See the sketch map provided for details.

OUR ADDRESS

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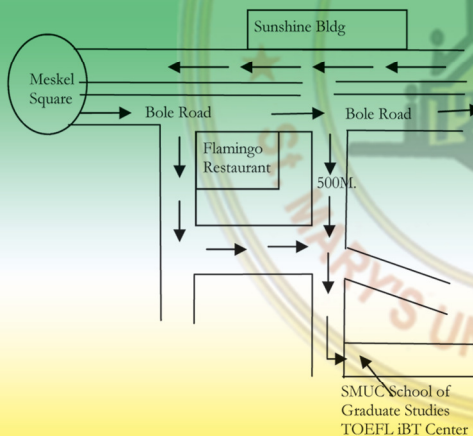
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**TAKE
TOEFL iBT**

**at St. Mary's University College
TOEFL iBT CENTER
School of Graduate Studies Campus
(BOLE CAMPUS)**

Register online at website: www.ets.org/toefl



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