

Examination regulations for the benefit of interuniversity postgraduate programme involving enrolment at more than one university

Explanatory note

The objective of these examination regulations is to guarantee the application of the equality principle when assessing study results in the specific context given.

1. General stipulations

Article 1

These regulations set down the rules for the proceeding of, and the deliberations on examinations which are taken as part of interuniversity postgraduate programmes involving enrolment at more than one university.

These regulations are applicable at HUB-KU Brussel, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Hasselt University, University of Antwerp, Ghent University and Vrije Universiteit Brussel. They are valid for each interuniversity postgraduate programme where the validity of these interuniversity examination regulations is provided for in the relevant interuniversity agreement.

For each of the interuniversity postgraduate programme involved the present examination regulations shall replace any other examination regulations which the participating university may have in place.

Article 2

Amendments of, and additions to these examination regulations must be approved by the respective university boards of governors by 1 July prior to the academic year in question.

2. Organisation of exams

Article 3

By 1 July prior to the academic year in question all participating institutions shall disclose the following information:

- objectives and content of course units;
- syllabus content and examination method(s);
- number of exam opportunities per academic year for each course unit;
- calculation of the exam score and the assessment criteria;
- general planning of exams;

Article 4

Prior to the start of the academic year and before exams are held at the very latest the names of the chairman and secretary of the relevant examination board, the ombudsperson and the member of staff responsible for the administrative aspects of the exam procedure shall be announced, along with their contact details.

At each participating university the exam schedules shall be communicated to students a minimum of three weeks before the start of the relevant exam period. Every effort shall be made to achieve a reasonable spreading of exams for each student.

3. Nature and composition of examination board – examiners

Article 5

The interuniversity steering committee or education committee shall establish one examination board for each programme in its entirety or halfway the programme.

The examination board for each programme in its entirety is representatively composed of at least six voting members, in such a way that each of the involved institutions is represented by at least one voting member. In order to form a valid assessment of a student, at least half of the members of the examination board have to take part in the deliberation.

The examination board shall appoint a chairman and a secretary from its members.

Participation in the working of the examination board by means of an advisory vote is permitted to:

- the Ombudsperson;
- the Administrative Secretary of the faculty or (a) member(s) of the administrative staff who prepare(s) the deliberation appointed by the Dean, and the study counsellor.

Article 6

In the event of a blood relationship or affinity to the fourth degree between a student and an examiner, or in the event that an examiner is of the opinion that there may be a potential conflict of interest, the examiner shall submit a request to the chairman of the examination board for an alternative examiner to be appointed. If an examiner is unable for reasons of 'force majeure' to hold an exam as planned, the chairman of the examination board shall likewise appoint an alternative examiner.

4. Examination proceedings

Article 7

Examiners and students shall adhere strictly to the examination procedure as determined. Exams may only be rescheduled for weighty reasons.

In such a case the chairman of the examination board or his/her replacement shall consult with the parties involved and reschedule the exam in question. The member of staff responsible for the administrative aspects of the exam procedure shall be informed of this circumstance.

Article 8

If there are weighty reasons to do so a student may obtain permission to sit exams in a different way from the one established. In order to obtain such permission the student in question shall submit a written request to the chairman of the examination board at the moment of enrolment or immediately following the coming into being of such a reason.

Article 9

All exams are public and shall be sat in a lecture room at one of the participating universities, unless there are weighty reasons (to be determined by the chairman of the examination board) to choose a different location.

Every student or examiner may request the presence of an observer at an examination. The role of observer may not be filled by a student who is due to be examined by the examiner involved in the same academic year, nor by a relative up to the fourth degree of kin. Such a request shall be submitted in writing to the chairman of the examination board.

Article 10

For each course unit an exam score is awarded. An exam score has the form of a whole number between 0 and 20. An exam score may also take a non-numerical form, i.e. "pass" or "fail".

Exam scores shall be calculated by adding up the student's results and rounding the final score down for decimals < 0.5 and rounding this up for decimals ≥ 0.5 .

Article 11

If a student fails to report for all examinations or ceases participation he or she shall inform the member of staff responsible for the administrative aspects of the exam procedure without delay.

Article 12

An irregularity is defined as any behaviour by a student in an examination setting which renders partially or wholly impossible a proper assessment of their own knowledge, understanding and/or skills or those of other students (or attempts to do so).

Plagiarism is an irregularity involving the use of one's own or other people's work (ideas, texts, structures, images, plans etc.), in its identical form or slightly adapted, without a careful acknowledgement of sources.

In the event that an examiner suspects a student of having committed an irregularity during an exam he or she shall report this to the chairman of the examination board without delay.

In the event that an examiner suspects a student of plagiarism the chairman of the examination board shall likewise be informed without delay.

If the suspicion is substantiated the examination board for the programme in its entirety shall decide on whether disciplinary action is to be imposed against the student. The student may continue to take exams pending the decision by the examination board.

The student involved has a right to be heard prior to any decision on an irregularity committed being taken. The ombudsperson shall be invited to be present. The student has inspection of the files and is allowed counsel during the interrogation.

The following disciplinary sanctions may be imposed by the examination board:

- awarding zero marks for the exam or paper of the given course unit or part thereof;
- awarding no marks for any exams in the given examination period;
- rejection: in this case the student may not re-enrol until the following academic year at the earliest and loses all marks already obtained in the examination period in dispute;
- exclusion: termination of the student's enrolment for the current academic year with immediate effect and being prohibited from enrolling for the following academic year at all participating institutions.

In determining the gravity of the offence and the punishment imposed the following aspects, among others, are taken into account:

- nature and scale of the irregularity/plagiarism committed;
- the student's experience;
- whether or not the deceit was intentional.

5. Establishing exam results

Article 13

A student shall have passed a course unit if he/she has acquired a minimum result of 10/20 or a "pass" assessment.

In order to calculate the average score for an entire programme the results obtained for each course unit shall be weighted according to the number of credits attached to a course unit. Course units for which a non-numerical assessment has been awarded shall not be taken into account for this calculation.

In calculating the average for the final score the student's results shall be added up and rounded down to the lower percentage for decimals 0.1-0.4 and rounded up for decimals 0.5-0.9.

Article 14

A student shall have passed a programme if he/she has obtained credit certificates or an exemption for all the constituent course units.

Article 15

The certificate for the interuniversity postgraduate programme can only be obtained together with or after the completion of a Master's programme.

6. Deliberations

Article 16

The time and location for the deliberations shall be determined a minimum of three weeks before they are due to take place.

A member unable to attend shall report this circumstance to the chairman without delay.

For a valid decision to be reached over a student a minimum of half of the board members must take part in the deliberations. All members present shall take part in the deliberations regarding each student.

Article 17

On the basis of a list of results the examination board shall jointly check the results of each individual student and validate these.

The examination board does not hold the power to adjust exam results at examiners' meetings, unless there has been a material mistake, a gross irregularity or an apparent injustice.

Unless an examination board member or the ombudsperson requests a vote, the chairman's proposal shall rank as a decision.

Voting is not secret, unless a member of the examination board or the ombudsperson requests for a secret vote to be held.

Each member of the examination board has one vote only. Decisions reached through voting are reached by majority vote. Invalid votes and abstentions are not taken into account.

In the event of a tied vote the examination board decision shall be to the advantage of the student.

Article 18

The members of the examination board and all those present at the meeting are bound to guarantee the confidentiality of the discussions and the votes.

Article 19

In the meeting minutes the proceedings of the examination board during the examiners' meeting shall be recorded. The minutes shall be signed by the chairman and secretary of the examination board.

These minutes shall record the date and place of the deliberations as well as the criteria applied in determining the results and, for each student, the decision regarding their results, in accordance with article 15.

The minutes of the deliberations shall mention, if applicable, that a vote was held in accordance with article 17 regarding the results of certain students.

The minutes shall state the exam results or refer to the exam results as attached to the minutes or contained in a digital file.

If applicable, the minutes of the deliberations shall include mention of the decisions under article 17, paragraph 2 and article 26.

7. Announcement of exam results

Article 20

The interuniversity steering committee or education committee shall determine the procedure governing the announcement of results at all the institutions involved.

Article 21

Copies of written exams shall be stored by examiners for a period of one year following the end of the academic year concerned. Students have a right to inspect their work as part of the examination feedback procedure.

Article 22

The competent administrative section at each participating university shall ensure that, in accordance with the stipulations of article 20, students receive their individual credits and results within a fortnight from the first announcement of results.

8. Obtaining credit certificates

Article 23

Both an exam score of 10 or more points or a "pass" assessment mean that the student is awarded a credit certificate for the course unit concerned which holds unlimited validity for the programme where it was obtained. After a period of 5 academic years, starting from the academic year following the academic year in which it was obtained, a refresher programme may be imposed. Such a decision shall be taken by the interuniversity education committee or steering committee.

9. Dispute settlement

Article 24

Irregularities or conflicts between examiners and students which interfere with proper exam proceedings shall be reported to the examination board by the ombudsperson or the persons involved. If necessary, the examination board shall take preliminary measures to safeguard the proper proceeding of exams. The examination board shall hear the parties which request to be heard and shall then take a final decision.

Article 25

In the event that a material mistake is established following deliberation this circumstance shall be reported formally to the chairman of the examination board, within ten calendar days.

A mistake not resulting in a decision which is disadvantageous to the student shall be rectified by the chairman and secretary of the examination board. The correction shall be communicated to the student involved. The chairman and secretary shall report this in an addendum to be attached to the meeting minutes.

In the event that the decision taken is disadvantageous to the student the chairman shall call a new meeting of the examination board as soon as possible

The new decision shall be communicated in writing to the student involved. In accordance with article 26 it is possible to appeal against the new decision.

Article 26

In the event of a dispute over an exam decision or an exam-related disciplinary measure the student involved may lodge an internal appeal with a body appointed by the interuniversity steering committee, if necessary aided by the ombudsperson, within a period of five calendar days from the announcement of exam results. The appeal shall result in:

- a rejection of the appeal by the chairman of the appeal body on the basis of its inadmissibility;
- a decision by the appeal body which either confirms or revises the original decision, stating full grounds.

Decisions as described in the previous paragraph shall be communicated to the student involved within a period of fifteen calendar days starting from the day following the day on which the appeal was lodged.

10. Study progress monitoring

Article 27

The student is subject to the system of study progress monitoring in place at the institution of his/her registration. An institution's decision to refuse a student's registration is recognized by the partner institutions in the agreement.

11. Ombudsperson, incompatibilities and concluding observations

Article 28

The interuniversity steering committee or education committee shall appoint at least one ombudsperson and one deputy.

A member of the examination board may not be appointed as ombudsperson.

Article 29

The ombudsperson acts as an intermediary between examiners and students.

The ombudsperson shall attend the deliberations. The ombudsperson may be requested to act as an intermediary in a discussion by one or all of the parties involved. The ombudsperson shall report his/her actions in writing to the chairman of the interuniversity steering committee.

Article 30

If the chairman of the examination board or his/her deputy are involved in a dispute as described in article 24, they shall be replaced by the most senior member of the examination board and by a person to be appointed by the rector of one of the participating universities.