Theologische Universiteit

GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN

Assessment and Examination Policy

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Examination Policy

Vision on examinations

Tests and examinations are an important part of college and university education. They must, according to Article 7.10, first paragraph of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), provide information on the individual student's knowledge, skills and insight. In addition, they also provide information about groups of students, for example about all first-year students, therefore providing insight into the education results.

Exams should also contribute to guaranteeing the level of university graduates. The level is an important aspect of the quality of the education. Thus exams are an important indicator for the quality of the education.

For *students,* exams are a means of obtaining insight into their learning process and being able to consciously control that; tests provide feedback. The final result of their study, the certificate, enables society, in particular the professional world, to see that the student has acquired competences which make him/her capable of practising a specific profession. For the student, the certificate thus acts as a pass to enter a profession or a follow-up study.

Lecturers, *too,* receive useful information from examination results. They can use that information for the supervision of individual students, as well as for the shaping of their education. Exam results of groups of students give lecturers feedback concerning the education learning process.

When an *education* regularly collects and evaluates exam results, it receives useful information on the level of the students and the curriculum. This is especially important when setting up a new curriculum.

Universities are responsible for the quality of their education. Collected exam results and exam evaluations, as a component of a quality control system, contribute towards insight into that quality.

This also applies to *the government*: examination results and certificates provide information on the quality of the offered education and the level of the graduates, subject to the exams themselves also meeting certain quality standards.

Assessment and Examination Policy principles

The Higher Education and Research Act (WHW) and the "Beoordelingskaders accreditatiestelsel Hoger Onderwijs" (NVAO, Dec. 2010) [governmental accreditation assessment framework for higher education] provide the basic principles for the Assessment and Examination Policy. Standard 3 of the assessment framework for the accreditation of education demands that *the education has an adequate system of assessment/examination and demonstrates that the final outcome qualifications are being met.* Standard 3 must be judged sufficient before an education can receive a positive accreditation decision, which means that a recovery period does not apply.

The Assessment and Examination Policy must be congruous with the Education and Examination Regulation (EER). Substantive basic principles are formed by the education at institution level and the final attainment levels applicable to the education programme.

The Board of Directors holds final responsibility for the quality of the education and degree conferment. At institution level the Board of Directors has the role of guarding and promoting the quality of the education and assessment and ensures the necessary and desirable measures and support. The Assessment and Examination Policy includes, among other things, basic principles; a description of measures and facilities; organisational and procedural aspects concerning examination and assessment and the working method for guaranteeing the quality of examinations and assessments.

The Examination Review Committee plays an essential and authoritative role within the framework of the Assessment and Examination Policy. The Examination Review Committee - of which the members are appointed by the Board of Directors - functions on the basis of the role, authority and tasks indicated in the WHW, and the basis of perceptible independence and expertise. The Examination Review Committee has a Regulation, which arranges its independence, mandate and the frequency of its meetings.

With the implementation of the new Law amendments, the attention of examination committees now encompasses, besides establishing instructions and directions within the framework of the Education and Examination Regulation (EER), expressly the substantive quality of examination and assessment; the Examination Review Committees guarantee that the examinations/assessments (including the organisation thereof) are in order, and guarantee that graduated students have reached the final attainment levels. If necessary, they initiate closer investigation. When observing sticking points, they inform the people responsible and oversee the measures taken and results.

In the WHW, a task description has been established. To the tasks belong, among other things:
- Determination of instructions for assessment (in relation to the EER);
- Guaranteeing the quality of examination and assessment and guaranteeing the final level of the students;
- Appointing skilled examiners;
- Giving account of activities through means of an annual report.

Conditions

Subject of assessment
- Clear final attainment levels for the education have been formulated, which correspond with the Dutch qualification structure and meet international requirements. The Dublin descriptors are taken as starting point.
- The final attainment levels have been translated into learning pathways and/or learning objectives for the different curriculum components.
- The education ensures a good connection between the education's final attainment levels, the learning pathways and/or the learning objectives of the curriculum components and the assessment of the learning objectives.
- The types of assessment have been derived from the learning objectives, and should connect adequately to these.
- The selected types of assessment are consistent with the education form and the learning objectives of the curriculum component concerned.

Assessment scheduling
- The Assessment schedule should be set-up in such a way that, particularly in the beginning stage of the study, it soon becomes clear whether the student can successfully complete the study.
- In the Education and Examination Regulation the following matters should be regulated:
  - The manner of programming the scheduled examinations and resit exams;
  - The number of times per annum for an educational entity to have opportunity for summative examination and the
  - Rules which apply to the examination (including practical exercises);
    (NB. The Examination Review Committee can, in particular cases, permit deviation form the number of times and the manner in which examinations are taken);
  - The manner in which enrolment and unenrolment for scheduled examinations has been regulated.
- At the beginning of the academic year, on authority of the Examination Review Committee, the examination timetable for that year will be published, in which dates and times of the examinations have been fixed. Shifting a scheduled examination (place or time), is only permitted after authorisation by the Examination Review Committee.

Types of examinations and assessment requirements.
- The type of examination for each curriculum component is a derivative of the learning objectives of the component concerned.
- Every examination meets the examination criteria: transparency, validity and reliability:
  - Transparency: prior to taking the exam, it must have been clearly communicated to the students how and on what they are being assessed.
  - Validity: the examination covers the learning objectives. Validity involves both content (congruous with the learning objectives), level (level of difficulty) and representation.
  - Reliability: the examination distinguishes between students who master the learning objectives and those who do not. The quality of the examination plays a role (distinguishing capacity, minimum chance of a 'lucky guess', unicity), the circumstances in which the examination is being taken (standardisation and objectivity) and the way in which the results are assessed (objectively, not randomly, with precision).
- There are assessment procedures and models available for every examination. The manner of determination of the pass-mark has been clearly motivated and recorded in advance.
- Examinations are evaluated for the benefit of analysis of the results. Should the examination analysis warrant it, this could lead to adaptation of the pass-mark and assessment. On the basis of subject evaluation data, it is possible to adapt the education and the examination for the following year.

Examiners
- All lecturers employed by the TUK have been appointed as examiner by the Examination Review Committee.
- Every examiner has been trained and/or declared competent for their specific role in the examination programme.
- The examiners are responsible for the assessment of students regarding curriculum components. They ensure that the assessment is qualitatively in order and corresponds with the learning objectives and education activities and corresponds with the final attainment levels and education vision.
- When developing the examination and assessment tools, the examiner is capable of applying quality regulations (on the basis of the instructions of the Examination Review Committee and the EER); of developing and adequately making use of the necessary tools (among which, examination matrix, examination materials, assessment regulations and models); of evaluating the examination and analysing the results and, when drawing up, taking, assessing, analysing, administrating and archiving examinations, of complying with the valid regulations.
- Regarding examinations, the examiners are accountable to the Examination Review Committee.

Regulations
- The Assessment and Examination Policy will be filled in in more detail by the drawing up of the Education and Examination Regulation (WHW Article 7.13) and the Examination Review Committee Regulations.
- The Education and Examination Regulation contains adequate and clear information on the education.
- There is a regulation for complaints (with regard to assessment and aspects connected to this) and a possibility for students to appeal.
- All relevant information involving regulations such as the EER, the Student Charter, and instructions from the Examination Review Committee can be easily found and consulted by students.

Quality assurance for Assessment and Examination Policy
- The education has a plan of assessment in which is indicated the manner of assessment of all final attainment levels. The plan of assessment has been based on the educational concept, the curriculum and the learning pathways incorporated in it.
- The education possesses directives for drawing up, giving, assessing and analysing examinations, for the administration and filing of exam papers. There is a filing system for all relevant examination material.
- The quality of examination and assessment and the gained (end) level of the students is regularly checked and, in the case of any problems being identified, action taken in a timely and adequate manner.
- Examination Review Committee members have the necessary expertise to be able to play their role adequately.
- There are possibilities available for training, advice and support for the Examination Review Committee.
- The institution ensures demonstrable expertise of the examiners in the field of examination and assessment. They create possibilities for training, advice and support by experts.

Examination plan

Types of examinations

Oral exam
While there is a fairly strong emphasis on reproduction of knowledge, the dialogue provides ample opportunity for breaking through to higher levels of understanding such as overview, making connections, insight, analysis, evaluation, determining of the own position. The lecturer is flexible in tapping areas of knowledge and can switch between the different levels of command. The assessment of oral examinations generally includes observing the extent to which the student is able to set up a structured presentation on the spot.
Ensuring validity and reliability is more difficult with oral examinations. For this reason oral examinations do not have preference, unless the subject matter cannot be assessed in another way. If an oral examination is the most suitable form of assessment, recording equipment will be used so that the examination can be filed as mp-3 recording.

Written exam
A written examination can assess candidates' knowledge at all levels. While a written examination is suitable for reproduction of knowledge, it can also test overview, insight and evaluation. At a written examination, the lecturer will determine in advance a correction model, in which has been fixed for each question the elements of which the answer must exist, and how each of those elements will be evaluated. This takes place for both closed and open-ended questions.

A written examination can exist of open and/or closed-ended questions. Several types of closed questions are possible:
1. Multiple-choice question with one correct response
2. True-False questions
3. Multiple-choice question with multiple responses
4. Hotspot question (one-out of-many)
5. Hotspot question (match)
6. Ranking question
7. Matching pairs question
8. Unmatching pairs question
9. Unmatching pairs question with greater number of linked data
10. Matrix question
11. Fill-in-the-Blank question

With open-ended questions, the following forms are possible:
1. Short answer questions
2. Long answer questions
3. Essay questions / Argumentation questions
4. Case question

Open book exam
The character of open book exams are strongly reproductive: in fact the same level is assumed as at an 'ordinary' exam. The difference is that greater attention is paid to testing your insight in the structure of the subject matter, so that you are able to quickly find relevant information and that it is possible to provide a more detailed answer from the book.
Within our education, an open book exam offers the opportunity to test more material using more questions than a regular written exam. Moreover, it is possible to some extent to make a connection with the application of the subject matter in practice.

Criteria, besides the general criteria for a written examination:

- Is the student capable of obtaining the correct information accurately from the book?
- Is the information well presented in the student's own words?

Take home exam

Compared to an open book exam, there is more time available for the take home exam, often a whole day. In addition, the materials to be used for answering the questions are less fixed: at home students have several resources at their disposal.

Objective of a take home exam: showing students that they can understand and apply the concepts covered in the learning material. It demands that students are able to find diverse information and translate it into a clear argument. A take home exam can involve a few small essay questions.

A good implementation of a take home exam assumes that students have a good overview of the learning material, so that they know what information is needed to answer the questions.

The assessment will take into consideration the quality of the information used (including material from lectures) and the standard (comprehensiveness, plausibility, consistency, clarity, etc.) of the argumentation provided.

Literature review

A literature review involves the following elements:

An account of compulsory or self-chosen literature. In this account, attention can be paid to the following aspects:

- A guiding concept, with or without a personal argumentative thesis or research question (in the case of self-chosen literature also a justification of the choice);
- Correctness of the account;
- Distinction between main issues and side issues;
- Choice of discussed subjects.

Analysis. Is the student able to fathom in what way the studied literature contributes to knowledge, insight and views with regard to the subject?

- Does the analysis discuss core matters from the studied literature?
- Are the right connections made in the argumentation under discussion?
- Are key concepts being well applied?
- Are relevant aspects from the material, or from a broader framework of reference, well portrayed?

Evaluation/determination of position. While this is not the main aim in a literature review, it often is a part of it. Relevant assessment questions in this respect:

- Are the chosen points of evaluation relevant, considered from the subject matter discussed?
- Does the evaluation do justice to the discussed position?
- Does the student sufficiently explicate his principles?
- Is the (concise) argumentation for the own point of view plausible?

Memorandum

A memorandum differs from a literature review in so far that it is not a prescribed piece of literature, but a substantial subject (or component of a subject) or a limited presentation of a question is at the forefront. The information is then introduced from that subject or that questions. A similarity is that a memorandum has a strong reproductive / reporting character.

Paper

A 'paper' at a scientific congress is a research contribution which is presented orally, to be later published in the form of Article. In the context of our education, however, a 'paper' is considered to be a written reproduction with the following characteristics:

- Restricted scope (4,000 - 5,000 words);
- Restricted presentation of question, often provided by the lecturer;
- Independent argumentation, with the benefit of literature/resources;
- Brief conclusions, possibly leading to a proposal for further research.

On the basis of these characteristics, assessment criteria are easily given:
- Presentation well developed and dealt with;
- Adequate selection of relevant information;
- Correct reproduction of information used;
- Clear, recognizable personal argumentation;
- Conclusions that have been covered by the argumentation;
- Possibly, sensible questions/ points of attention for follow-up.

Essay

An essay is an independent and well-rounded argumentation on a fairly comprehensive subject. The strength of an essay is not in the detail and justification, but in a creative and convincing personal argumentation. An essay has a scope larger than a paper (5,000 - 10,000 words).

Criteria for an essay:
- Clear essay question presentation;
- Coherent and plausible argumentation;
- Own point of view;
- Originality and creativity;
- Careful wording.

Thesis

The word 'thesis' denotes the most comprehensive and most complete written production form used in the education. A thesis is always assessed by two examiners to guarantee the objectivity of the assessment. A thesis combines the characteristics of independence in the choice of presentation of questions and the construction of an argumentation meeting the requirements of precision in documentation, presentation and analysis of the material used.

The presentation of questions of a thesis must be on the one hand well-defined, but on the other hand must be of a reasonably encompassing scope. For comparison's sake: a presentation of questions for a descriptive thesis could possibly be in the form: 'What is theologian x's conviction on subject y? A memorandum involves more a question like: 'How does theologian x use concept y in his book z?'

In short theses in the earlier phases of education, as a derivative of the final attainment levels of the education, criteria can be used such as:

Research questions
- Clear and unambiguous?
- Researchable?
- Well operationalized in the continuation of the research?

Argumentation:
- Is an own argumentation built?
- Does the argumentation contribute perceptibly to answering the research question?
- Is the argumentation clear and correctly built up?
- Are terms used correctly and unambiguously? Are arguments presented in a convincing manner?
- Are own presuppositions made explicit i.e. used in a transparent manner?

Reproduction:
- Has a good selection taken place of material necessary for answering the research questions?
- Is good distinction made between main and side issues?

- Is information, including points of view of others, correctly reproduced?
- Is information placed in broader frameworks of theories, movements, etcetera?
- On relevant points, is there a continued questioning and a sound analysis presented?

Conclusions:
- Do the conclusions follow from the earlier argumentation?
- Are elements from the preceding argument well brought together in the conclusions?
- Does the conclusion demonstrate the adoption of an independent position in relation to the examined material?
- Have sufficient arguments been used to develop the conclusions?

Presentation
A presentation is an assessment form where the verbal communication of the student plays a role. Think of presentations of the results of (group) projects, (group) assignments and theses. Is important herby to determine in advance clearly which assessment criteria will be used.

Portfolio/dossier
In a portfolio, students display their competences by giving an impression of the manner in which assignments have been made and evaluated in specific context. An assessment on the basis of portfolio has the following advantages in relation to standard instruments of assessment:
- The image of the student is more authentic
- There is room to stress individual features

Forms of assessment in the Master's programmes

The master's phase has its own specific forms of assessment. Sometimes there are only a few students for a specialization or main subject of the general master. This can be a reason to set oral exams.

In the Master of Theology (General Programme) an appeal is made on the higher performance level of learning (see page 11): application, analysation, synthetisation and evaluation. For this reason the Master programme contains especially (yet not exclusively) essays as form of assessment.

Scheduling per education period

The scheduling of educational components is mentioned in the Student Guide. The Examination Schedule can be found on the TUK website.

Means of assessment

Every form of assessment has its own assessment system. Is important that there is a clear assessment model available for every examination. For written examinations this involves an answer model, for written productions it involves assessment criteria.

Exam construction

Testing the quality standards
Validity
The validity of the exam has do with the meaning, the usability and the correctness of the conclusions which are drawn from the test scores. There are three types of validity.
1. Validity of content
> The degree in which the exam is representative for that which one wants to test with the exam. This means, among other things, that every important subject from the learning substance must be questioned in the exam.
2. Validity of understanding
> The degree in which the test score can be considered a measure for the intended theoretical understanding. It is, for example, not valid to test insight by asking for a definition which can be learned by heart.
3. Criteria validity
> The degree in which the test score coincides with similar measures outside the test. For example, scores on tests regarding the same subject must stand in relationship to each other.

Reliability
The reliability of a test indicates to what extent it can be trusted as measure, regardless of the test's content. In other words: should someone take a comparable test directly after the first test, approximately the same scores should emerge.

Objectivity
The test results may not be dependent on the assessors.

Transparency
A test is transparent when all information is for making the best imaginable preparation and reply strategy possible for the students. For example, it should be clear to the student which objectives the teacher is focussing on in the test,

Examination matrix
An examination matrix is a blueprint of the exam in which the most important characteristics of the exam are fixed and is used as a <u>tool</u> to construct exams. An examination matrix states, among other things:
- the learning objectives on which the test is based
- the level at which the learning objectives must be developed into questions;
- the number of questions the test consists of and how the questions have been divided across the learning objectives;

The examination matrix used in the institution has been added as an Appendix 1. The examination matrix is established by means of Bloom's taxonomy.

Bloom's taxonomy
A taxonomy is a systematic classification in which a hierarchic structure plays a role. For structuring learning objectives we use Bloom's taxonomy.
Bloom distinguishes six behaviour levels into which a learning goal can be classified:
1. **Knowledge**   Memorizing and being able to reproduce information
2. **Understanding**   Being able to summarize, explain
3. **Application**   Being able to use information to solve a problem

4. **Analysation**   Being able to systematically research information and make connections
5. **Synthetisation** Is able to merge information into a new whole
6. **Evaluation**   Being able to assess information and formulate a point of view

The order indicates that a student can only apply something once he/she understands what it is about and for this it is necessary that the student has the knowledge in the first place. Where the behaviour levels knowledge, understanding and application are concerned, the closed-ended question form is suitable. The levels higher on the scale lend themselves especially to be reviewed by means of open-ended questions, case examples and assignments.

Procedure for construction of an examination/test

The lecturer (examiner) is responsible for the quality of the exams which he constructs and must account for it to the Examination Review Committee.

To give the Examination Review Committee the opportunity to guarantee the quality of the tests, it is important that the lecturer submits to the Examination Review Committee, 10 working days at the latest before the meeting of the Examination Review Committee in which the exams for the period concerned are discussed, the following data: This occurs by placing the documents on the T-disk in the folder `Toetsing' or on the ELO Sakai:

At examinations:
1. Justification by the lecturer concerning the constructed exam, if possible with use of a filled in examination matrix. An examination matrix is only a tool for constructing exams. The lecturer is free to submit another suitable tool to the Examination Review Committee. (Tools: examination matrix in Appendix 1 and Self-assessment form in Appendix 2). *T-disk.*
2. An examination example. *Sakai.*
3. The exam and one resit exam. *T-disk.*
4. The answer model or assessment model. *T-disk.*

At other test forms:
1. Justification by the lecturer concerning the constructed exam/test. (Tools: Self-assessment form in Appendix 2). *T-disk.*
2. A description of the assignment. *Sakai.*
3. The assessment model. *Sakai.*

Setting exams

The procedures for setting and assessing exams have been added in Appendix 3 and 4.

Assessment and feedback

At the assessment of tests it must always be transparent to the student how the assessment has come about. The student has the right to demand an explanation. In the case of written productions an assessment model is always used and the student can be given oral feedback, if required.

Students receive communications on their results through 'trajectplanner'. If they wish, they will be given the chance to view the exam within 5 working days. After these 5 days the lecturer must ensure

that the exams arrive at the student administration desk, where the exams will be filed away.

To written productions of students applies that everything must be handed in and filed away by means of Sakai.
Bachelor's examinations and Master's theses are saved in the library as well as in the digital files.

Testing the quality assurance

Role of Examination Review Committee
The Examination Review Committee has the legal task (WHW Article 7.12b paragraph 1 under a) to guarantee the quality of tests and exams. The Examination Review Committee of the TUK is occupied with experts in the field of education and assessment and with examiners and further professionalizes itself through training.

Quality guarantee
The Examination Review Committee guarantees the quality of the assessment in two manners:
1. *In advance*
   The Examination Review Committee receives from the lecturer all documents concerning the test, 10 working days before the meeting of the Examination Review Committee in which the tests of the period concerned are discussed. On the basis of random samples, the Examination Review Committee will examine one exam per year-group per education programme. As a rule, this will concern 3 tests from the Bachelor Programme, 3 tests from the Master of Arts (Ministry) Programme and 1 test from the Master of Theology (General) Programme.

2. *Afterwards*
   On the basis of results (an exam has been very well made or very badly made, or there are large differences among the population), module evaluations (an exam receives a bad evaluation), or complaints by a student, the Examination Review Committee may review the exam afterwards.

Literature / Further reading?

Books

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Jaspers, M., & Zijl, E. van. (2011). *Kwaliteit van toetsing in het hoger onderwijs. Naar een versterkte rol van examencommissies.* Eindhoven: Fontys Hogescholen, Dienst Onderwijs en Onderzoek.

Kwikkers P.C. (2011). WHW. *Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek, tekst en toelichting en de experimentenwet vooropleidingseisen, selectie en collegegeldheffing*. Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers BV.

Kwikkers, P.C., Westerheijden, D.F., Vercruysse, N., Schalkwijk E.V., Peels, C.J., & Frederik, J.A. (2011). *Accreditatie en kwaliteitszorg. De accreditatie van hoger onderwijs in Nederland en Vlaanderen.* Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers.

Onderwijsraad. (2004). *Examinering in het hoger onderwijs.* Den Haag: Onderwijsraad.

Onderwijsraad. (2010). *Een diploma van waarde.* Den Haag: Onderwijsraad.

Teelen Kennismanagement. (2011).*Toetsontwikkeling in de praktijk. Hoe maak ik goede vragen en toetsen?* (4th ed.). Wilp: Teelen B.V.

Abovementioned books are in possession of the TUK and can be found in the programme coordinator's room.

Websites www.toetswijzer.nl

www.onderwijsatelier.hva.nl

www.utwente.nl/so/toetsing