



15-06-2020, Marlies van Beek m.e.vanbeek@uu.nl

Guidelines for constructing case-based questions

(From: Jaap Milius, O&T- UU, and van Berkel, Bax & Joosten-ten Brinke, 2014: Toetsen in het Hoger Onderwijs and *a guide for academics- open book exams*, Centre for Teaching and Learning, the University of Newcastle, Australia)

General guidelines for constructing case-based exams

- Make use of a blueprint (i.e. test matrix, table of specification) and keep the learning outcomes in mind i.e. what skills and knowledge are you assessing?
- Use the experience of professionals in the field by collecting material for the cases
- Before taking the exam, present it to your colleagues or to a panel of experts
- Change the description of the case and/or the question if there is insufficient agreement on the correct outcome among colleagues
- Keep the scoring mechanism simple
- Try to co-work on case-based exams with other study programmes or institutes
- Try to integrate types of case-based questions, and how to answer them, in your learning activities during the course
- Provide students with some examples of questions (and answers) to increase transparency

Guidelines for describing the cases

- Use the representation of real situations; avoid presenting situations that do not exist/ are not plausible in real life
- Make sure that the description of the case is as clear and specific as possible
- Make sure there is sufficient information on the content and the context of the case
- Present the information or data uninterpreted; present relevant qualitative or quantitative data and then ask students interpretative and application questions – What does the data show? What relevance does this data or does the scenario have in terms of [component of current topic]? What other factors could potentially affect this data? How would you test for these?
- Be aware of irrelevant information (distraction)

Guidelines for the construction of the questions

- Questions need to be devised to assess the interpretation and application of knowledge, comprehension skills, and critical thinking skills (rather than only knowledge recall)
- Present relevant qualitative or quantitative data and then ask students interpretative and application questions – What does the data show? What relevance does this data or does the scenario have in terms of [component of current topic]? What other factors could potentially affect this data? How would you test for these?
- Relate the questions directly to the case
- Direct the question to essential decisions as much as possible
- Restrict the amount of decisions asked for per case
- Devise clear and unambiguous questions to limit student confusion and time spent interpreting the question
- Make sure the content of the question determines the form of the question and not vice versa
- Make sure that intended correct outcomes are completely correct and that incorrect answers are incorrect by all means.