Decision-making framework for offering education in connection with COVID-19 block 1 2021-2022
Adopted by the Executive Board on July 6 2021, adjusted on August 26 2021.

Assessment Framework Goal
Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the Netherlands, there are questions within Utrecht University (UU) whether and how courses\(^1\) can continue to be taught. This decision-making framework provides an instrument to answer these questions.

Basic principles of the decision-making framework
Utrecht University aims to offer education of high quality. We cannot offer our courses in the same manner as before the COVID-19 outbreak. However, UU does everything to ensure that our courses will be taught. The following principles guide our decision making:

- Guidelines from the government: UU follows the advice of the cabinet, RIVM, WHO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Study delays: UU wants to prevent study delays for students as much as possible.
- Legal equality: we want to treat all students nationally and at UU equally as much as possible.
- Quality of education: UU want to offer education that is at least of sufficient quality.
- Work pressure and welfare: we have explicit attention for the workload of lecturers and support staff and for the welfare of our students.
- Privacy: the privacy of persons should be sufficiently guaranteed.

Who decides?
In coordination with the faculties, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the choice of whether or not courses can continue to be taught is centralized with the Executive Board so that there is a uniform line within the UU. If necessary, the Board issues new mandates. Deviations are only possible after approval of the Executive Board.

Which decisions have already been made?\(^2\)
You can find the most recent information about decisions that have been made here: https://www.uu.nl/en/information-coronavirus

Recent developments
For block 1 2021-2022, the starting point is education on location, whereby the 1.5-metre measure is abandoned. However, there is a maximum group size of 75 students for education. This limitation does not apply to testing as of September 20 2021 when the exam takes place in a large space where 1,5m distance can be maintained and this can be effectively enforced.

Free self-tests are available on a voluntary basis for employees and students who want to come to activities on location and have no symptoms. More information about the tests and how to order them is available at www.zelftestonderwijs.nl.

Principles block 1
In block 1, we offer education with only one restriction and that is a maximum group size of 75 people. This can be summarized as follows:

- We presume education on location, with the exception of a maximum occupancy of a lecture hall of 75 students. For testing, there is no maximum group size as of September 20 2021 if the exam takes place in a large space where 1,5m distance can be maintained and this can be effectively enforced.
- We expect the students and lecturers at the location where the education is given.
- If education is planned on location, lecturers are not asked to provide distance education in parallel.
- Lecturers who cannot teach a class on location have to contact their manager, the education director and if applicable their course coordinator, so they can decide together what steps to take.
- Students who cannot or do not wish to attend a class on location, for which attendance is compulsory, contact the study advisor of the study programme concerned or follow the procedure set out on the study programme’s student website.

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\(^1\) Including education for professionals.

\(^2\) There are slightly different decisions for UCU and UCR as their students live and study on campus.
• If students cannot or do not want to take an examination on location, they should contact the board of examiners.

• If students cannot take an exam on location due to quarantine obligations, they will keep the right on a first exam opportunity (as well as on an additional or substitute test). In that case, degree programmes can offer the opportunity to take the exam with online proctoring, if this is possible with respect to support staff and technical conditions. If the student cannot or does not want to take the exam with online proctoring, the student will take the exam at a later point in time, which will not be at the expense of the number of exam opportunities and for which the degree programme is not obliged to enable this in the shortest possible time frame. The degree programme can also choose to offer an alternative form of testing, such as an oral exam, if the degree programme is of the opinion that the alternative exam is sufficiently comparable to the written exam.

• In the event of a new lockdown, the university will have to switch quickly to the ‘campus lite’ scenario or the ‘virtual campus’ depending on the governmental directives. This means that when designing on-location courses, lecturers must consider how the course can be redesigned if the curriculum must be offered online.

• Even if a course is taught online, we adhere to the timeslot model, as long as this is feasible after consultation on a national scale and with the Security Region. See this internet page for more information about the timeslot model: https://students.uu.nl/en/practical-information/enrolment/course-registration.

What actions does the Executive Board require from the faculties?

**Executive Board**
The Executive Board ultimately will decide, with due observance of the government measures relating to corona, which part of the education can take place on location. The Executive Board mandates the Dean to determine the priorities, in cooperation with the Directors of Education, within the framework of the Executive Board: which education should preferably take place on location and which education should take place remotely? If there are bottlenecks in the scheduling process, decisions will be made in the meeting between the Vice Decans of Education with the Rector Magnificus (instead of MO).

**Deans/Vice Deans of Education**
The Vice Dean of Education ultimately decides, on behalf of the Dean, which education and which exams will take place on location. The assessment of which education can be offered on location takes place on the basis of the frameworks of the Executive Board, the working group Scheduling, the prioritisation of the faculty itself and in consultation with the Security Region.

**Director of Education**
In consultation with the lecturers, the Directors of Education will develop proposals for how education will take place in 2021-2022. If crucial education cannot take place (education that may cause study delays), the Director of Education will consult with the (Vice) Dean. The (Vice) Dean will inform the Executive Board.

In consultation with the lecturers, the Director of Education director coordinates the redesign of the teaching methods and, if applicable, the testing, including compliance with the quality requirements.

**Form of assessment other than that described in EER or course manual**
If a different assessment method has to be chosen (which deviates from the assessment method described in the EER or course manual), the Dean applies the safety net regulation of Article 8.1 EER (In those cases in which these regulations do not provide for, do not clearly provide for or lead to manifestly unreasonable results, a decision is taken by or on behalf of the Dean, after having heard the examination board. If the decision on the basis of the law falls within the powers of the examination committee, the Dean sends the request to the examination committee for processing).

The Dean mandates the Directors of Education to determine, on behalf of the Dean, whether a new assessment form needs to be chosen with regard to the Corona measures. Please note: this concerns the didactic choices, not the choice whether an exam takes place on location or remotely (possibly via online proctoring). That mandate remains with the Dean, in this case the Vice Dean of Education.

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3 For UCU and UCR, we mean Dean when the text mentions a Vice Dean.
The Director of Education decides, after advice from the examiner/course coordinator in question, which new assessment form will be chosen. If there is any doubt as to whether the validity, reliability and transparency of the new test form is still guaranteed, the Director of Education or the examiner/course coordinator may request advice from Educational Consultancy & Professional Development, team exams and feedback. The Director of Education will inform the Board of Examiners about the adjustments.

** Examiner/Lecturer  
The examiner (lecturer/course coordinator) substantiates that the alternative assessment is appropriate (i.e. matches the learning objectives, the learning activities and the given instruction) and indicates how the quality of the alternative is guaranteed. In all cases, the lecturer will inform the students as soon as possible about adjustments of teaching and assessment methods via the regular communication channels (in any case Blackboard and/or MyTimeTable).

** Board of Examiners  
Based on its independent quality assurance role, the Board of Examiners assesses whether there are insurmountable objections to the way in which the testing is organised. If there are insurmountable objections, it will intervene and discuss a solution with the Director of Education. If the Board of Examiners and the Director of Education fail to find a solution, the Board of Examiners will escalate to the Dean.

** Online proctoring  
If there is a (partial) lockdown it is possible knowledge exams cannot be scheduled on-location and there is no alternative assessment form is possible, the Executive Board has decided that online proctoring can be used, if certain conditions are fulfilled.

Teaching staff can ask the Vice Dean of Education (through the Director of Education) whether a test can be considered for online proctoring. The Vice Dean of Education will decide, on behalf of the Dean, which tests will be conducted with online proctoring. UU’s policy on online proctoring can be found on internet, here for employees https://www.uu.nl/en/education/quality-and-innovation/remote-teaching/remote-testing and here for students https://students.uu.nl/en/corona/testing. The basic principle in this policy is that we want to achieve a balance, as well as we can, between preventing study delays and guaranteeing privacy.

We will use the following decision-making frame to determine whether an exam qualifies for online proctoring.

Online proctoring can only be used if there are no alternative options:

1. The principal rule is that the test is held on-campus.
2. If the test cannot be held on-campus, alternative forms of testing will be considered. This is preferable to rescheduling the test: that way any delay in the student’s studies can be avoided. Examples why a test cannot be held on-campus are:
   - the student is abroad;
   - there is insufficient space on-campus, due to government measures in connection with COVID-19;
   - the health of the student does not allow this; or
   - the student may not travel to the campus due to a lockdown or quarantine.
   Possible alternatives:
   a. Another form of testing is possible to test the learning goals of the course, such as open-book exams, take-home exams, essays, an oral test, interim tests by means of assignments, formative assignments, etc.;
   b. There are alternative measures to prevent fraud, such as: a lighter form of online invigilation; setting a short time limit to complete the test (although this must not cause too much stress or lead to time issues for the student); after the test, randomly selected individual video interviews on the test; conducting several variants of the test, so that the students do not have the same order or an identical (although comparable) series of questions.
   c. If the alternatives described under a and b do not provide an acceptable solution, alternative 3 can be chosen:
3. Online proctoring, conducted according to this protocol and the UU privacy statement.
Students will be informed at least two weeks before sitting the test if that test will be subject to online proctoring. If a student has compelling objections to sitting the test via online proctoring, that student will be offered an alternative or another solution will be sought. The student must inform the course coordinator of such objection no later than five days before the test is scheduled.
Advice and guidelines for designing education at a distance during a (partial) lockdown

Priorities in duties
We ask everyone to make an effort to implement alternative forms of education, even if this takes extra time and effort and/or is at the expense of other activities (except for care duties of medical staff). We also ask this of employees who are at home in isolation but are not ill. We ask supervisors to pay attention to the work pressure for their employees is feasible and if necessary prioritize duties related to education above other duties.

Illness
The Executive Board realizes that COVID-19 may cause more teaching staff to be ill than usual. The Executive Board asks supervisors to provide replacements as much as possible, especially if it concerns crucial education (education which can cause study delays).

Students may also be more ill than usual. Education (in alternative forms) also continues for smaller groups of students; students who are ill must make appropriate arrangements just as they would normally.

Pedagogy
The following UU-internet page contains information about distance education: https://www.uu.nl/en/education/quality-and-innovation/remote-teaching. It contains more information about how you can implement alternative teaching methods and alternative assessment. This page is continuously updated.

Alternative teaching and assessments methods do not have to be very innovative. We ask lecturers to see in which alternative ways you can guide students, answer questions, teach and test. There are many possibilities for innovative teaching methods, but this is explicitly not a goal in itself.

Attendance on-location
- Students who cannot or do not wish to participate in on-location education, will be permitted to participate in educational activities (incl. exams) in an alternative manner, for example online or at a later point in time (this can also be in the next semester).
- Students who cannot participate in on-location education, are for example: students who belong to a risk group for infection with COVID-19, students who have or whose housemates have symptoms that fit with a COVID-19 infection and students who live abroad.
- Students who do not wish to participate in on-location education are for example students with fear for infection.
- Faculties inform students about who they should contact if they (structurally) cannot or do not wish to participate in on-location education (incl. assessment). For incidental illness, the normal rules within faculties apply if students cannot participate in education or assessment.
- In case of assessment on-location, the lecturer informs the students who participate in the course at least two weeks in advance that the exam will take place on-location. Does a degree programme offer assessment on-location? Then this was a conscious decision because the subject matter cannot be tested at a distance and/or online. Therefore, we assume that students are present on-location for their exam. Faculties / degree programmes will make additional rules on how they handle cases in which students do not wish to participate in an exam on-location at that specific moment. They will look for an alternative, but that alternative is not per definition of an online copy of the exam on-location. Other alternatives can be participating in an already planned substitute exam or participating in an additional examination on-location at a later moment in time.
- If students cannot take an exam on location due to quarantine obligations, they will keep the right on a first exam opportunity (as well as on an additional or substitute test). In that case, degree programmes can offer the opportunity to take the exam with online proctoring, if this is possible with respect to support staff and technical conditions. If the student cannot or does not want to take the exam with online proctoring, the student will take the exam at a later point in time, which will not be at the expense of the number of exam opportunities and for which the degree programme is not obliged to enable this in the shortest possible time frame. The degree programme can also choose to offer an alternative form of testing, such as an oral exam, if the degree programme is of the opinion that the alternative exam is sufficiently comparable to the written exam.
Assessment

It may be the case that the newly chosen examination and/or grading form is not consistent with the originally described exam and/or grading form in the EER. However, the EER has a safety net scheme. The Executive Board deems this safety net scheme applicable if the form of exam and/or grading needs to be adjusted in connection with COVID-19. Please refer to attachment 1, alternative assessment in relation to corona. We ask the Board of Examiners to ensure that the newly chosen examination and/or grading form meets our quality requirements. If this is the case, the Board of Examiners should agree to this in line with the safety net regulation in the EER.

Moreover, it can take examiners longer to mark tests. If examiners expect that they will exceed the standard time limit of 10 working days, they should contact the Director of Education / Board of Examiners (check Education and Examination Regulations of your faculty to determine exactly who you should to contact). The examiner can determine together with the Director of Education / Board of Examiners that the time limit is exceeded because of reasons of force majeure and set a new time limit and communicate this to the students in questions. The Executive Board deems the COVID-19 outbreak a legitimate reason of force majeure.

Education at a distance and privacy

Because of the swift transition to (partial) education at a distance, UU wants to use software in education that previously has not been used (on such a large scale) within UU. When using this software, UU finds it important that the privacy of students and employees is guaranteed. Recently, the UU has accelerated checks on privacy risks of the most commonly used tools and taken any necessary action. This has resulted in the following:

- Mentimeter will be tolerated until the beginning of period 1.
- Peergrade will be tolerated until the end of period 1. Eduflow will be the probable successor.
- Pitch2Peer has been positively evaluated and can be safely used indefinitely.
- Zoom use is still discouraged, but tolerated through August 31.

Lecturers can find general instructions on working safely with personal data on intranet: https://intranet.uu.nl/en/privacy. For some software, lecturers can limit the privacy risks by choosing specific settings. The UU works on including instructions about that in the manuals for that software, if it is not yet included already.

Lecturers can contact Teaching Support for advice or questions about using these tools and about privacy. More information on Teaching Support can be found on internet: https://www.uu.nl/en/education/quality-and-innovation/remote-teaching/contact-teaching-support

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4 Model Education and Examination Regulations Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree article 8.1: In those cases in which these regulations do not provide for, do not clearly provide for or lead to manifestly unreasonable results, a decision is taken by or on behalf of the Dean, after having heard the examination board. If the decision on the basis of the law falls within the powers of the examination committee, the Dean sends the request to the examination committee for processing.

5 Model Education and Examination Regulations Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree article 5.9: If the mark is not available within this period time for reasons of force majeure, the examiner must communicate this to the student, indicating when the mark will be determined. Force majeure may only be established in consultation with the Board of Examiners/Education Director (delete as applicable).
Quality assurance of tests to be made at home
measures to prevent fraud when replacing a written test with a test to be made at home

Anton van den Hoeven, 25 March 2020, update 13 October 2020

Basic principles

- Wherever possible, (alternative) testing continues to take place. Alternative testing is preferable to rescheduling tests. The measures relating to Corona will continue for some time to come and it is in the interest of the students that their studies can continue as much as possible.
- The education director and the examination committee will agree on alternative forms of testing, so that the technical aspects of the tests, the practical possibilities in this exceptional situation and the consideration that the adjustments are not to the student's disadvantage, are properly considered.
- We start from trust, and not from the worst in people. In principle, students mainly want to learn and not cheat.
- However, we do take measures to prevent and discourage fraud as much as possible. These measures must be feasible and workable for teachers.
- All suspected plagiarism and fraud must be reported to the examination committee. In case of indications of large-scale fraud, the examination committee can, as usual, declare the entire test invalid.
- It is a good idea to exchange and coordinate the measures so that there is as little difference as possible between faculties.
- The education directors/BoS's have a leading role in this. It is a good thing that they are in charge and that the examination committees supervise this on the basis of their quality assurance role.

Responsibilities

Executive Board:
- has decided on a decision-making framework on when education (incl. testing) will take on-location or at a distance. The Board considers it important that, where possible, education should continue in an alternative manner in order to prevent as much study delay as possible for students.

Dean:
- Applies the safety net regulation article 8.1 OER:
  - In those cases in which these regulations do not provide for, do not clearly provide for or lead to manifestly unreasonable results, a decision is taken by or on behalf of the Dean, after having heard the examination board. If the decision on the basis of the law falls within the powers of the examination committee, the Dean sends the request to the examination committee for processing.
  - Mandates the education directors, on behalf of the Dean, to determine whether a new test form should be chosen in connection with the Corona measures (which deviates from the test form described in the OER or course manual).

Director of Education:
- directs the redesign, including compliance with the quality requirements, and determines, after advice from the relevant examiner/course coordinator, which new testing method is to be chosen.
  - in case of doubt as to whether the validity, reliability and transparency of the new testing method will continue to be guaranteed, can request advice from Education Advice & Training, team testing and feedback.
- Informs the examination committee of the changes.

Examiner (teacher/course coordinator):
- substantiates that the alternative assessment is appropriate (i.e. matches the learning objectives, the learning activities and the instruction given), indicates how the quality of the alternative is guaranteed.

Examination Committee:
- assesses on the basis of its independent quality assurance role whether there are insurmountable objections to the way in which the testing is set up
- Intervenes if there are insurmountable objections: consults with director of education about a solution
- Scales up to the Dean as examination committee and education director are unable to find a solution
Preconditions

- Online proctoring is used to a limited extent if there is no possibility to take the knowledge test at the university itself and the test cannot be converted into an alternative test, such as an open-book exam, take-home exam, essay or an oral test. The programme may choose to use online proctoring as a facility to limit study delays as much as possible. The UU-policy on online proctoring can be found on internet: [https://www.uu.nl/en/education/quality-and-innovation/remote-teaching/remote-testing](https://www.uu.nl/en/education/quality-and-innovation/remote-teaching/remote-testing) for lecturers and [https://students.uu.nl/en/practical-information/corona-and-education/testing](https://students.uu.nl/en/practical-information/corona-and-education/testing) for students.

Risks with a test to be made at home

- Students can consult sources at home that you have no control over.
- Students can collaborate physically, but also online, for example via computer or smartphone.
- Questions in the test are public. This means that not all questions can be reused, a small part probably still can (the guideline is often: not more than 25%).

Possible measures (preferably used in combination)

1. The student signs a standard statement that he/she makes the examination according to the applicable conditions, such as without contact with others, and only with the use of permitted aids (= mainly psychological rather than actual prevention of fraud). In this statement it is also stated that students can afterwards be additionally orally tested or questioned about their answers to the test (see point 11).

2. in the case of online examinations/tests that are limited in time, students can report sick up to 15 minutes before the start at the latest. Otherwise, the situation would arise that they first look at the test and then decide whether or not to take it.

3. The teacher makes multiple versions of the questions so that students do not all take the same exam. Different versions can also be:
   - different sequence of questions;
   - write one aspect of a case question in a slightly different way;
   - when interpreting a chart, make the values differ, etc.
   Designing really different questions is laborious: the quality of the questions has to be very clear so that students have really similar exams (parallel tests).

4. If possible: use assessment that focuses on insight/reflection and not on reproduction. Testing should comply with constructive alignment: the learning objectives should be attuned to the learning activities of the course and the assessment should be in line with the learning objectives and the learning activities, also in terms of level.

5. If the final test cannot be taken in an adequate manner and subtests are available that meet the requirements better, then the weight of subtests/submissions that have already been taken can be increased.

6. Educational directors may consider whether it is possible to test learning objectives at programme level, if it is not possible to test online whether all learning objectives from the course have been achieved. For programmatic testing, see [https://educate-it.uu.nl/programmatisch-toetsen](https://educate-it.uu.nl/programmatisch-toetsen).

7. In the case of small groups: consider an oral examination, possibly on the basis of written work submitted in advance.

8. Exam is an "open book" exam (because of the fact that searching for information is virtually impossible to prevent).

9. Time: the examination must be made in a limited time. The time for the test is should not be too long so that students do not have time for extensive research or consultation. However, time pressure also creates stress among students. When determining the time available, it is important to keep the balance between the two interests: fraud prevention and preventing too much stress among students.
Furthermore, when planning the tests that have to take place at the same time, it is important to take into account the fact that there may be students in different time zones, for example international students who have gone home. If a student takes the test earlier than others, it is good to have the person concerned sign a confidentiality agreement in which the student declares that he/she does not share the questions and answers with others.

10. Assignments are submitted via Blackboard, in which Urkund offers support to lecturers when carrying out a plagiarism check. Remindo has no plagiarism control (yet).

11. The students are informed in advance (see 1) that a subset of the students can be tested or questioned about their answers to the test afterwards. The subset of students can be composed as follows:
   - a group of students determined by a random sample,
   - possibly supplemented with 'suspicious or conspicuous' cases. For example, one could think of the situation that a few students who never scored higher than a 6 and who were definitely not active in the course, now make the online test completely error-free.

The additional oral tests are a means to check the reliability of the test. If the oral questions show that there are too many doubts about the reliability of the test as such, the examination board can declare the entire test invalid or determine that an additional test is necessary for the final grade.

12. Use a simple form of online supervision (which is different from real online proctoring) by asking the student to use his or her phone as a camera to keep an eye on himself or herself in an application in which the instructor can monitor the entire group (e.g. teams). This will have a preventive effect. In the case of question marks/incidents during the assessment, the instructor can apply measure 11.

Online supervision will not be feasible in the case of large groups of students:
   - via Teams, the instructor cannot see more than 49 students at the same time and you cannot determine which students you see;
   - in Starleaf you can have a maximum of 20 students on screen at the same time.

13. For 'high stake' knowledge tests (i.e. in which the consequences of failing or succeeding are significant) and in which learning objectives are tested that have not been/are not tested in another way or at another time), aimed at reproduction knowledge, for large groups of students, the above measures will offer insufficient solace. There is no immediate solution for this, other than an exam on location or with online proctoring.

14. Where the above solutions do not lead to an adequate solution:
   - now close the block with an intermediate test, and at the end of the year take a kind of "comprehensive exam" orally (Teams) over several subjects. The course results will only be final after passing the comprehensive exam.
   - as a last resort: postponement to a later date.