Decision-making framework for offering education in connection with COVID-19 block 1 2020-2021

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Assessment Framework Goal
Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the Netherlands, there are questions within Utrecht University (UU) whether and how courses 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?
The Executive Board has, due to COVID-19 outbreak, taken responsibility for decisions on whether courses can continue to be taught. In short: the Executive Board decides. If necessary, it issues new mandates. Deviations are only possible after approval of the Executive Board.

Which decisions have already been made?1
You can find the most recent information about decisions that have been made here: https://www.uu.nl/en/organisation/practical-matters/information-coronavirus

The decision making framework for offering education in block 2020-2021 is described in the advice of the working group Resuming Education, which you can find on intranet: https://intranet.uu.nl/en/start-phase-coronacrisis-working-groups-and-contact-persons

This can be summarized as follows:

• We assume to be able to follow the ‘campus lite’ scenario, in which we avoid large concentrations of students, but small-scale meetings can still take place. When possible, meetings may be organised on-location to permit location-specific education, teaching formats where students work together and have contact with lecturers, and/or activities for groups of students for whom community-building is important. Online education will be the norm for instructional education, such as most lectures.
• 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 the duration of the first semester, for example online or at a later point in time.
• In the event of a second lockdown, the university will have to switch quickly from the ‘campus lite’ scenario to the ‘virtual campus’. This means that when designing on-location courses, lecturers must consider how the course can be redesigned if the curriculum must be offered online.

What actions does the Executive Board require from the faculties?2
The Executive Board issues the following mandates to achieve the above:

• The Faculty Board decides, together with the Directors of Education, the priorities within the framework offered by the working group Resuming Education: which education is offered preferably on-location and which education will be offered online?
• Directors of Education suggest, together with lecturers, how education will be offered in 2020-2021. They base their suggestions on the framework of the working group Resuming Education, the priorities set by the faculty and the basic principles as stated above.

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1 There are slightly different decisions for UCU and UCR as their students live and study on campus.
2 For UCU and UCR, we mean Dean when the text mentions the Faculty Board or Vice-dean.
If the course learning objectives or the form of assessment (incl. grading) changes compared to the course description, the Director of Education consults the Examination Committee about this decision.

If crucial education cannot be offered (education that may lead to study delays for students), the Director of Education consults the Faculty Board about this decision. The Faculty Board informs the Executive Board.

- The Vice-deans of Education decide which education can be offered on-location, based on the priorities of the faculties, the decision-making framework of the working group Scheduling and in consultation with the Security Region.
- In all cases, the lecturers will inform their students as soon as possible about the adjustment of their teaching via the regular communication channels (in any case Blackboard and / or MyTimeTable).

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.

Online proctoring

Possibly, a small number of exams cannot be scheduled on-location and for which no alternative assessment form is possible. The Executive Board has decided that online proctoring can be used in block 1. The Executive Board will decide on a vision of UU on online proctoring mid-September; at the same time UU will carry out privacy checks in order to carry out online proctoring from block 2 onwards that fulfils all criteria with respect to privacy.

The lecturer can put in a request via the Vice-dean whether an exam qualifies for 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/practical-information/corona-and-education/testing-in-period-4. 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 only implement online proctoring if:

1. The exam cannot take place on-location. For example, because students live abroad or because there is no sufficient room on-location.
2. There is no other assessment form possible to test the learning objectives of the course, for example because the exam assesses knowledge rather than insight. Alternative assessment forms are, among others, open book exams, take home exams, essays or an oral assessment.
3. A lighter form of online supervision or alternative measures to prevent fraud are insufficient to guarantee the quality of education. Alternative measures are, for example:
   a. The exam must be made in a limited time;
   b. After the exam, question a subset of students individually about the exam via an individual digital meeting;
   c. Using different versions of the same exam, so that students do not all take the same exam or not in the same order.

Students will be notified no later than two weeks before the exam is to be taken that it is an exam with online proctoring. If a student has serious objections to online surveillance, the student will be offered an alternative or a different solution will be sought. Students should inform the lecturer of this choice at least five working days prior to the exam.

Advice and guidelines for designing education at a distance

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 ensure that 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; 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 the duration of the first semester, for example online or at a later point in time. 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 during the first semester. 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.

**Assessment**
It may be the case that the newly chosen examination and/or grading form is not consistent with the originally described test 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 test 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 Examination Committee to ensure that the newly chosen examination and/or grading form meets our quality requirements. If this is the case, the Examination Committee should agree to this in line with the safety net regulation in the OER.

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 / Examination Committee (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 / Examination Committee that the time limit is exceeded because of reasons

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3 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.

4 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).
of force majeure and set a new time limit. 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. The coming period, UU will undertake accelerated checks on the privacy risks of the most commonly used tools and will decide on additional measures, if necessary and not already in place. This applies specifically to (at least) three issues:

- The use of Mentimeter, Pitch2Peer and Peergrade from block 2 onwards. We expect a decision on this mid-September.
- The use of Zoom from block 2 onwards. We expect a decision on this mid-October.
- The use of online proctoring from block 2 onwards (see above).

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 additional advice or questions about privacy and educational software. More information on Teaching Support can be found on internet: https://www.uu.nl/en/education/quality-and-innovation/remote-teaching/contact-teaching-support
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 22 July 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

Precondition
• Online proctoring is used to a limited extent if there is no possibility to take the 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 for lecturers and https://students.uu.nl/en/practical-information/corona-and-education/testing-in-period-4 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.

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

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5 Online proctoring is currently only allowed in block 1. The Executive Board will decide mid-September about online proctoring from block 2 onwards.
8. Exam is an "open book" exam (because of the fact that searching for information is virtually impossible to prevent).

9. Time pressure: the examination must be made in a limited time. The time for the test is somewhat tight 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 SafeAssign 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 9 students at the same time and you cannot determine which students you see;
   - in Starleaf you can have several students (up to 20) 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.

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 (skype) over several subjects. The course results will only be final after passing the comprehensive exam.
   - as a last resort: postponement to a later date.