

The Examination Board's Rules and Guidelines 2018-2019

**THE EXAMINATION BOARD'S RULES
AND GUIDELINES**

2018-2019

Examination Boards
Faculty of Science



The Examination Board's Rules and Guidelines (2018-2019)

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1. Scope of application

The Rules and Guidelines referred to in Article 7.12b, third paragraph, of the Higher Education and Research Act are adopted by the Examination Board and further clarified as the Rules and Guidelines of the Examination Board.

These Rules and Guidelines apply to the examinations and final degree assessments in the degree programmes of the Bachelor's Colleges and Graduate Schools in all areas of the Faculty of Science: Health and Life Sciences (HLS), Earth, Ecological and Environmental Sciences (EEE), Information Sciences (IS) and Natural Sciences and Mathematics (NSM).

These regulations apply to all students taking a degree programme during this academic year, irrespective of the moment at which they commenced the degree programme.

2. Definition of terms and general information

1. The terms defined in the Academic and Examination Regulations that apply to the relevant study programme also apply to these Rules and Guidelines. The other terms have the meanings ascribed to them by the Higher Education and Research Act. Below is a list of key terms and their definitions within the context of this document:
 - 1) *Examination Board or sub-board*: the Examination Board for one or more of the faculty's degree programmes;
 - 2) *Faculty Examination Board*: a coordinating Board of Examiners focused on procedural harmonization of the sub-boards' working methods, approving Assessment Committee reports and dealing with Rules and Guidelines. All

members of the Examination Board for specific degree programmes are also members of the Faculty Examination Board.

2. In the event that any provision in these regulations conflicts with a provision in the Academic and Examination Regulations applicable to the relevant degree programme, the provisions of the Academic and Examination Regulations shall take precedence.

3. Composition of the Examination Board

1. The Faculty Regulations apply to the composition of the Examination Board. The Faculty of Science has two Faculty Examination Boards: the HLS-EEE Faculty Examination Board (encompassing Health & Life Sciences and Earth, Ecological & Environmental Sciences) and the NSM-IS Faculty Examination Board (encompassing Information Sciences and Natural Sciences & Mathematics). The HLS-EEE Faculty Examination Board has nine sub-boards and the NSM-IS Faculty Examination Board has seven sub-boards. The Examination Board for specific degree programmes (or a cluster of degree programmes) consists of a maximum of four members, all experts in the field of the relevant programme(s). At least one board member should belong to the teaching staff of the programme or one of the programmes to which these Rules and Guidelines apply. The members of the various Examination Boards together form the Faculty Examination Board. The Faculty Examination Board should contain at least one member who is not affiliated with the relevant degree programme(s). Members of the Executive Board or persons who have other financial responsibilities within the institution are precluded from serving on the Examination Board.
2. The members of the Examination Board are appointed by the Faculty Board.
3. The Examination Board shall appoint one of its members to act as chairperson (external members are not eligible for this position). The chairperson shall appoint an alternate to replace him/her in the case of absence. The chairperson of the Faculty Examination Board should preferably not be a member of one of the sub-boards. The administrative secretariat is responsible for the procedural matters of the Examination Board.
4. Before a member is appointed, the Faculty Board will consult the Examination Board regarding the proposed appointment.
5. A member of an Examination Board is appointed for a period of three years and may be reappointed no more than twice.
6. The Faculty Board is responsible for guaranteeing that the Examination Board operates in a manner that is independent and expert.

4. Duties of the Examination Board

The duties of the Examination Board are regulated by law. These include drawing up rules for the performance of duties and responsibilities and taking measures with regard to:

- a. determining in an objective and expert manner whether or not a student meets the conditions set in the Academic and Examination Regulations relating to the knowledge, insight and skills necessary to be awarded a degree;
- b. maintaining and assuring the quality of all examinations and final degree assessments;
- c. determining guidelines and instructions to assess and determine the results of examinations and final degree assessments within the framework of the Academic and Examination Regulations;
- d. granting exemptions for one or more examinations;
- e. academic misconduct;

- f. appointing examiners to conduct examinations and determine their results;
- g. granting degree certificates, including a diploma supplement, as proof that the student has successfully completed his or her final degree assessment;
- h. granting permission to students to take part in a free-choice study programme, the final degree assessment for which leads to the awarding of a degree;
- i. issuing a transcript of the results attained to persons who have successfully completed more than one examination but are not eligible for a degree certificate;
- j. drawing up an annual report on its own activities.

5. Working method of the Examination Board

1. In principle, the Examination Board meets once a month (with the exception of July and August) or as often as its chairperson deems necessary. The meetings are not held in public. The Faculty Examination Board meets at least five times a year.
2. The Faculty Board can add an administrative secretariat to the Examination Board.
3. In the event of a request or complaint involving a member of the Examination Board, this shall be dealt with in the absence of the member concerned.
4. The request or complaint must always include a justification of the request or a description of the complaint.
5. The Examination Board will make a decision within six weeks of receiving a request.
6. Faculty Examination Board decisions are taken by majority vote. The Board's decisions must be taken by at least half of the members.
7. The HLS-EEE Faculty Examination Board has nine sub-boards for Bachelor's and Master's programmes in the following fields:
 - Earth Sciences
 - Biology and Ecology
 - Biomedical Sciences
 - Biomolecular Sciences
 - Environment and Resource Management
 - Health and Life
 - Health Sciences
 - Management Policy Analysis & Global Health
 - Neurosciences
8. The NSM-IS Faculty Examination Board has seven sub-boards for Bachelor's and Master's programmes in the following fields:
 - Mathematics & Business Analytics
 - Chemistry
 - Pharmaceutical Sciences
 - Computer Science
 - Physics and Astronomy
 - Medical Sciences
 - Science, Business & Innovation

The sub-boards have corresponding designations. Each sub-board has no more than three members. The first five sub-boards mentioned have no members in common.
9. In the interests of procedural matters, sub-boards can be supplemented by the addition of non-voting members.
10. From among their members, the sub-boards elect an executive board, consisting of a chairperson and a secretary.
11. Day-to-day matters in the Faculty Examination Board are dealt with by the sub-boards.
12. Sub-board decisions are taken by majority vote.

6. Registration for examinations

1. Registration for written examinations is subject to rules and regulations¹. The Examination Board can set specific additional rules with regard to the organization and procedures associated with administering examinations and final degree assessments.
2. It is not possible to register after the deadline. A student who is not able to register before the deadline due to exceptional personal circumstances may submit an appeal on the basis of the hardship clause.

7. Questions and assignments, subject matter and duration of examinations

1. None of the individual questions and assignments in the examination will relate to anything other than the previously announced examination material. The main points of the examination material are announced prior to the start of the programme component that prepares students to sit the examination in question. The exact scope of the examination material is published no later than one month before the exam is administered.
2. The length of each examination is such that the student can reasonably be expected to answer the questions in the time given.
3. In the event of a resit in another academic year, the student will sit an examination based on the material set for that examination in the academic year in question, unless the Examination Board decides otherwise (at the request of the examiner).
4. The Examination Board monitors the quality of examinations and final degree assessments.

8. Completing examinations in other ways

1. At an examiner's request, the Examination Board may permit a different form of examination than that stipulated in the study guide.
2. At the student's request, the Examination Board may permit a different form of examination from that stipulated in the study guide.

9. Oral examinations

1. Unless otherwise specified by the Academic and Examination Regulations for the relevant educational unit, no more than one student will take an oral examination at the same time.
2. The sub-board or the examiner may decide in a particular case that an oral examination is not public.
3. A student may submit a detailed request to the Examination Board to deviate from the requirement for a public oral examination. The sub-board will weigh the student's interests against the interests of administering a public examination.
4. An oral examination will be taken in the presence of a second lecturer/examiner.
5. In order to participate in an oral examination, students must show valid proof of registration and a valid ID.

10. Quality assurance

1. Quality is assured in accordance with the provisions of the Guide for Examination Boards (*Handreiking examencommissies*).
2. The Examination Board applies the Assessment Policy Framework (*Kader toetsbeleid*) to ensure the quality of examinations and final degree assessments.

¹ Registration deadlines for educational activities and examinations 2017-2018

11. Procedure for written degree components

1. In order to participate in an examination, students must show a valid proof of registration (university registration card) and a valid ID with a signature and a photo that is a good likeness of the individual in question.
2. The Examination Board ensures that enough invigilators are appointed for the written examination and that these individuals will ensure that the examination is conducted properly.
- 2a. The examiner may, when using a common examination room, ask the central organization unit to ensure that there are enough invigilators present.
3. Students are obliged to follow the instructions of the invigilator(s).

12. Procedure for practicals

1. The member of teaching staff responsible for the practical, the fieldwork, field trip or for managing the research group ensures that, for the practical experiments and practice sessions, assistants will be appointed where necessary to monitor the proper running of the practical, fieldwork, field trip or research activity.
2. At the request of the Examination Board or someone acting on the Board's behalf, students are obliged to identify themselves by presenting a valid proof of registration.
3. Students are obliged to follow without delay the instructions given by the manager of the practical, both before and during the practical.
4. Any student who fails to abide by the provisions included or intended in paragraphs 2 and 3 may be excluded from further participation in the relevant practical by the Examination Board or someone acting on the Board's behalf. As a consequence of this exclusion, no result will be issued. Before the Examination Board decides on exclusion, the student in question will be given the opportunity to be heard.
5. If a risk assessment has been drawn up for the practical exercise, the student must sign this document before the start of the course. A student who does not sign may be excluded from the course.

13. Graduation, degree certificate and transcript

1. The Examination Board will determine the result of the final degree assessment once it has established that the student has passed all of the educational units in the programme. The final degree assessment takes place on the date on which the final examination has been successfully taken, unless the final degree assessment includes an administrative procedure to be carried out by the Examination Board itself.
2. A degree certificate will only be issued once the Executive Board has certified that the student has met all procedural requirements, including payment of tuition fees.
3. The Examination Board will add a diploma supplement to the degree certificate, which provides information on the nature and content of the degree programme completed. The diploma supplement is drawn up in English and complies with the European format.
4. The student can make a substantiated request to the Examination Board not to proceed with issuing a degree certificate, unless he/she has submitted a request for it to be issued. Any such request must be submitted within two weeks of the student having been informed of the intended graduation date. The Examination Board allows graduation to be postponed by up to one year from the original date of graduation, in response to a substantiated request.

5. Those who have passed more than one examination but who are not entitled to a certificate as referred to in paragraph 1 may, on request, receive a statement issued by the relevant Examination Board which at the very least states the examinations passed, and is accompanied by a specification of the educational units involved, the number of credits thus obtained and when the examination results were achieved.

14. Degree classifications (*judicia*)

1. If a student completes the programme with outstanding results, the classification 'cum laude' may be awarded.
2. 'Cum laude' on the Faculty of Science Bachelor's programme
The classification 'cum laude' is awarded to students who have met the following conditions:
 - a. all grades must be 7.0 or higher;
 - b. for NSM-IS, the grade for the final project on the Bachelor's programme must be 8.0 or higher;
 - c. the weighted average of all degree components must be 8.0 or higher; for NSM-IS, the grade for the final Bachelor's project does not count towards the weighted average. Extracurricular grades do not count towards the average.
 - d. at HLS-EEE, exemptions are granted up to a maximum of 60 credits and at NSM-IS, exemptions make up no more than 20% of the standard number of credits to be obtained.
 - e. all grades must be obtained within four years of starting the programme.
3. 'Cum laude' on the Faculty of Science Master's programme
The classification 'cum laude' is awarded to students who have met the following conditions:
 - a. a grade of 7.0 or higher for all components;
 - b. at NSM-IS, the grade for the graduation project must be 8.0 or higher;
 - c. the weighted average for all degree components must be 8.0 or higher; at NSM-IS, the grade for the final Master's project does not count towards the weighted average. Extracurricular grades do not count towards the average.
 - d. at NSM-IS, exemptions make up no more than 50% of the standard number of credits to be obtained.
 - e. at HLS-EEE, exemptions are granted up to a maximum of 20% of the total number of credits;
 - f. for a two-year Master's, all grades must be obtained within three years of starting the programme, while for a one-year Master's all grades must be obtained within two years of starting the programme.
4. No additional degree classification (e.g. cum laude) will be awarded if a student is guilty of academic misconduct.
5. As long as it presents arguments for its case, the Examination Board may depart from the criteria stated in paragraphs 2 and 3, either to the advantage or the disadvantage of the student.

15. Exemptions (supplementary to the Academic and Examination Regulations) and replacement assignment

1. A request for exemption from an examination must be submitted to the Examination Board before the start of the relevant degree component.
2. After consulting the relevant examiner, the Examination Board can grant exemption from an examination, practical or fieldwork based on the following:

- a. a successfully completed examination, practical or fieldwork project in higher education in the Netherlands or elsewhere, which corresponds in terms of content, level and study load with the component from which an exemption is being requested; or
 - b. knowledge and/or skills of a similar content, level and scope gained outside higher education.
3. Prior approval is required from the Examination Board if a student wishes to meet the requirements for specific examinations by studying at a different faculty or university (in the Netherlands or abroad).
 4. Students can request that the Examination Board grant them exemption from participation in practical components or give them a replacement assignment. The grounds for granting such exemptions include conscientious objections. The Examination Board determines which supplementary requirements students have to meet.
 5. An exemption based on a course from the programme that gave the student admission to the degree programme cannot be granted.
 6. No exemptions can be granted for theses or final projects.

16. Academic misconduct and plagiarism in examinations and final degree assessments

1. Academic misconduct and plagiarism are defined as any act or omission by a student that partially or entirely precludes an accurate assessment of their knowledge, understanding and skills, or those of another student.
2. Academic misconduct includes:
 - a. being in possession of aids or resources (pre-programmed calculator, mobile phone, books, syllabi, notes, etc.) which are not expressly permitted during the examination;
 - b. copying from or exchanging information with another student during the examination;
 - c. assuming someone else's identity during the examination;
 - d. allowing someone else to assume your identity during the examination;
 - e. obtaining details of examination questions before the date or time when the examination is scheduled to take place;
 - f. changing, extending or amending a section of the examination after it has been submitted for final assessment.
3. Plagiarism includes the following:
 - a. using or copying another person's written work, data or ideas without providing full and appropriate source references;
 - b. not indicating clearly in the text, for example through the use of quotation marks or a particular layout, that text is being cited directly from another author, even where correct source references have been included;
 - c. paraphrasing the content of other people's texts without sufficient referencing of sources;
 - d. submitting a text (wholly or in part) that has previously been submitted for an earlier assignment for a separate degree component;
 - e. copying work from other students and presenting this work as one's own;
 - f. submitting assignments that have been obtained from a commercial agency or that have been written by someone else (whether or not in exchange for payment).
4. Electronic detection software programs may be used to detect plagiarism in texts. When submitting a text, the student implicitly consents to the text being entered into the database of the detection program concerned.

17. Procedures and penalties

1. If the examiner ascertains, or has good reason to suppose, that plagiarism or another form of academic misconduct has taken place, he/she must report this to the Examination Board in writing immediately.
2. The Examination Board will inform the student of this report in writing and invite the student to a hearing about the alleged plagiarism or other form of academic misconduct, and will take a decision based on the documentary evidence and, if possible, the information provided by the student at the hearing. Further information may be required from the examiner.
3. If the Examination Board is convinced that plagiarism or another form of academic misconduct has been committed, a penalty will be imposed.
4. In cases of plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct, the Examination Board can – with due regard to the principles of legal fairness and proportionality – declare the examination or the assignment to which the misconduct relates to be invalid or assign a grade of 0, and may also exclude the student from the next examination opportunity for that particular course or subject.
5. In the event of serious or repeated academic misconduct or plagiarism, the Examination Board may exclude the student from participating in one or more examinations or final degree assessments at VU Amsterdam for a maximum of one year.
6. If very serious academic misconduct or plagiarism is identified, the Examination Board can advise the Executive Board (through the Faculty Board) that the relevant student's registration should be terminated permanently.
7. The Examination Board grants no exemptions from examinations which are taken at another faculty during the period when the student is debarred from sitting examinations.
8. The student can appeal directly to the Examination Appeals Board against the decision made by the Examination Board within six weeks of the announcement of the decision.
9. In urgent cases relating to academic misconduct and plagiarism which are not covered by these Rules and Guidelines, the Examination Board will make a decision with due regard to the principles of an appropriate procedure.

18. Irregularities

If the Examination Board concludes that an examination or one or more components of an examination were not completed in the prescribed manner, or that an examination or examination component was not administered correctly, it can declare the examination, or the relevant component, invalid.

19. Retention periods

1. Bachelor's and Master's theses and final assignments are retained for a period of at least seven years.
2. Exam question papers and answers (including assignments and other written materials for which a full or partial grade has been given) and examination results are retained for a period of at least two years. For a constituent test the term is one year.

20. Annual report

By 1 November, the Examination Board will compile a report on its activities during the previous academic year. The Examination Board will send the annual report to the

Faculty Board. On request, the annual report or parts of the report can be made available to interested parties.

21. Amendments to these Rules and Guidelines

No amendments are made in relation to the current academic year, unless there is a reasonable expectation that this will not infringe the interests of the students.

22. Unforeseen circumstances / hardship clause

In any circumstances not covered by these Rules and Guidelines, or in circumstances where the provisions in these regulations are unreasonable or unfair to the student, the decisions of the Examination Board will be final.

23. Date of commencement

These Rules and Guidelines take effect as of 1 September 2018.

Adopted by the NSM-IS Examination Board on 28 June 2013.

Adopted by the HLS-EEE Examination Board on 2 July 2018.