**Tips for creating Exams**

1.      Make an overview of the learning objectives that are to be assessed.
- If not all objectives have an equal weight, assign each goal its own weight.

2.      Decide which assessment form is most suitable, depending on the learning objectives.
- When assessing knowledge and understanding, closed questions offer many advantages.
- A test consisting entirely of closed questions must have at least twenty questions in order to limit the chance that students will simply guess a significant number of answers correctly.
- Open questions are the most suitable way to test higher-order thinking skills (application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation).
- Where possible, it is preferable to use several short-answer questions that cover the learning objectives well, rather than a limited number of long-answer questions that cover a (random) selection of the objectives.

3.      Draw up one or more test questions for each learning objectives. Consider the time students have to make the exam.
- Depending on its complexity, a multiple-choice question with four answer options takes 40 to 60 seconds to answer.
- A short-answer question takes at least a minute to answer.
- A long-answer question, ranging from half a page to a full page (20-40 lines) takes at least 10 minutes to answer.

4.      Check the validity of the test (e.g. using an assessment matrix).
- Content validity: have all learning objectives been adequately addressed?
- Formal validity: do the questions correspond to the proficiency levels indicated in the learning objectives?

5.      Check the quality of the questions. Apply the rules of thumb for relevance, objectivity, specificity and efficiency.
- Use clear, unambiguous language.
- Use verbs to specify how answers should be given. ('Describe in your own words.')
- Provide clues about the number and type of the intended answer elements.
- Avoid interdependent questions.
- Avoid unnecessary information.
- Highlight negatives (e.g. What is *not* a consequence?). Avoid double negatives.

6.      Put the questions in a logical order. There are two ways of doing this:
- Follow the structure of the subject matter; or
- Arrange the questions by degree of difficulty.

7.      Draw up an answer key.
- The weight of the questions is based on the weight of the corresponding learning objectives.
- Work out how points should be given, down to the level of answer elements.
- Determine the points required for a passing grade (provisional).
- Use the process of writing out the answers as a tool for quality control. Change questions that you found to be unclear or far too difficult yourself.

8.       Ensure that the exam has a clear layout.
- Leave at least one blank line between each question.
- A question may never bridge two or more pages.
- Make it clear to students how many points they can earn per question.
- Indicate how many questions the exam contains and , if necessary, which questions will take the most time.

9.       Have your exam checked by a colleague and use the faculty exam cover page.

Bron: A. Wilschut, D. van Straaten en M. van Riessen, *Geschiedenisdidactiek. Handboek voor de vakdocent* (Bussum, 2013), p. 375. With some minor adjustments.

For more information about creating exams (in Dutch), see the chapters "Toetsen met gesloten vragen" and "Toetsen met open vragen" in *Toetsen in het hoger onderwijs*, edited by Henk van Berkel, Anneke Bax and Desirée Joosten-ten Brinke (Houten, various editions: 2014/2017). The book can be consulted digitally on the website of the VU University Library.