

School of Humanities Assessment Policy 2025

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Introduction

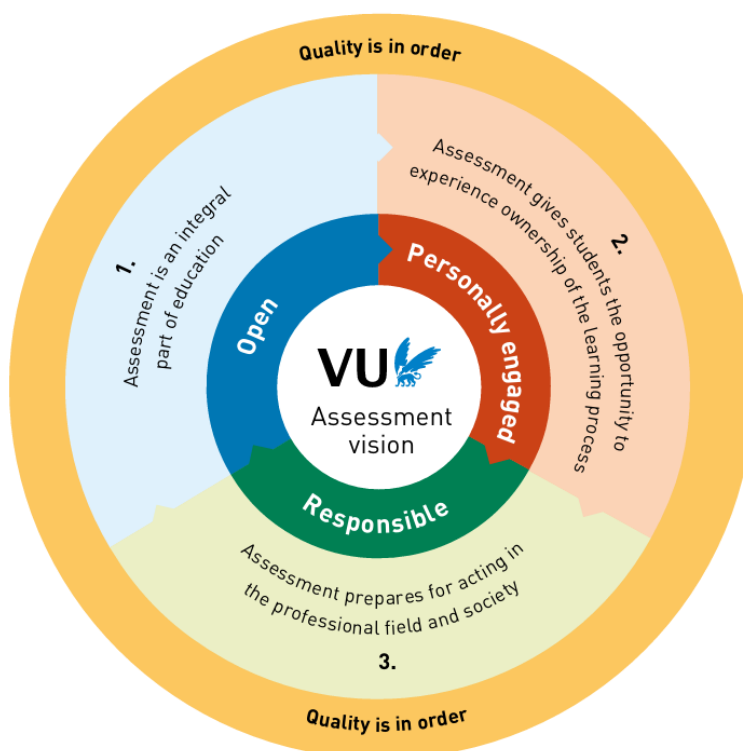
In 2022, the VU Amsterdam [Vision for future-proof assessment](#) was presented. This vision is fleshed out in three design principles, related to VU Amsterdam's core values: open, personally engaged and responsible. The design principles are as follows (see also Figure 1 below):

1. Assessment is an integral part of the learning process
2. Assessment gives students the opportunity to experience ownership of the learning process
3. Assessment prepares students to take an active role in their professional field and society at large

These design principles, which are presented in detail in the VU Amsterdam Vision for future-proof assessment, are intended to serve as a basis for all programmes at VU Amsterdam. They also form the foundation of a degree programme's assessment programme. Degree programmes make choices in the focus they place on the various design principles, depending on the nature and educational vision of the programme. When designing the assessment of a course unit, a learning path/minor or a programme, the lecturer or programme management considers the alignment of the assessment programme with the design principles. As a point of departure, the quality of the assessment must always be in order.

This document aligns the School of Humanities' assessment policy with the VU Amsterdam vision for assessment, focusing on such things as quality assurance, actors in assessment, assessment practice and practical support.

Figure 1: The vision on assessment in relation to the core values of the VU.



1. Assessment at the School of Humanities

The School of Humanities comprises a broad spectrum of disciplines and has degree programmes in linguistics, literature, communication and information sciences, art and culture, history, ancient studies, archaeology, philosophy and PPE. Interdisciplinarity is paramount throughout. The School aims to train students to become independent thinkers with an inquisitive attitude who can contribute to a future-proof society.

The School's three departments (Philosophy; Language, Literature and Communication; Art & Culture, History, and Antiquity) subscribe to the VU-wide vision of the importance of a stimulating and high-quality study climate. Given the wealth of disciplines and courses, a more specific vision on the coherence between education and the corresponding assessment is desirable. The school operates on the principle that quality assurance of education begins with and is based on the quality of the teaching staff; that quality assurance requires peer assessment and peer feedback from degree programme management and the Examination Board; that quality assurance requires clear procedures and structures in the organisation of the degree programme; and that quality assurance concerns the assessment of the degree programme and its components. This document has been prepared with the above in mind. The following basic principles apply to this vision for assessment:

- Assessment aligns to the final attainment levels and learning objectives ([constructive alignment](#))
- Assessment is representative, valid, reliable, transparent, usable and comparable. These characteristics are defined as follows:¹
 - **Representative:** the assessment reflects the course material taught.
 - **Valid:** the test measures what it is meant to measure, both with regard to the material to be learned (content validity) and with regard to the skills expected from the students (understanding, application, etc.) (concept validity).
 - **Reliable:** reliability is the extent to which the assessment provides an accurate and consistent measure. Every test is a snapshot with potential sources of error that may influence the result. The outcomes should be influenced as little as possible by elements of chance (e.g. misleading questions or spelling errors). For more information, see the VU Assessment Framework, pages 13-14.
 - **Transparent:** prior to the start of the course, examiners ensure that students are aware of the learning objectives, the summative/formative assessment methods and, for summative assessments, the relative weight attached to them. Important dates and deadlines are also made clear in advance.
 - **Usable:** the assessment method chosen is suitable in terms of group size and assessor workload. If the same learning objectives can be assessed at the same level using two or more assessment methods, it is reasonable to choose the method that is most usable in practice.
 - **Comparability:** the comparability of tests is important when working with parallel versions. But the first test opportunity and the resit should also be comparable in terms of level, representativeness and difficulty.

The design principles mentioned earlier have been fleshed out in this document and these serve as a basis for the School of Humanities assessment policy.

1. Assessment is an integral part of the learning process
 - a. A safe learning environment is essential for the learning process

¹ These definitions of validity, reliability, transparency and comparability are shortened versions and translations of the descriptions in the Dutch-language version of the forthcoming VU Assessment Framework (2025).

- b. The learning process provides sufficient space for open, formative dialogue²
- 2. Assessment gives students the opportunity to experience ownership of the learning process
- 3. Assessment prepares students to take an active role in their professional field and society at large
 - a. In degree programmes, theory and skills are also assessed in conjunction
 - b. Assessment includes true-to-life assignments

2. Quality assurance

[VU Amsterdam's Manual for Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning](#) describes the entire quality assurance cycle of a degree programme at VU Amsterdam. For the School of Humanities lecturers and staff, the main parts of this (the PDCA cycle and the VU Taxonomy) are briefly described below. For more detailed information and questions on this, please refer to the School's policy department, courses from the Centre for Teaching and Learning ([CTL](#)) or the aforementioned manual.

Assessment must be aligned with the learning objectives as formulated and the chosen teaching methods ([constructive alignment](#)). The relative weighting of the learning objectives must also be reflected in the assessment.

The learning objectives of each course must be adequately assessed, so that a programme can guarantee that every student actually meets the final attainment levels.

It is also important that assessment methods correspond to a programme's teaching methods. This correspondence is set out in a programme's assessment plan (see Chapter [4](#)). The PDCA cycle is the point of departure for the assessment plan.

2.1 The PDCA cycle

The PDCA cycle is a systematic approach to continuously evaluate and improve quality. It is an iterative process consisting of several phases: plan (Plan), execute (Do), evaluate (Check) and adjust (Act/Adjust). These four phases are constantly repeated to continuously optimise the content and/or adapt it to changing needs.

Plan

As the examiner, a course coordinator bears primary responsibility for assessment of the course. The course coordinator is responsible for formulating clear learning objectives and corresponding assessment methods. The course coordinator makes an assessment overview for the course, which provides information on:

- the assessment methods used
- the way the learning objectives are assessed
- the weight of the different assessments

For written exams, the course coordinator makes clear how the learning objectives and assessment methods relate to one another, e.g. in the study guide.

The assessment methods of a course are listed in the course syllabus, along with information about how students receive feedback and the nature of resit opportunity.

² Formative dialogue is an essential part of the learning process and focuses on questions relating to feedup, feedback and feedforward. These questions enable students to consciously and actively work on achieving learning objectives and, by extension, on their learning process (self-regulated or otherwise). The formative dialogue is (i) a form of assessment in which assignments are assessed without the consequence of a grade that counts towards the final grade, and (ii) related to the learning process of the student and gives the student insight into their development and place in the learning process. The formative dialogue is therefore always accompanied by feedback processes and self-regulation.

Do

'Do' is creating good assessment questions that closely follow the topics and levels of the course. Together with the lecturers, the course coordinator draws up the assessment instrument (an answer key for open-ended questions, assessment criteria or rubrics including points allocation) and the cut-off score. The syllabus describes how the final grade is established and how the components count towards the final grade.

Check

This is a review by direct colleagues. Before the test, peer feedback takes place: examiners review each other's questions including the answer key, assessment criteria or rubric(s). After administering and grading a written exam, an assessment analysis can be carried out (mandatory for digital exams).

The VU Examination Service or the School of Humanities ICT in Education team can help interpret the outcome. The course coordinator looks at the pass rates in their course and links these to the evaluation results.

Act/Adjust

How do we make sure that we learn from what we do?

- Each course is evaluated at least once every three years.
- The Examination Board/assessment committee (NL: toetskamer) carries out a periodic check to ensure the quality of assessment dossiers (see Chapter 3).
- The course coordinator reviews the results for each course and discusses them with fellow lecturers.
- The Programme Committee plays a role in reviewing course evaluations.

These discussions and actions can lead to improvement plans, which are included in the assessment dossier. The course coordinator discusses any changes in assessment methods or learning objectives with the programme director. This allows the programme director to maintain an overview of the programme, given their responsibility for the quality assurance of the programme.

2.2 VU Taxonomy

The VU Taxonomy was developed to help teaching staff apply the VU vision of assessment to their own courses. The table provides guidance on how to develop course assessment in a practical and coherent way. More information on the VU Taxonomy can be found [on the VU website](#).

3. Actors in assessment

3.1 Faculty Board and the Teaching and Examination Regulations

The Faculty Board is responsible for organising and coordinating teaching (and research) within the School. This means that the Faculty Board draws up the Teaching and Examination Regulations of the programmes and monitors compliance. The Faculty Board also appoints the members of Examination Boards and Programme Committees.

The Higher Education and Research Act (WHW) dictates that the broad outlines of the teaching programme and examination methods for each programme or group of programmes are recorded in the Teaching and Examination Regulations. These outlines are then fleshed out in faculty policy, the study guide, syllabi, final project manuals and final project regulations, internship manuals and/or other regulations.

3.2 The Examination Board and its rules and guidelines

The Examination Board determines whether a student meets the conditions set by the Teaching and Examination Regulations regarding the knowledge, insight and skills required to obtain a degree. The Examination Board safeguards the quality of assessment together with lecturers and staff. The powers and duties of an Examination Board are laid down in the Higher Education and Research Act. The Examination Board ensures and safeguards the quality of assessment. The Examination Board has an independent role.

Within the School of Humanities, the Examination Board consists of an executive committee, a Bachelor's Examination Board, a Master's Examination Board and an assessment committee. The Examination Board monitors compliance with the procedures and regulations in the Teaching and Examination Regulations and the rules and guidelines. Procedures for interim exams and final exams are presented in detail in the rules and guidelines of the Examination Board. These also define what is considered a violation, academic misconduct or plagiarism, as well as the possible sanctions. The requirements for cum laude are also set out in the rules and guidelines. The rules and guidelines are binding. There is a separate Examination Board for the Philosophy Politics and Economics (PPE) programme.

The assessment committee carries out periodic checks on assessment dossiers and theses. In other words, the assessment committee monitors and safeguards the quality of tests and exams, for example by means of random samples and/or evaluations. The assessment committee also specifically reviews the quality of assessment of theses. In principle, the assessment committee also annually assesses the programme's assessment plan (in any case prior to midterms and visitations), focusing on whether the programme enables students to achieve the final attainment levels of the degree programme with its programme of assessment. See also [Appendix 1](#).

VU Amsterdam has [general exam regulations](#), which the School's Examination Board adheres to.

3.3 Examiners

An examiner is a lecturer who has been appointed an examiner by the Examination Board. The examiner is responsible for the quality of assessment and appraisal of the relevant course. Multiple lecturers can be designated as examiners, but in the relevant systems one examiner will be officially linked to the course (course coordinator). Two examiners are always present at an oral exam. In the unforeseen instance that the second examiner cannot be present, an audio recording of the oral exam may be made. In that case, the examiner will include the recording in the assessment dossier. Examiners are expected to:

- hold a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ). Agreements about increasing the assessment skills of examiners can be made and evaluated in their annual and other performance reviews.
- have a PhD. This applies to regular courses as well as theses and internships.

The Examination Board may make an exception if the lecturer has extensive teaching experience and/or will complete the UTQ or a PhD in the very near future. To request this, the Programme Director must submit a written request to the Examination Board, accompanied by a copy of the lecturer's CV that lists their teaching duties. The above exception does not apply to the assessment of Bachelor's and Master's theses. Lecturers without a PhD are deemed qualified to assess tests under the supervision of an examiner.

3.4 Programme Committee

Each programme has a Programme Committee. The Programme Committee consists of teaching staff and students who, among other things, advise the Programme Director and the Faculty Board about

decisions relevant to the programme. Programme Committees verify, assess and monitor the quality of the programme and have the right of advice and right of assent for parts of the Teaching and Examination Regulations. When it comes to assessment, the Programme Committee has an advisory role. It reviews evaluations for each course and discusses them with the course coordinator and/or Programme Director if necessary.

3.5 Programme Director and Programme Coordinator

The Programme Director is responsible for the coherence and assessment quality of the programme. The Programme Director drafts the assessment plan, which includes the programme's final attainment levels and learning paths, most of which have been drawn up in consultation with the Programme Coordinator and full professors. The Programme Director also nominates examiners to the Examination Board.

The Programme Coordinator is in charge of organising the implementation of teaching and assessment. The Programme Coordinator is consulted if there are questions and changes concerning exam logistics.

3.6 Educational Policy Department

The Education Policy Department is responsible for shaping, implementing and safeguarding education policy (including assessment policy). It also monitors the quality assurance of education at the School. The Education Policy Department organises midterms and independent quality inspections in consultation with the programmes and advises on ICT in teaching and assessment. It is also involved in educational innovation.

3.7 Education Office

The Education Office supports the School and its programmes in the organisation and planning of education and helps students with study advice and practical matters. The educational logistics department of the Education Office is responsible for coordinating the organisation of exams. The student affairs department of the Education Office takes care of grade registration, graduation and diplomas.

3.8 Teaching assistants

A teaching assistant is a student enrolled at a higher education institution who has a formal appointment to support education and who receives financial compensation for doing so. Rules governing the support delivered by teaching assistants have been laid down [here](#).

4. Assessment practice

This chapter describes the framework for the School of Humanities' assessment at the programme and course level. The various actors in assessment at the School of Humanities all play an important role. Programme Directors and examiners have a particular responsibility for the pedagogical value of assessment. The following principles are used in assessment.

- All of the courses at the School of Humanities are designed according to the principles of *constructive alignment* ([4.1 Constructive alignment](#), [4.6 Summative and formative assessment](#) and [6 Glossary and useful links](#)).
- There are legal frameworks and quality frameworks for the preparation of exams ([4.4 Exams and constituent tests](#)), resits ([4.5 Resits](#)) and theses ([4.2 Theses](#)).

- The language of assessment is logical and students are assessed in the appropriate language ([4.3 Language](#)).
- Lecturers are asked to be able to show the relationship between the learning objectives of the course and the assessment methods and to submit an assessment dossier ([4.9 Content of assessment dossier](#)). Lecturers' choices at the course level will also appear in the programme's assessment plan ([4.7 Assessment plan](#)).
- For some assessment methods or circumstances, there are specific guidelines ([4.8 Assessment methods in practice](#)).

4.1 Constructive alignment

Constructive alignment refers to the necessary alignment – in terms of content and cognitive level – between learning objectives, learning activities and assessment. The course coordinator is responsible for constructive alignment within a course.

In addition, the learning objectives of individual courses within a programme must be purposefully aligned with the programme's final attainment levels.

4.2 Final Project (Thesis)

The procedures are laid down in the faculty final project regulations and final project manuals for each programme. The following principles serve as the basis of the final project process:

- The final project covers all the final attainment levels and the relationship between the final attainment levels and assessment criteria is clear.
- Theses are consistently assessed according to the applicable guidelines and using the applicable assessment forms.
- The process of writing or creating the final project is clear to students from the moment they start working on the final project

4.3 Language

It is important for lecturers and students that the language in which exam questions and assignments should be asked and answered is clear. The point of departure is that the language of assessment should be as close as possible to the language of instruction of the programme or track. For programmes with components taught partly in Dutch and partly in English, the programme's assessment plan clearly states the rules for the use of Dutch or English in assessments. If language proficiency in one of the languages is an explicit learning objective of the programme component, this is also clearly stated in the assessment plan and the study guide/syllabus.

If the examiner is not able to conduct the assessment in the assessment language of the programme component, the Examination Board may appoint a second examiner.

4.4 Exams and constituent tests

Every course is concluded with an exam. An exam is an assessment of a student's knowledge, understanding and skills and can consist of several parts (partial exams). The assessment is expressed in terms of a final grade. An exam may be written, oral or otherwise.

Partial examinations do not mean more tests with a corresponding increase in workload, but a distribution of the assessment. This gives the student the opportunity to let the course material sink in and the lecturer the opportunity to spread out the workload. The course coordinator provides students with clear information about the assessment of the course in the study guide and syllabus.

The student should be informed in advance about:

- The number of exams (or partial exams)

- The weighting of the different exams (or partial exams)
- Which exams (or partial exams) are summative
- Which parts of the course are practical exercises and how these are assessed
- The options for resitting and/or compensating exams (or partial exams)
- How the final grade will be determined

Constituent exams are valid in the academic year they are administered, unless the study guide specifies otherwise. The examiner may set a substitute assignment in special cases, taking into account the original learning objective(s) to be assessed.

For information on retention periods, see the relevant [page on VU.nl](#).

4.5 Resits

A resit always covers the same subject matter as the exam. In principle, a student has the right to one resit of each exam or assignment. When doing a resit, the most recent grade counts, even if it is lower than the previously obtained grade. In principle, a resit has the same assessment method as the original exam, given the requirement of comparability. Students are given the opportunity to sit exams twice per programme component per year. The Examination Board will determine (at the student's request) whether the student will be given an extra opportunity due to special circumstances. The possibility of resitting an internship and/or final project must be detailed in the programme's internship manual and final project manual, in line with this framework.

4.6 Summative and formative assessment

The aim of a summative assessment is to make a judgement about the knowledge and skills of a student and to determine whether they have an adequate command of the learning objectives of the programme component. The results of summative tests have consequences, usually in the form of a grade. It tests the extent to which students have achieved the objectives set by the programme component and makes a judgement on the basis of these findings. The test must therefore be able to differentiate students with a good command of the relevant material from those whose command is inadequate.

In the case of a formative test, students are not given a grade but feedback about the degree to which their work meets the relevant criteria, and the follow-up action required. Particularly when it comes to developing academic skills and critical thinking, giving and receiving good feedback is one of the best ways to understand and internalise assessment criteria. If students learn to understand the criteria required for their academic performance on their own – now and in the future – they will gradually be able to better reflect on their own work and become less dependent on feedback from the lecturer/examiner.

The choice of a summative or formative test is made primarily from a didactic point of view. However, in the context of workload, it is important to strike the right balance between using summative and formative assessments.

4.7 Assessment plan

Every programme has an assessment plan. The assessment plan is aligned with the VU Taxonomy and describes the following for each programme:

- The programme's final attainment levels in relation to the Dublin descriptors;
- The degree programme's assessment programme, and the accompanying explanation and methods for optimising assessment quality;
- The relationship between each course's learning objectives and the final attainment levels;

- The learning paths;
- The language in which the assessment questions are written and answered.

The Programme Director draws up the assessment plan for each programme. The Programme Director reviews the assessment plan every year, adjusting it if necessary. The review of the assessment plan takes place annually in the period between the drafting of UAS texts and the start of the next academic year.

4.8 Assessment methods in practice

This chapter describes a range of assessment methods and their functions. It is important to determine in advance which assessment method fits best, also considering the workload involved.

Exam

The word ‘tentamen’ (exam) has legal significance in the Netherlands: Article 7.3(3) of the Higher Education and Research Act stipulates that every educational unit shall end in a ‘tentamen’. This is therefore also called an ‘afsluitend tentamen’ (final exam).

The Teaching and Examination Regulations define a ‘tentamen’ as the assessment of a student’s knowledge, understanding and skills with regard to an educational unit. The assessment is expressed in terms of a final grade. An exam may consist of one or more constituent exams.

‘Tentamen’ can also refer to an assessment on (some of) the subject matter of a particular course.

A ‘tentamen’ may be written, oral or otherwise.

- Written: on a computer or with pen and paper. Examples include a written exam, a paper, an essay, a review and a report.
- Oral: the student answers questions from an examiner and a second examiner is present for reliability purposes.
- Otherwise: poster presentation, practicum, performance, design, exhibition, portfolio, fieldwork, etc.

Please note: Not all assessment methods are suitable for use as a final exam. For instance, an oral presentation is usually used as a partial exam or practical exercise; in that case, it covers part of the course material. In those cases, an oral presentation cannot be considered a final exam. An oral presentation should not be confused with an oral exam, which may indeed cover the entire course material.

Digital exams

TestVision is VU Amsterdam’s standard assessment application, which lecturers can use to create, prepare and grade assessment questions. It works with other software, such as SPSS, R Suite and Matlab. With TestVision, it is possible to collect all kinds of data about the exam, including assessment and item analysis to give lecturers more insight into the quality of the exam. In addition to TestVision, Canvas can be used for formative quizzes and hand-in assignments. We discourage the use of Canvas for summative exams.

The logistical capacity for assessment with TestVision is not yet sufficient to administer all exams digitally. In practice, exams are also conducted with pen and paper. This is indicated by lecturers upon communicating their UAS timetable preferences.

On rare occasions and in specific circumstances, digital exams can be administered remotely using online proctoring. See [4.10 Online proctoring](#).

Take-home exams

The term ‘take-home exam’ is widely used but has a specific meaning. Features of a take-home exam are:

- The exam consists of several essay questions that students must answer based on their own research; the exam may also consist of topical case studies;
- The exam is not held at an exam location;
- The student is given 24-72 hours to complete and hand in the exam.

Administering a regular written exam (digital or otherwise) without supervision is not considered a take-home exam, but an unsupervised exam. This is not allowed at VU Amsterdam and the School of Humanities because of the high risk of fraud.

Group assignments

A group assignment is one on which two or more students work together. If a group assignment is summative, there are two possible types of grades: a group grade (where all students in the group receive the same grade) or an individual grade based on a group product.

Upon completion of a group assignment, it is important for each student to have reached the required level as described in the learning objectives. For this reason, it is not permitted to assess a learning objective with a group grade alone, unless:

- the learning objective explicitly involves learning to work in a group, and/or
- it is demonstrable that all group members have achieved the relevant learning objective(s) (e.g. through critical reflection on the group assignment).

Peer review and peer assessment

‘Peer review’ means giving feedback on the work of fellow students and is encouraged as a learning activity at the School of Humanities, but is not compulsory. A ‘peer assessment’ is the assessment of a student by one or more fellow students.

In peer assessment of summative assignments, it is expected that:

- peer assessment is carried out by at least two fellow students;
- peer assessment does not make up a substantial part of the final course grade, but a maximum of 25%. The lecturer can also choose a smaller percentage, such as 10%;
- students use an appropriate assessment instrument; and
- the examiner closely monitors the results and adjusts the grade as necessary to ensure that the grades accurately reflect the student’s performance vis-à-vis the learning objectives. The final responsibility for the grade always lies with the examiner.

Self-assessment

Self-assessment is a method by which students assess their own work. At the School of Humanities, we recognise the value of students learning to assess the quality of their own work in relation to the intended learning objectives, but self-assessment is not mandatory. Self-assessment can also be formative (without assigning a grade to the work). However, if a lecturer chooses a self-assessment assignment in which the student assigns a grade to their own work, it is expected that:

- students use an appropriate assessment instrument for self-assessment;
- self-assessment makes up a maximum of 5% of the final grade; and
- the examiner closely monitors the results and adjusts the grade as necessary to ensure that the grades accurately reflect the student’s performance vis-à-vis the learning objectives.

If self-assessment is part of a peer assessment, both guidelines apply: peer assessment can make up a maximum of 25% of the final grade, of which up to 5% can be self-assessment. The final responsibility for the grade always lies with the examiner.

4.9 Content of assessment dossier

For each course, an assessment dossier is compiled by the course coordinator/examiner. This dossier contains all information on assessments; the documentation required varies by assessment method (see table below). If a course contains several summative tests, the examiner should include the necessary documentation for all summative tests in the assessment dossier. The assessment dossier also states whether an assessment analysis has been carried out and how the results are used. The assessment committee performs periodic checks on the assessment dossiers.

Assessment method	Required documentation
Written exam: multiple-choice questions (including digital), open questions (including digital) or paper/essay	- the syllabus - mock exam or representative practice or sample questions in the syllabus for a multiple-choice exam or open question exam: the exam and resit exam, including the cover sheet, which should contain (a) the corresponding instructions and (b) the name of the examiner (not involved in the course) who carried out the peer review of the exam and assessment instrument(s) for a paper/essay: assignment instructions - the assessment instrument (typically a rubric or answer key) with corresponding scores - in a multiple-choice exam, this is typically a list of correct answers on a copy of the exam, including any corrections - in an open-ended exam or paper/essay, this is typically a rubric or answer key - the cut-off score and score-to-grade transformation for a paper/essay: if not assessed directly on the 10-point scale - the pass rate - in case of a digital exam: a copy of the assessment and item analysis (if feasible given student numbers) - course evaluation results - short note with any improvement actions (if applicable) based on the assessment and item analysis, course evaluation or any other indicators
Oral exam	the syllabus

	• exam instructions • the name of the examiner (not involved in the course) who carried out the peer review of the exam and assessment instrument(s) • the name of the second examiner • the list of questions or guidelines for the exam • the completed copies of the assessment instrument (such as a rubric or answer key) with corresponding scores, or notes used for assessment • if no second examiner was present: the audio recordings of all exams • the cut-off score and score-to-grade transformation (if not assessed directly on the 10-point scale) • the pass rate • course evaluation results • short note with any improvement actions (if applicable) based on the course evaluation or any other indicators
Oral presentation (partial exam) or audiovisual assignment	• the syllabus • assignment instructions • the name of the examiner (not involved in the course) who carried out the peer review of the exam and assessment instrument(s) • the assessment instrument (such as a rubric or answer key) with corresponding scores • the cut-off score or score-to-grade transformation (if not assessed directly on the 10-point scale) • for an oral presentation: copies of all completed assessment instruments • the pass rate • course evaluation results • short note with any improvement actions (if applicable) based on the course evaluation or any other indicators

4.10 Online proctoring

According to central VU Amsterdam policy, online proctoring is only allowed in highly exceptional cases. The circumstances in which online proctoring may be allowed are:

1. When it is necessary, for example in the case of national government measures that prevent students from coming to campus in large numbers and situations where it is unsafe for students to come to campus in large numbers;
2. For candidates who have to take a selection test for admission to a Bachelor programme with limited enrolment;

3. For students who have requested and received permission from the Examination Board to take their test with online proctoring due to special individual circumstances.

In the case of a student's request motivated by special individual circumstances (see item 3 above), the student should submit the request to the Examination Board in sufficient time for it to be considered before the exam and – if it is approved – for online proctoring to be set up.

5. Practical support

5.1 Organisation

In principle, members of the teaching staff at the School of Humanities are responsible for administering exams themselves. Exams are organised by the Education Office. Detailed information about the way assessment is organised at VU Amsterdam is available on [the VU Amsterdam website](#).

5.2 Registering for exams

Every student must register for courses. After registering for a course, the student is automatically registered for the written exam. In the case of a failing grade, the student will automatically be registered for the resit. In other cases, the student must arrange this themselves.

5.3 Special facilities

Students with disabilities can request special facilities for taking exams. The academic advisors are mandated by the Examination Board to grant these facilities. The Education Office is in charge of coordinating the arrangement of facilities and informs the student and the examiner about the practical aspects associated with special arrangements made to help the student take an exam.

5.4 After an exam

The examiner must determine the result of a written exam within ten working days. For theses, the grading period shall not exceed twenty working days. The lecturer records the grades via VU.nl. The student has the right to inspect the graded exam. The student can peruse the questions and assignments of the written exam concerned and the norms on the basis of which assessment took place.

Students can submit requests and questions with regard to assessment to the Examination Board via VU.nl (e.g. a request for a supplementary exam, a request for an extension of the validity period of exam results, and questions regarding the application of the Teaching and Examination Regulations and rules and guidelines).

5.5 Complaints

An individual student can submit a complaint about exams via VU.nl. The Education Office will handle the complaint on behalf of the Faculty Board.

- In the event of a complaint about the organisation or content of an exam, an individual student is advised to first contact the course coordinator. If the content of the complaint is about the way in which an exam has been assessed, an appeal can be lodged with the Examination Appeals Board. See also [the information for students on VU.nl](#).
- A group of students can submit a collective complaint in writing to the Faculty Board. If such a complaint concerns assessment (or the quality thereof), the Faculty Board may seek advice from the Examination Board (in particular the assessment committee).

- As a result of complaints about the assessment of a course or the quality thereof, a Programme Committee or Programme Director may request the Examination Board (in particular the assessment committee) to analyse the assessment dossier for the course concerned.

6. Glossary and useful links

All information on assessment for staff can be found here: [Testing and assessing - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam](#)

Artificial Intelligence: The use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, has increased a lot in recent years. This can negatively affect students' development of writing skills and makes it easier to cheat when writing a thesis. VU Amsterdam is constantly updating its policies on the use and abuse of AI and assessment; faculty Examination Boards determine when fraud is involved. At the time of writing, the use of AI in education is decided at the programme level.

Assessment instrument: [Testing and assessing - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam \(vu.nl\)](#)

Cut-off score: The cut-off score is the pass/fail limit when grading a test. The cut-off score is a minimum standard of proficiency, based predominantly on the material studied, that students must meet in order to pass the assessment. An examiner must be able to justify the exact cut-off score for the programme component in its entirety. The use of decimals is required in this context. For example, 59.9 is a valid cut-off score, 60 is not. See also: Manual for Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning, Chapter 11, Appendix 4: [Setting the cut-off score](#).

Constructive alignment: [Motivated students with constructive alignment - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam \(vu.nl\)](#)

Examination Board and assessment committee:

[Examination and Assessment Board - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam \(vu.nl\)](#)

[Examination Board - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam \(vu.nl\)](#)

Formative assessment: see [Examiner \(lecturer\) - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam \(vu.nl\)](#)

Manual for Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning: [Manual for Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam \(vu.nl\)](#)

PDCA cycle: See VU Amsterdam's Manual for Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning, [Chapter 10 \(Assessment Framework\)](#)

Thesis regulations and thesis manual: [Thesis information School of Humanities - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam \(vu.nl\)](#)

Summative assessment: [Examiner \(lecturer\) - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam \(vu.nl\)](#)

Take-home exam: see [Chapter 4 \(Assessment practice\)](#)

Assessment and item analysis: [Examiner \(lecturer\) - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam \(vu.nl\)](#) (currently only available in Dutch)

Assessment dossier (module dossier): see [Chapter 4 \(Assessment practice\)](#)

Assessment blueprint: See VU Amsterdam's Manual for Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning, [Chapter 10 \(Assessment Framework\)](#) and [2069419 SOZ Brochure Quickstart NL.pdf \(kc-usercontent.com\)](#)

Assessment plan: See VU Amsterdam's Manual for Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning, [Chapter 10 \(Assessment Framework\)](#)

VU Taxonomy: [VU Taxonomy for course learning goals at VU Amsterdam - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam](#)

Appendix 1 Appendix on assessment committee

The role and tasks of the assessment committee

On behalf of and under the auspices of the executive committee of the Examination Board, the assessment committee safeguards the quality of assessments and assessment plans, as described below. In this School, the assessment committee forms part of the Examination Board. The members of the assessment committee represent the respective departments of the School. A full description of how the assessment committee operates can be found on VU.nl.

On behalf of the Examination Board, the assessment committee annually selects exams and theses for each programme in order to ensure that exams and theses meet the quality requirements, that the assessments are adequate and that the peer assessment is carried out. The assessment committee ensures that examiners complete the assessment forms when grading a thesis.

The annual plan of the assessment committee states which course assessment dossiers will be evaluated in the next academic year. Suggestions as to which courses should be evaluated can be made by other sections of the Examination Board, Programme Directors, the Portfolio Holder for Education and the Programme Committees. In consultation with the secretary, the chairperson makes the final selection of courses, taking into account the visitation cycle and a good spread of courses over the different education periods. If possible, this selection will not be communicated to the examiners/course coordinators of the courses concerned, so that they do not know in advance that their course will be assessed. Course coordinators must then ensure that the assessment dossier is made available to the assessment committee.

Each assessment dossier is assessed by two committee members based on a clear assessment form. In consultation with the secretary, the chairperson determines which members of the committee will evaluate an assessment dossier, taking their subject-related and educational expertise into account. Once a year, one particular assessment dossier is assessed and discussed by all members of the assessment committee. During the meeting of the assessment committee, the findings of the committee members are discussed, after which the two assessment forms are merged into a single form, and any actions to be taken are discussed. Examiners always receive the merged assessment form. There are several possible outcomes:

- the assessment committee finds that the assessment dossier is completely in order; the chairperson commends the examiner – no feedback is deemed necessary but the assessment committee does ask for confirmation of receipt;
- the chairperson of the assessment committee asks the examiner to respond to the findings (feedback);
- the assessment committee has fundamental objections to the assessment dossier; the chairperson informs the examiner about this, asks them to draw up an improvement plan and checks whether the improvement plan is actually being implemented. The Programme Director is informed about the fact that an improvement plan has been requested and is told whether the plan has actually been implemented. If it is established that no improvements have been made, the Examination Board's executive committee will be informed. The executive committee will consult the supervisor of the examiner in question, as well as the Programme Director, who will decide on appropriate measures. In extreme circumstances, the Examination Board can decide that the teaching staff member may no longer act as an examiner – for the course in question, or in general.

If an assessment dossier has been evaluated on the recommendation of another section of the Examination Board, the Portfolio Holder for Education, Programme Director or Programme Committee, the examiner remains the first point of contact. In addition, the Programme Director and the officer/committee concerned will be informed about the findings of the assessment committee. The annual plan of the assessment committee also states which thesis assessments will be analysed in the following academic year. Suggestions as to which thesis assessments should be analysed can be made by other sections of the Examination Board, Programme Directors, the Portfolio Holder for

Education and Programme Committees. In consultation with the secretary, the chairperson makes the final selection of theses, taking into account the visitation cycle. The analysis is done using a form designed for this specific purpose. Each thesis assessment is analysed by one assessment committee member. The subject-related expertise of the members is taken into account as much as possible when dividing the theses. The findings of each member of the assessment committee with regard to a thesis assessment are discussed during an assessment committee meeting, after which it is determined whether further action is required. Examiners always receive the assessment form. There are several possible outcomes:

- the assessment committee does not find any irregularities with regard to the thesis assessment; the findings are archived by the secretary, but no feedback is requested from the original assessors, apart from confirmation of receipt;
- the assessment committee does find irregularities in the thesis assessment and therefore asks the original assessors for a response (feedback); if the feedback is satisfactory, it will be archived by the secretary, together with the findings of the assessment committee. In principle, the member of the assessment committee concerned will ask the assessors to respond;
- the assessment committee has fundamental doubts about the assessment and decides to read the thesis in its entirety. If doubts remain about the assessment after reading, the chairperson informs the original assessors and their Programme Director(s) of the assessment committee's findings. They are asked for a response and this response, together with the findings of the assessment committee, is archived by the Secretary. The assessment committee checks whether any proposed improvement measures are actually implemented. If it is established that no improvements have been made, the Examination Board's executive committee will be informed. The executive committee will consult the supervisor of the examiner in question, as well as the Programme Director, who will decide on appropriate measures. In extreme circumstances, the Examination Board can decide that the teaching staff member may no longer act as an examiner (for thesis assessment, or in general).

If a thesis has been evaluated on the recommendation of another section of the Examination Board, the Portfolio Holder for Education, Programme Director or Programme Committee, at least the Programme Director and the officer/committee concerned will also be informed of the findings of the assessment committee. An overview of all assessment committee evaluations, including feedback given by the original assessor, is included as a confidential appendix to the assessment committee's annual report.

The assessment committee advises on the assessment policy at School level and its translation/implementation at departmental level, as well as on the assessment plans. The assessment committee also advises on the thesis regulations, thesis and internship manuals and the assessment forms for oral exams, papers and theses. The assessment committee informs the Examination Board's executive committee of its findings.

The assessment committee evaluates the assessment policy and its implementation on the basis of assessment dossiers provided by the lecturers, graded theses and other relevant information. The findings and any recommendations for improvement are included in the annual report of the Examination Board. The Portfolio Holder for Education and Programme Directors receive this annual report. Programme management and the Examination Board ensure that there is regular contact between the two bodies with regard to assessment and assessment policy; twice a year (and more often if necessary), the chairperson of the assessment committee will attend the meetings of the Programme Directors to discuss the assessment policy and its implementation.

Assessment dossier evaluation form used by assessment committee

Course	
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Examiner	
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Documents	Present?	Comments
Syllabus		
details (title, code, level, number of EC, examiner)		
description of content		
teaching method(s)		
learning objectives		
assessment method(s) , including the weighting of the different grades of the assessment components and ways to compensate for grades within the course		
the schedule for the study period , including date(s) of exam(s) and/or deadlines for other assignments (including resits)		
Written exam		
the mock exam (or sample questions)		
the exam (and any resit exam)		
the cover sheet of the exam / resit exam, mentioning the name of the co-examiner (not involved in the course) who carried out the peer review		
the answer key of the exam (and any resit exam).		
relationship between learning objectives of the course, assessment and intended proficiency levels (e.g. in an assessment blueprint)		
Assessment method(s) other than written exam (explain which type of assessment)		
instructions with regard to content		
the assessment criteria (by means of e.g. an assessment model or form)		
relationship between learning objectives of the course, assessment and intended proficiency levels (e.g. in an assessment blueprint)		
Other documents		
List of results for test/paper		
Evaluation		

General findings of assessment committee
Course coordinator feedback

Form assessment thesis assessments

Thesis title	Study programme	Grade	Names first and second supervisor	Approved examiners?
Content	Satisfactory? (yes/no)	Comments		
Introduction (research design, research question, method, theoretical framework)				
Conclusion				
Bibliography				
Academic language and composition				
Process	Satisfactory? (yes/no)	Comments		
There is a fully completed thesis agreement signed by all parties involved (Philosophy excepted).				
A first and second reader were involved in the assessment (for a thesis with two supervisors: a third reader)				
There are individually completed assessment forms of the first and second (possibly third) reader				
There is a third form (cover page) in which the two readers have come to a joint final verdict				
The assessment forms show that the content of the assessments is very similar.				
<i>If the assessment forms do differ significantly from each other: the documentation shows that an adequate</i>				

working method has been followed to arrive at a final assessment.		
	Satisfactory? (yes/no)	Comments
Final verdict		

Feedback from supervisor(s) (if needed)