

Examination Board Rules and Guidelines

2026 - 2027

**Examination Boards
Faculty of Science**

Examination Board Rules and Guidelines

Valid from September 1, 2026

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Appendix 1: VU Amsterdam – Examination Regulations

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 referred to 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 Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) 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:
 - a. *Examination Board or sub-board*: the Examination Board for one or more of the faculty's degree programmes;
 - b. *Faculty Examination Board*: an overarching Examination Board focused on procedural harmonization of the sub-boards' methods, approving reports of the Assessment Committee and constructing the Rules and Guidelines. All members of the Examination Board for one or more of the faculty's degree programmes are also members of the Faculty Examination Board.
2. In case that a clause in these regulations conflicts with a clause in the Teaching and Examination Regulations applicable to the relevant degree programme, the provisions of the Teaching and Examination Regulations will take precedence.

3. Composition of the Examination Board

1. The Examination Board is composed on the basis of the Faculty Regulations. The Faculty of Science has two Faculty Examination Boards: the HLS-EEE Faculty Examination Board and the NSM-IS Faculty Examination Board. The HLS-EEE Faculty Examination Board has nine sub-boards and the NSM-IS Faculty Examination Board has six sub-boards. The Examination Board for (a cluster of) specific degree programmes consists of a maximum of five members, all experts in the field of the relevant programme(s). At least one 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 excluded from serving on the Examination Board.
2. The members of the Examination Board are appointed by the Faculty Board.
3. The Examination Board appoints one of its members to act as chair (not the external member). The chair appoints another member to replace them in the case of absence. The chair of the Faculty Examination Board should preferably not be a member of one of the sub-boards. The administrative secretary 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 only be reappointed twice.
6. The Faculty Board is responsible for guaranteeing that the Examination Board operates in a competent and independent manner.

4. Duties of the Examination Board

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

1. determining in an objective and competent manner whether or not a student meets the conditions set in the Teaching and Examination Regulations relating to the knowledge, insight and skills necessary to be awarded a degree;
2. maintaining and assuring the quality of all examinations and final degree assessments;
3. determining guidelines and instructions to assess and determine the results of examinations and final degree assessments within the framework of the Teaching and Examination Regulations;
4. granting exemptions for one or more examinations;
5. extending the validity period of an examination or an exemption, if a student submits a motivated request. The Examination Board may decide to only grant an extension of validity after the student has successfully passed a supplementary examination on the relevant subject matter.
6. determining in exceptional cases that the assessment method laid down in the TER may be deviated from;
7. fraud;
8. appointing examiners to conduct examinations and determine their results;
 - a. Before the start of each academic year, the Examination Board appoints examiners and replacing examiners, provided that an examiner is a member of the permanent staff of VU Amsterdam, Amsterdam UMC or a partner institution of a formal joint-degree programme, holds a PhD and possesses a BKO, SKO or equivalent qualification;
 - b. In exceptional cases, individuals who do not meet the basic requirements for examiners as set out in paragraph a. may be appointed if the Examination Board deems this justified. To this end, the programme director must submit a reasoned request to the Examinations Board;
 - c. The Examination Board may revoke or suspend an examiner's appointment if the examiner no longer teaches at the VU or if, in the Examination Board's opinion, the examiner is not performing the role of examiner properly.
9. granting degree certificates, including a diploma supplement, as proof that the student has successfully completed their degree programme;
10. granting permission to students to take part in a free-choice study programme and the accompanying final degree assessment which leads to the awarding of a degree;
11. issuing a transcript of the results attained by students who have successfully completed more than one examination, but are not eligible for a degree certificate;
12. drawing up an annual report on its own activities.

5. Working method of the Examination Board

1. The Examination Board normally meets once a month (with the exception of July and August) or as often as its chairperson deems necessary. The meeting schedule will be published in time. 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 secretary to the Examination Board.
3. In the event of a request or complaint where a member of the Examination Board is involved in, this will be dealt with in the absence of the member concerned.
4. A request or complaint must in any case include substantiation or a description, respectively. The request must be complete and contain all necessary information.
5. The Examination Board will make a decision within six weeks (30 business days) of receiving

- a request. This period may be extended, if the Examination Board informs all parties concerned in writing.
6. Decisions of the Faculty Examination Board require 1 vote per sub-board. Decisions of the Faculty Examination Board will be taken only when half of the sub-boards are represented.
 7. The HLS-EEE Faculty Examination Board has nine sub-boards for Bachelor's and Master's programmes in the following fields:
 - Earth Sciences (Bachelor's programmes Aarde, Economie & Duurzaamheid, Aardwetenschappen, Master's programmes Earth Sciences, Hydrology)
 - Biology and Ecology (Bachelor's programme Biologie, Master's programme Ecology and Evolution)
 - Biomedical Sciences (Bachelor's programme Biomedische wetenschappen, Master's programme Biomedical Sciences)
 - Biomolecular Sciences (Master's programme Biomolecular Sciences)
 - Environment and Resource Management (Master's programme Environment and Resource Management)
 - Health and Life (Bachelor's programme Gezondheid en Leven)
 - Health Sciences (Bachelor's programme Gezondheidswetenschappen, Master's programme Gezondheidswetenschappen)
 - Management, Policy Analysis and Entrepreneurship in the Health and Life Sciences & Global Health (Master's programmes Management, Policy Analysis and Entrepreneurship in the Health and Life Sciences, Global Health (research))
 - Neurosciences (Master's programme Neurosciences)
 8. The NSM-IS Faculty Examination Board has six sub-boards for Bachelor's and Master's programmes in the following fields:
 - Mathematics & Business Analytics (Bachelor's programmes Business Analytics, Mathematics, Master's programmes Business Analytics, Mathematics)
 - Chemistry
 - Pharmaceutical Sciences (Bachelor's programme Farmaceutische Wetenschappen, Master's programme Drug Discovery Sciences)
 - Computer Science (Bachelor's programmes Artificial Intelligence, Computer Science, Master's programmes Bioinformatics and Systems Biology (joint degree), Artificial Intelligence, Computer Science (joint degree), Computer Security, Information Sciences)
 - Physics and Astronomy
 - Medical Natural Sciences & Science, Business & Innovation (Bachelor's programmes Medische Natuurwetenschappen, Science, Business and Innovation, Master's programmes Biomedical Technology and Physics, Science, Business and Innovation)
 9. Sub-boards are mentioned accordingly. Every sub-board has at least 2 members.
 10. In the interest of procedural matters, non-voting members can be added to the sub-board.
 11. A chairperson and a secretary are elected by the own members of the sub-board, they will function as the executive board.
 12. Day-to-day matters in the Faculty Examination Board are settled in the sub-boards.
 13. Decisions of the sub-board are taken by majority vote.
 14. Students who take a course elsewhere as part of their program should contact the Examination Board of the program to which that course belongs, if they request an extra examination opportunity.
 15. If the decision of the Examination Board requires the weighing of interests, the following should be taken into account, among other things:
 - a. safeguarding the quality of examinations or final degree assessments;
 - b. efficiency requirements: the Examination Board aims to prevent students falling badly

- behind in their studies, as well as lecturers or the degree programme having a significant/excessive additional workload. It will be taken into account in the assessment that the efforts required of the degree programme should not be disproportionate;
- c. leniency: the Examination Board will exercise leniency towards students if they have fallen behind in their studies due to special circumstances beyond their control.
16. Students can submit an appeal against the decision made by the Examination Board directly to the Examination Appeals Board within six weeks of the announcement of the decision.

6. Questions and assignments, study material 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. 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.
3. Each exam will have such length as to ensure that students to reasonable standards have enough time to answer the questions.

7. Completing examinations in a different form than that specified in the TER

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

8. Oral examinations

1. Unless otherwise specified by the Teaching 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 an exceptional case that an oral examination is not public.
3. A student may submit a motivated request to the sub-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. If an oral examination is conducted by video interview, the presence of one examiner and the making of an audio recording shall suffice.
5. In order to participate in an oral examination, students must show valid proof of registration and a valid ID.

9. Assessment of examinations

1. A course unit is concluded with an examination to which a final grade or symbol (pass/fail, good/sufficient/insufficient, or a different type of qualification) is assigned.
2. When a student did not participate in any of the constituent parts of the examination, the examiner records as the final grade: 'no show' (ns).
3. In determining the final grade, the weighted average of partial results shall be truncated after two decimal places, after which the following table shall apply:

From	To	Grade
1.00	1.24	1.0
1.25	1.74	1.5
1.75	2.24	2.0
2.25	2.74	2.5
2.75	3.24	3.0
3.25	3.74	3.5
3.75	4.24	4.0
4.25	4.74	4.5
4.75	5.49	5.0
5.50	6.24	6.0
6.25	6.74	6.5
6.75	7.24	7.0
7.25	7.74	7.5
7.75	8.24	8.0
8.25	8.74	8.5
8.75	9.24	9.0
9.25	9.74	9.5
9.75	10.0	10

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.

11a. Procedure for written examinations

1. Students are obliged to be validly registered at the time of participating in an examination and to provide proof of identity in accordance with the provisions of the Vrije Universiteit - Examination Regulations (Appendix 1), the forms of identification specified are valid only in the form of physical documents; digital documents are not regarded as valid forms of identification.
 - a. If a student cannot produce valid proof of identity, as stated in paragraph 1, the student can be excluded from the exam, or the exam submitted by the student can be declared invalid afterwards. The registration proving that the student took the exam will remain unchanged.
 - b. Participating in a digital exam is not possible without the personal VUnetID and password of the student. The student is responsible for having these available.
2. In consultation with the Education Office of the faculty, the testing organization shall ensure that, for the purpose of the written examination, sufficient invigilators are appointed, who shall ensure that the examination proceeds in good order.
3. If the examination is not held in a common examination room as referred to in the Vrije Universiteit - Examination Regulations (Appendix 1), the Faculty Education Office shall ensure the presence of sufficient invigilators.
4. Students are obliged to follow the instructions of the invigilator(s).

11b. 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 practical sessions, assistants will be appointed where necessary to monitor that the practical, fieldwork, field trip or research activity goes well.

2. At the request of the Examination Board or someone acting on the Examination Board's behalf, students are obliged to identify themselves by presenting a valid proof of registration.
3. Students are obliged to follow the instructions given by the person in charge of the practical, both before and during the practical.
4. Any student who fails to follow up 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 Examination 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 was drawn up for the practical exercise, the student must sign this document before the start of the course. A student who does not sign this may be excluded from the course.

12. Graduation

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 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 student can make a substantiated request to the Examination Board not to proceed with issuing a degree certificate. Any such request must be submitted within 10 working days of the student having been informed of the intended graduation date or has met the requirements to graduate. The Examination Board allows graduation to be postponed provided the postponed graduation date falls within the nominal duration of the programme plus one year. The Examination Board may decide differently in exceptional cases.

13. Free curriculum

1. Subject to certain conditions, the student has the option of compiling a study programme of their own choice which deviates from the study programmes prescribed by the degree programme.
2. The composition of such a programme requires the prior approval of the Examination Board that has the greatest jurisdiction over the programme components.
3. The free programme is compiled by the student from educational units offered at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam or another institution of higher education and must at least have the same scope (breadth and depth) as a regular Bachelor's or Master's programme. The student must ensure that the proposed Bachelor's programme enables them to proceed to at least one Master's programme. In doing so, they are not obliged to take the relevant Master's programme.

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. for all degree components, with the exception of the graduation project, grades of 7.0 or higher have been obtained;
 - b. the weighted average of all degree components must be 8.0 or higher. Extracurricular

- grades do not count towards the average;
 - c. the grade for the graduation project is at least an 8.0;
 - d. exemptions make up no more than 36 EC of the standard number of credits to be obtained;
 - e. all grades must be obtained within four years of starting the programme;
 - f. only the results obtained during the initial participation are taken into account. This requirement applies to all students who started the programme as of September 1, 2023;
 - g. students who started their studies before the first of September 2026 have to meet the requirements of the cum laude classification of their starting year.
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. for all degree components, with the exception of the graduation project, grades of 7.0 or higher have been obtained;
 - b. the weighted average for all degree components must be 8.0 or higher; the grade for the final Master's project does not count towards the weighted average.
Extracurricular grades do not count towards the average;
 - c. the grade for the graduation project is at least an 8.0;
 - d. exemptions make up no more than 20% of the standard number of credits to be obtained;
 - e. for a two-year Master's programme, all grades must be obtained within three years after starting the programme, for a one-year Master's programme all grades must be obtained within two years after starting the programme;
 - f. only the results obtained during the initial participation are taken into account. This requirement applies to all students who started the programme as of September 1, 2023;
 - g. if a student follows two master's programs simultaneously of two years each, then the student must have completed both programmes within 3,5 years;
 - h. if a student follows two master's programmes simultaneously, where one programme lasts two years and the other one year, then the student must have completed both programmes in three years;
 - i. students who started their studies before the first of September 2026 have to meet the requirements of the cum laude classification of their starting year.
4. No additional degree classification (e.g. cum laude) will be awarded if a student is guilty of fraud.
5. When applying the criteria for awarding degree classifications as described in paragraphs 2 and 3, the rounded final results of the degree components as registered in the official student administration records are used.
6. When applying the criteria for awarding degree classifications, a student will be deemed to have participated in an examination once the examination location has been entered or, in the case of a digital examination, once the exam in the examination environment has been accessed. In the case of papers and assignments assessing skills, the student will be deemed to have participated once a final version has been submitted.
7. As long as it presents arguments for its case, the Examination Board may deviate from the criteria stated in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4.

15. Degree certificate and statement

1. The Examination Board grants a degree certificate as proof that the student has passed their final degree assessment. The Examination Board will add a diploma supplement to the degree certificate, which will provide information on the nature and content of the

completed degree program. The diploma supplement is drawn up in Dutch or English and complies with the European format. Extra-curricular courses that have been passed outside of the VU, will not be included in the diploma supplement.

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. 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 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.

16. Exemption (supplementary to the Teaching and Examination Regulations)

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. If the Examination Board grants an exemption for an examination that is part of an educational unit that involves more than one examination, the exemption can only be granted once all other components of the educational unit have been passed. In that case, the exemption is registered as the final result for the educational unit.
5. An exemption based on a course from the programme that gave the student admission to the degree programme cannot be granted.
6. 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.
7. No exemptions can be granted for theses or final projects.
8. The maximum amount of exemptions a student can receive is 60 EC for one three-year bachelor program, 36 EC for one two-year master program, and 18 EC for one one-year master program. This does not include substitute courses (courses obtained at another institution as part of a double degree, see Art. 1.2 of the TER).
9. If a student takes several programs (simultaneously), leading to several degrees, whereby subjects may be included in both programs, the Examination Board may deviate from the rule under 16.8.

17. Replacement assignments

1. 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 in consultation with the examiner which supplementary requirements the student has to meet. Student must always meet the learning outcomes for the programme.
2. A study result for a replacement assignment for which a pass mark has been obtained at a foreign university, may be registered as 'geslaagd' or 'pass'.

18. Exemption from practical training and tutorials

In exceptional cases, the Examination Board can, upon request, exempt a student or partially exempt a student from the obligation to participate in a practical training or tutorial. The Examination Board decides how the student can demonstrate that they have the required academic skills.

19. Fraud in examinations and final degree assessments

1. Fraud (including plagiarism) is defined as any act or omission by a student that partially or entirely precludes making an accurate assessment of their knowledge, understanding and skills, or those of another student.
2. Fraud includes at least:
 - a. being in possession of tools or resources (pre-programmed calculator, mobile phone, smart watch, books, syllabi, notes, etc.) which are not explicitly permitted during the examination;
 - b. copying from or exchanging information with another student during the examination;
 - c. assuming someone else's identity during an examination;
 - d. allowing someone else to assume your identity during an examination;
 - e. obtaining the examination questions before the date or time when the examination is scheduled to take place;
 - f. changing, extending or amending a section of an examination after it has been submitted for a final assessment;
 - g. continuing to work on an examination after the official examination time has ended, with the exception of those who have been granted extra time;
 - h. the submission of work that has been wholly or partially generated using artificial intelligence, in a manner not permitted by the examiner;
 - i. falsifying data/research data or sources;
 - j. plagiarism.
3. Fraud in the form of plagiarism includes at least 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 an appropriate 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 previously submitted or comparable texts (or parts thereof), for assignments for other degree components, without referring to it;
 - 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 for the detection of fraud. When submitting a text, the student implicitly consents to the text being entered into the database of the detection program concerned.

20. Procedures and Measures

1. If the examiner ascertains, or has good reason to suppose, that fraud has taken place, they 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 fraud, 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. It is possible that the Examination Board will only invite a student to be heard after a provisional decision has been sent.

3. If the Examination Board finds that fraud has indeed occurred, a measure will be imposed.
4. In cases of fraud, 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. The Examination Board can also require the student to write a reflection report. Also, as a part of the measure, the Examination Board may impose that a plagiarism certificate be obtained before the grade is released.
5. In the event of serious or repeated fraud, 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 serious fraud is identified, the Examination Board can advise the Executive Board that the relevant student's registration should be terminated permanently.
7. In urgent cases relating to fraud 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.
8. If a student takes a course at another degree programme and fraud is detected or suspected, the Examination Board responsible for the course in relation to which the fraudulent conduct has been detected, will investigate the suspected fraud by the student. The Examination Board of the degree programme that the student is enrolled in, will be informed of the findings. The latter Examination Board determines whether, and what measure is imposed on the student, in the event of fraud.

21. Irregularities

If the Examination Board concludes that one or more examination components, or an entire examination, was not completed in the prescribed manner or that an examination component or examination was not held in the proper manner, such that a proper assessment of the student's knowledge, insight and skills cannot be made, it will declare the examination, or the relevant component thereof, invalid.

22. Retention periods

The Examination Board follows the retention periods specified in the Retention Periods List for the retention periods of exams, certificates for the propaedeutic phase, graduation projects, and graduation exams: [Onderwijs](#)

23. Annual report

By the first of 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.

24. 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.

25. 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.

26. Date of commencement

These Rules and Guidelines take effect as of 1 September 2026.

Adopted by the NSM-IS Examination Board on August 31, 2026

Adopted by the HLS-EEE Examination Board on August 31, 2026

APPENDIX 1

[Vrije Universiteit - Examination Regulations](#)