



# UCU Assessment policy plan

## Introduction

This document outlines the principles of assessment at University College Utrecht. It follows the UU educational model and reflects the UCU vision on education, providing guidelines for examiners. The Assessment Policy Plan (APP) has been formally approved by the College Board after approval of the UCU Council and Board of Studies and is reviewed annually. The implementation of the principles outlined in the APP is the responsibility of the examiners (teachers) and is monitored by the Heads of Department and the Fellows of the disciplines. The Examboard is responsible for safeguarding the overall quality of assessment.

This document creates a structure to assure the validity, accuracy and transparency of assessment. The guidelines included in this document are further developed for the different tracks in their own assessment plans, indicating the specifics of assessment for that discipline in more detail.

UCU is characterized by a small-scale intensive teaching environment. To help students reach the learning objectives, UCU monitors and assesses the learning process of the students continuously, and provides regular feedback.

University College Utrecht uses a five-letter grading system. These grades indicate the following:

- A: very good (A+ : outstanding)
- B: good
- C: satisfactory
- D: restrictive pass
- F: fail

All letter grades correspond with a grade point (see ARR, paragraph 5.4.1 to calculate final grades.

Some extracurricular courses and projects are not awarded with a letter grade, but only with a Pass or Fail.

## 1. Description of (delegated) responsibilities of all actors involved with any aspect of assessment

- Board of Studies. All proposals for new courses are evaluated by the Board of Studies. The learning goals and their relation to assessment, as well as the proposed assessment plan for the course are a major part of the decision-making procedure for adding a course to the program.
- Examboard. The exam board is responsible for safeguarding the overall quality of assessment.
- Assessment Committee: the Assessment Committee supports the Examboard in the evaluation of the quality of assessment.
- UCU Council. The UCU Council acts as both Faculty Council and Program Committee. As Program Committee they oversee the quality of the education at UCU, including the evaluation.
- Examiners. All teachers and faculty members responsible for assessment are called examiners and operate under the auspices of the Exam Board.

## 2. Professional qualification and quality assurance of examiners

All examiners have at least a BKO and a PhD. For teachers in training for their BKO and / or not yet in possession of a PhD, a qualified examiner in the same field takes formal responsibility for assessment and grading.



### 3. Quality assurance of assessment

The quality assurance of UCU education takes place through a cyclic quality assurance system, which is documented in the Quality Assurance Plan, and reported on in the Quality Assurance Reports. For assessments, the Examboard safeguards the overall quality. The Examboard regularly perform in-depth assessments of the quality of assessment across the disciplines.

### 4. Description of end terms

We distinguish between learning objectives at course, track and degree level. These are the basis for assessment. All assessment components are related to the learning goals of the course. Conversely, each learning goal is addressed in at least one assessment component.

- Learning goals for courses are specified in the course outlines. The course outline describes the learning objectives, the assessment components with their weights in the final course grade, and the relation between learning objectives and assessment components (<https://www.uu.nl/en/organisation/university-college-utrecht/academic/course-outlines>).
- Tracks also have determined learning goals, to be found in the track manuals (add link). For each track an assessment plan exists.
- Learning objectives at degree level can be found in the appendix.
- The relation between learning objectives at all three levels can be found (add link).

### 5. Design of assessment material

Every regular 7.5 EC course has at least 3 different assessment measures, of which at least one is taken before midterm. No single assessment measure may count for more than 40% of the final grade. Final grades of 2.5 EC modules may be based on a single assessment.

Every exam (including the bachelor thesis) adheres to the following:

- Criteria for grading are clearly stated and communicated to students in advance by use of either an assessment matrix, rubric, or other transparent measures.
- The combination of assessments per course will reflect all learning goals at the indicated level. This is evaluated by at least one faculty member besides the responsible teacher.
- Peer consultation is applied in the design of all exams. At least one peer examiner will review the content of every assessment component of a course. Peers will need to come to an agreement on the content of the exam.

### 6. Actual assessment

- a) Group work versus individual work.
  - For any assessment component that is based on group work, the contributions of individual students are identifiable. Depending on the nature of the group assignment, examiners may decide to give one composite grade, or differentiate between individual students. This is described in the course outline.
  - The combined weight of group work components to the final course grade cannot exceed 50%. Exception is the student designed honors course, which is not graded with a letter grade.
- b) Class participation
  - A class participation grade is based on clear criteria, as described in the Osiris course outline.
  - The weight of a class participation component cannot exceed 10%.
- c) Controlled condition



- In principle, assessment takes place under controlled conditions, i.e. in the classroom.
- In cases where this is not possible, take-home assignments can be given in the form of exams or papers. Students working on papers at home receive feedback on work-in-progress at least once
- d) Details are described in the Osiris course outline. If this feedback is received in a meeting, for students who fail to show up on these progress meeting(s), an F will be registered for the work. In addition, the final grade is accompanied by a formal evaluation in line with the assessment criteria.
- e) Must-pass elements
  - Examiners may define one or more assessment components as “must pass” elements, i.e. elements that students need to obtain a C- on in order to pass the course, irrespective of their performance on other components. If any “must pass” elements are identified, they are accompanied by a clearly described catch-up option (see below).
  - If a student does not obtain at least a C- on a “must pass” element, the examiner registers an F grade for the course. In order to obtain credits for the course, the student must make use of the catch-up option. For a student who then satisfies the requirements, a new grade for the “must pass” element is entered, and the F grade removed. For a student who fails to make up for the deficit as prescribed the F remains.
- f) The bachelor thesis is the final end product of the UCU bachelor and is graded by the supervisor on the basis of the finished product as well as the research process, including an explicit evaluation at midterm. A second examiner independently grades the final version of the thesis. If there is a discrepancy in evaluation, the examiners attempt agreement. If this is not possible, the supervisor contacts the Fellow of the track. If no agreement can be reached, the Fellow contacts the Exam Board, which then decides on further action.
- g) Any oral exams are administered by at least two examiners and an audio recording is made and stored.

## 7. Storage of assessment information

- a) All examination materials are stored electronically on a platform readily accessible to colleagues, for instance, on Surfdrive. This includes exam questions, essay prompts, descriptions of group assignments, and so forth.
- b) All materials produced by students are archived for a duration specified by law.

## 8. Special circumstances

- a) Students with a disability, chronic illness, or specific learning difficulty (for instance, dyslexia, dyscalculia or adhd) may request a learning accommodation agreement. See <https://students.uu.nl/en/university-college-utrecht/student-life/health-and-wellbeing/disabilities-learning-disorders>
- b) Students who are unable to attend an in-class assessment component due to sudden illness or personal circumstances report to their examiner by email and explain the nature of their circumstances. Students are allowed to make up for a missed component at a designated date and time no later than one week after the formal end of the course, or by using the centrally-organised catch-up opportunity for that semester. During their UCU career, students are allowed to make use of this catch-up option no more than three times. Both an individual catch-up (arranged with your course instructor - if they are able to facilitate this) and the centrally organised catch-up opportunity count towards these three times. For students who fail to catch up a missed assessment component, an F for that component will be registered. See <https://students.uu.nl/en/university-college-utrecht/practical-information/rules-and-regulations/catch-up-exams>
- c) For students who miss a deadline without written approval after requesting an extension, an F will be registered. Students may request an extension of a deadline as described in the ARR, paragraph 5.4.3.



## 9. Academic Integrity

- a) Fraud and plagiarism are defined as an action or failure to act on the part of a student, whereby a correct assessment of his or her knowledge, insight and skills is made impossible, in full or in part.
- b) Plagiarism is defined as including data or sections of text from others in a thesis or other paper without quoting the source.
- c) In all cases in which fraud or plagiarism is found or suspected, the examiner will inform the student, the tutor and the Examboard of this in writing. The student, instructor, and tutor meet to address the case and provide the conclusions in a report signed by all three parties. The Examination Board decides on the consequences of the violation, which may range from an F for the assignment to an F for the course. See also ARR paragraph 5.14.



## Appendix UCU Learning goals at degree level (End terms)

UCU has specified the following program specific end terms, which can be found below. These end terms relate to the Dublin descriptors as indicated in the table.

### *Disciplinary depth*

1. Graduates can demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant questions, theories, and conventions of the domain and its embedding
2. Graduates can use the domain knowledge, and apply the concepts and theories to concrete problems

### *Broad knowledge*

3. Graduates can apply knowledge and skills obtained in different disciplines to an academic problem

### *Thinking skills*

4. Graduates can demonstrate a cohesive, consistent, and logical reasoning
5. Graduates have a critical approach to problems
6. Graduates can demonstrate a reflective and self-critical attitude

### *Communication skills*

7. Graduates can communicate efficiently following proper conventions for the discipline

### *Learning skills*

8. Graduates know how and where to search for material and assess the relevance of resources
9. Graduates can demonstrate metacognitive skills such as time management, monitor their progress, and reflect on this

### *Research skills*

10. Under supervision, graduates can formulate a relevant research question, translate this to a research plan; conduct the study, analyze, interpret and report in the results following proper conventions

### *International and intercultural orientation*

11. Graduates can speak foreign languages
12. Graduates understand and can reflect on cultural differences
13. Graduates reflect on their own value system in relation to that of others

### *Societal orientation*

14. Graduates are able to apply knowledge and skills towards solutions for societal issues

### *Other skills*

15. Graduates can collaborate professionally with others and provide and receive constructive feedback
16. Graduates can make well-informed choices for their future plans after graduation



Table UCU program specific end terms and Dublin descriptors

End terms		Dublin Descriptors				
		Knowledge and understanding	Applying knowledge and understanding	Making Judgements	Communication	Lifelong skills
Disciplinary depth	1	●			●	
	2	●	●			
Broad knowledge	3	●	●			●
Thinking skills	4		●	●		●
	5			●		●
	6			●	●	●
Communication skills	7				●	●
Learning skills	8		●	●		●
	9			●	●	●
Research skills	10	●	●	●	●	
International and intercultural orientation	11				●	●
	12		●	●		●
	13			●		●
Societal orientation	14		●	●		●
Other skills	15			●	●	●
	16			●		●