



# Model Regulations of the Board of Examiners<sup>1</sup>

(Rules & Guidelines pursuant to Section 7.12 (b)(3) of the Higher Education and Research Act)

Regulations of the Board of Examiners adopted by the Board of Examiners for the Graduate School of Natural Sciences at Utrecht University, on 8 December 2017.

## Preamble

The Board of Examiners of the Graduate School of Natural Sciences consists of a central Board of Examiners and six Executive Panels. These Executive Panels implement examinations policy independently, within the frameworks set by the central Board of Examiners of the Graduate School of Natural Sciences. The chairs of the Executive Panels form, together with an independent chair and an external member, the central Board of Examiners of the School. The central Board of Examiners acts as a framework-setting and supervisory body. It determines examinations policy and sets the frameworks in the form of regulations and procedures. The central Board of Examiners lays down the regulations of the Board of Examiners each year. In its supervisory role it also monitors the quality of the decisions and the implementation of examinations policy by the panels.

Requests to the Board of Examiners are received centrally and are then assigned by the central Board of Examiners to the Executive Panels.

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<sup>1</sup> This document “Regulations Board of Examiners Undergraduate School” is a translation of the Dutch “Reglement Examencommissie Undergraduate School”. No rights can be derived from this translation other than stipulated in the Dutch Reglement.

## PARAGRAPH 1 – GENERAL STIPULATIONS

### **Art. 1.1 – scope of application**

These Regulations apply to the tests and examinations of the master's programme(s) of the Graduate School of Natural sciences.

The terms defined in the Education and Examination Regulations of these study programmes also apply to these Regulations.

### **Art. 1.2 – Board of Examiners**

1. The Board of Examiners will appoint a member from its ranks who is charged with managing the daily course of affairs of the Board of Examiners.
2. The Board of Examiners will take decisions by an ordinary majority of votes. If members are not present at the meeting, they are given the opportunity to vote by ballot for one week after the meeting. If the votes are equal, the chair has the decisive vote.
3. Decisions taken by a Board of Examiners will be recorded in minutes. These minutes will be approved, at least by or on behalf of the chair.
4. The Board of Examiners will be supported in its work by an official secretary. This official secretary will not sit on the Board of Examiners. The official secretary will:
  - prepare, convene and take minutes at the meetings;
  - monitor the implementation of decisions taken;
  - communicate decisions taken to students and other interested parties;
  - draw up regular reports;
  - archive requests processed, objections and decisions taken.
5. The chair and all members of the Board of Examiners are authorized signatories, with the exception of the external member. The Board of Examiners may authorize the official secretary to communicate and sign off decisions of the Board of Examiners on its behalf. For this purpose the Board of Examiners will give the official secretary written authorization, containing the frameworks and general instructions relating to exercising the delegated authority.
6. The Board of Examiners must take a decision within six weeks of receipt of a complete application.
7. The Board of Examiners determines the tasks, powers and operating procedure of the Executive Panels. By its mandate it can delegate legal tasks to the Executive Panels.

### **Art. 1.3 – Executive Panels: composition, operating procedure and decision-making**

1. The Executive Panel implements the examination policy for the study programme(s) under its remit within the framework determined by the Education and Examination Regulations and the central Board of Examiners. This comprises the following tasks:
  - a. Appointing examiners (article 1.5 section 1)
  - b. Invigilating during tests (articles 2.1 and 2.2)
  - c. Quality assurance of the assessment (articles 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4 and 4.5)
  - d. Granting exemption and approving study components (articles 5.1 and 5.2)
  - e. Determining graduation and degree classification (article 6.1)
  - f. Dealing with cases of suspected fraud and plagiarism (see EER article 5.14)
2. The Executive Panel awards the diplomas and is responsible for an orderly course of events during graduation ceremonies.
3. The chair can decide that the graduation ceremony is presided by a professor or a (senior) lecturer; this chair need not be a member of the Executive Panel.
4. The Executive Panel takes decisions by a simple majority of votes. If the votes are equally divided, the chair has the decisive vote.
5. If necessary, the Executive Panel consults the central Board of Examiners in order to guarantee the unambiguous interpretation and implementation practice of the EER and regulations within the Graduate School.

#### **Art. 1.4 - standards**

In its decisions, the Board of Examiners will be guided by the following standards:

- a. the retention of quality criteria in an examination or test;
- b. efficiency requirements, expressed *inter alia* in efforts to:
  - limit as far as possible loss of time for students;
  - encourage students to terminate their studies as quickly as possible, if it is unlikely that they will pass an examination or test;
- c. protecting students from themselves in the event that they wish to take on an excessive study load;
- d. leniency towards students who, through no fault of their own, have experienced delays in the progress of their studies.

#### **Art. 1.5 - examiners**

1. The Board of Examiners will appoint members of the academic staff charged with teaching a course as examiners and points out their duties and powers to them. The Board of Examiners may furthermore appoint other members of the academic staff and experts outside the study programme as examiners. The examiners are responsible for the testing of the course.
2. The Board of Examiners may withdraw the appointment as an examiner in the event that the examiner fails to comply with the applicable legislation or regulations or guidelines of the Board of Examiners, or if the competence of the examiner concerning the making, administering or marking of tests repeatedly proves to be of insufficient quality.
3. The Board of Examiners will register all examiners so that it is known which persons are authorized to administer examinations and to determine the results thereof.
4. The examiner notifies the students of guidelines with regard to the examination component to be assessed well in advance.
5. The examiner determines the amount of study required and the assessment criteria of the examination component for which he is responsible and sees to it that the students are notified of the above well in advance.
6. Before the start of an examination component the examiner publishes the sources on which the subject matter of the examination component to be assessed is based in the course catalogue.

### PARAGRAPH 2 – ORGANIZATION OF TESTS AND PROPER PROCEDURE

#### **Art. 2.1 – times of tests**

The Board of Examiners will ensure that:

1. Written tests are to be administered at times that are determined at least 30 days before the start of the term in question.
2. In setting the times of the tests, the Board of Examiners must prevent any overlap of tests as far as possible.
3. Changes to times set may be made only in cases of force majeure.
4. If possible, oral tests are to be administered by the examiner(s) in question at a time set after consulting with the student.
5. The times of tests administered in a different way than orally or in writing are determined as much as possible in accordance with the preceding two sections.
6. The times of written resit examinations will be determined and announced at least two weeks in advance. At least five working days will pass between the announcement of the results and the resit examination.

#### **Art. 2.2 – order during an examination or test**

1. The Board of Examiners will ensure that an adequate number of invigilators are appointed for the written examinations. These invigilators will ensure that the test proceeds properly.
2. The examiner is responsible for the presence or availability of a content expert during the test. In the event of absence the examiner appoints an invigilator to replace him during the test and delegates the powers of invigilation for the duration of the test

3. The student must identify himself/herself on request by or on behalf of the Board of Examiners by his or her a valid proof of identity. Admission to the test may be denied if the student is unable to identify himself/herself.
4. The student must follow instructions of the Board of Examiners, or the examiner or invigilator, which are given before, during and immediately after the test.
5. Should the student fail to follow one or more instructions as referred to in the fourth paragraph, he or she may be excluded by the Board of Examiners or examiner from further participation in the test in question. As a consequence of the exclusion, no result will be determined for that test.
6. The duration of a test must be such that students reasonably have enough time to answer the questions.
7. Latecomers will be admitted to a test 30 minutes at most after the start of the test. If a student is prevented by force majeure from being present within this time limit, the examiner, will decide whether he or she can still be admitted to the test.
8. Students may not leave the room where the test is being administered within 30 minutes of the start of the test.
9. After the participants to the test have left the room, no more latecomers will be admitted to the test.
10. Invigilators can oblige students to hand over their bags, coats and electronic devices not needed to the test.
11. When the examiner suspects a student of fraud during the test, he;
  - Informs the student concerned of his suspicion;
  - Confiscates evidence, such as crib notes, or, if this is not possible (e.g. in case of fraud committed with the help of a mobile phone), he collects evidence by taking photos or other means;
  - Draw up a report, describing what has happened and what he has observed;
  - Allows the student to finish the test;
  - Sends the student's test, his report and any evidence separately to the Board of Examiners and the programme leader of the master's programme followed by the student within one working day.

### PARAGRAPH 3 – ASSESSMENT OF TESTS, THESIS

#### **Art. 3.1 – marking of test**

1. The Board of Examiners will ensure that:
  - Written tests are to be marked on the basis of predetermined, written standards, possibly adjusted on the basis of a correction;
  - The weighting of the interim results in reaching the end result is laid down in the academic programme catalogue;
  - All examiners mark it on the basis of the same standards
  - The manner of marking must be such that the student can check how the result of his or her test was reached.
2. If in the case of practical exercises several students contribute towards a single joint project, the following rules apply:
  - a. the guideline for the individual or collective marking of group work must be established beforehand by the examiner and notified to the student;
  - b. the supervisor will regularly satisfy himself or herself that all students make a proportional contribution to the end product;
  - c. examiners can assess students individually on the basis of the work they have performed.
3. The last mark given will apply in assessing the result of a test/course.

#### **Art. 3.2 – assessment of thesis, research assignments, undergraduate theses**

1. The Board of Examiners will ensure that the assessment criteria for the thesis, research assignments and undergraduate theses are laid down and that these are included in the course or thesis manual.

2. If in the case of practical exercises several students contribute towards a single joint project, the Board of Examiners will use the following guidelines:
  - a. agreements on the division of tasks among the students who are to perform the work must be set out in writing by the examiner(s) responsible prior to the start of the work;
  - b. students will be marked individually on the basis of the work they have performed.
3. A thesis, research assignments and papers must be marked by two examiners. The first examiner will present the end product and his or her mark, with a written explanation, to the second examiner. The second examiner will assess whether the mark is justified in view of the end product and the explanation. If this is not the case, the first and second examiner will determine the mark in consultation. If the first and second examiner cannot reach agreement, the Board of Examiners will appoint a third assessor who will give a binding final opinion.
4. The examiners will provide an explanation, using a marking form, of the manner in which the final mark has been reached.

### **Art. 3.3 – subsequent discussion**

1. As soon as possible after the result of an oral test is made known, if a student so requests or on the initiative of the examiner a subsequent discussion will be held between the examiner and the student, in which the examiner will give reasons for the decision.
2. During a period of 30 days, starting on the day after the results of a written test were made known, the student may request a discussion with the examiner. The discussion will be held at a place and time determined by the examiner.
3. If a collective discussion is organized, the student can submit a request as referred to in the second paragraph only if he or she was present at the collective discussion and he or she gives reasons for that request, or if he or she was prevented by force majeure from attending the collective discussion.
4. The provisions of the preceding paragraph will apply by analogy if the examiner offers the student the opportunity to compare his or her answers with model answers.

## PARAGRAPH 4 – ASSURING THE QUALITY OF EXAMINATIONS

### **Art. 4.1 – assuring the quality of testing**

The Board of Examiners will ensure that:

- a. a testing policy/testing plan is in place, and that this is implemented;
- b. tests are compiled in line with the learning objectives and final attainment levels for the course in question.

### **Art. 4.2 – determining the quality of testing**

The Board of Examiners will ensure that the quality of individual tests is tested on the basis of random samples – and following complaints, evaluation of results, pass rates and suchlike – in relation to the validity (they measure knowledge, skills and competences) and reliability (are they consistent and accurate).

### **Art. 4.3 – declaration of invalidity of test for all participants due to quality shortcomings**

1. If it becomes apparent that the test has such serious quality shortcomings that it cannot be ascertained whether and to what extent the students have achieved the learning objectives of the course, by virtue of its quality assurance role pursuant to Section 7.12b (1)(a) of the Higher Education and Research Act the Board of Examiners may decide immediately that the examination concerned is invalid, and that all participants must repeat the entire examination as soon as possible. The Board of Examiners will set the date on which the examination will be repeated. This date will be no later than two weeks after establishing the quality shortcomings, so that the participants will still be able to benefit from their preparations for the examination.
2. Except in the event of fraud or plagiarism as referred to in Art. 5.14 (4) of the Education and Examination Regulations, the Board of Examiners may no longer declare a test invalid if the final test results have already been published.

#### **Art. 4.4 – assuring the quality of examinations (final level of the graduates)**

The Board of Examiners will ensure that:

- a. the exit qualifications for the course as described in the Education and Examination Regulations are translated into testable learning objectives for each course;
- b. it is systematically examined whether there is a sufficient connection between the course objectives and the final qualification levels, or the sum of the learning objectives for each course corresponds to the exit qualifications for that course.

#### **Art. 4.5 – Board of Examiners’ own investigation to maintain quality of examination**

1. A student has passed the examination if all parts of the examination programme have been successfully completed. Contrary to the above, the Board of Examiners may decide that in order to pass the examination the student must have complied with the requirements relating to the Board of Examiners’ own investigation as referred to in Section 7.10(2) of the Higher Education and Research Act into the knowledge, understanding and competence of the student.
2. The Board of Examiners will only conduct such an investigation if it establishes that there are certain facts or circumstances that lead it to the conclusion that the Board of Examiners cannot vouch for the student having obtained the exit qualifications for the course (as referred to in Art. 3.1 of the Education and Examination Regulations).
3. If the Board of Examiners exercises its authority to conduct an investigation as referred to in the first paragraph, it will inform the student(s) concerned in writing of its decision, giving reasons and drawing the student’s attention to the option to submit an appeal to the Examination Appeals Board.

### PARAGRAPH 5 EXEMPTIONS, APPROVAL OF COURSE UNITS

#### **Art. 5.1 – exemption**

1. Students wishing to receive one or more exemptions, must submit a request with grounds to the Board of Examiners. The request must be signed and contain:
  - the student's name, address and student number
  - a description of the grounds on which the exemption is being sought
  - for which course(s) the exemption is being sought
  - an authenticated copy of the student’s diploma, examination results or proof of tests previously taken
  - and/or a description of the knowledge and experience the student has obtained outside of higher education, accompanied by the relevant documents showing this.
2. The Board of Examiners will submit the request for advice to the examiner(s) charged with the teaching of the course(s) for which the exemption is being sought.

#### **Art. 5.2 – approval of course units**

1. Students wishing to include course units which require prior permission of the Board of Examiners on the grounds of the Education and Examination Regulations must submit a request, giving reasons, to the Board of Examiners. The request must be signed and contain:
  - the student’s name, address and student number;
  - a description of the contents, level and assessment of the courses for which approval is being sought;
  - an indication of the way in which the student wishes to include the course(s) in the education programme;
  - the advice of the programme coordinator or a specialist lecturer for the course.
2. If approval concerns course units outside UU, following their completion the student will submit a certified transcript or student progress monitoring summary. On this basis, the marks and study points will be entered in Osiris.

## PARAGRAPH 6 – DETERMINING GRADUATION AND DEGREE CLASSIFICATION

### **Art. 6.1 – determining graduation and degree classification**

Based on the graduation file the Board of examiners determines whether the student has met the conditions of the examination programme and has consequently graduated, and it determines the degree classification based on the graduation file. The graduation file consists of:

- The elaborate Study Progress report, including information about the research project (title), supplemented by all results in one printout;
- Earlier decisions of the Board of Examiners
- Letter of Admission, issued earlier; and
- A reprimand of exclusion on account of fraud or plagiarism recorded in Osiris.

## PARAGRAPH 7 – COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

### **Art. 7.1 Complaints about testing and marking**

1. 'Testing and marking' is understood to mean all situations where there is a formal assessment moment that leads to a mark or an alphanumerical result relating to learning objectives and exit qualifications that are laid down in the Education and Examination Regulations.
2. The first point of contact for students with a complaint about testing and marking is the examiner who is responsible for determining the result of the test. If there are several examiners for the course, the course coordinator is the first point of contact as the 'representative' for all examiners involved in the test (provided that the course coordinator is also an examiner). The examiner will endeavour to reach a solution in an informal manner.
3. If the examiner, whether or not in reply to complaints, establishes that the test does not meet one or more quality requirements, the examiner may decide to adjust the marks and the standard. In that case the adjustment of the results comprises all the students that have taken the test. If the final test result has already been published, the amended result may no longer be to the disadvantage of one or more students.
4. The Board of Examiners may at all times make use of its statutory authority pursuant to Section 7.12b (1)(b) of the Higher Education and Research Act: '*to lay down guidelines and rules from within the framework of the education and examination regulations (...), to assess and establish the result of tests and examinations*'. The examiner will observe the guidelines and rules laid down by the Board of Examiners.

### **Art. 7.2 Appeal against decisions concerning testing and marking**

1. Students may submit an appeal against the decisions of examiners or the Board of Examiners to the Examination Appeals Board within six weeks of publication of the mark/alphanumerical result. See <https://students.uu.nl/en/practical-information/academic-policies-and-procedures/complaints-objections-and-appeals/examination-appeals-board>.
2. Art. 54 of the Administration and Management Regulations of UU stipulates that a formal complaint will not be dealt with if it concerns conduct against which the person involved may lodge an appeal. Since an appeal may be submitted to the Examination Appeals Board against decisions relating to testing and marking, complaints about testing will not be dealt with according to the formal complaints procedure of Utrecht University. This means that the complaints procedure described in Art. 7.1 is not formal in nature.

## PARAGRAPH 8 – FINAL PROVISIONS

### **Art. 8.1 – annual report**

1. The Board of Examiners will draw up an annual report of its activities for each academic year and will send this to the dean.

2. The annual report will contain the following parts:
  - a. composition of the Board of Examiners and Executive Panels;
  - b. monitoring of quality of the tests and examinations (final level of the graduates):
    - description of procedures and guidelines for marking and setting standards for tests; way in which it is ascertained that these are applied;
    - description of guidelines for marking and setting standards for research assignments and theses; way in which it is ascertained that these are applied;
    - way in which and number of times that the quality of the tests has been examined.
  - c. quantitative information, numbers:
    - diplomas awarded (plus number with distinction (*cum laude*));
    - requests for exemption or approval;
    - requests for a special examination dispensation;
    - cases of fraud.
  - d. recommendations

#### **Art. 8.2 - amendments**

1. Amendments to these regulations will be laid down by the Board of Examiners in a separate decision.
2. An amendment to these regulations does not relate to the current academic year, unless the interests of the students are not harmed as a result in all reasonableness.

#### **Art. 8.3 – entering into force and publication**

1. These regulations enter into force on 15 December 2017.
2. The Board of Examiners will ensure the publication of these regulations, as well as any amendment thereto, via the internet.