

**VERSION MANAGEMENT**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Responsible party</b>	<b>Procedure</b>
0.1	August 2021	Policy officer Education	Drawing up the revised draft version of the faculty assessment policy of the Faculty of Science
0.2	October 2021	Policy officer Education	Initial draft version modified following the consultation with the Director of Education of the Faculty of Science
0.3	November/December 2021	Policy officer Education	Adjustment following the feedback from the MTO + Director of Education + programme directors meetings
0.4	February 2022	Policy officer Education	Adjustment following the feedback from the Faculty Examination Boards and the Examination Sub-boards, as discussed with the Director of Education
1.0	11 February 2022	Policy officer Education/ Faculty Board of the Faculty of Science	The draft 2022 Faculty of Science assessment policy submitted to the Faculty Board for adoption.
1.0	12 February 2022	Faculty Board of the Faculty of Science	Assessment policy adopted by the Faculty Board
1.1	27 February 2025	Policy officer Education	Non-working links have been replaced

# **The 2022 Faculty of Science Assessment policy**

*Version 1.1*

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Appendix 11   Guide for Examination Boards (derived from the VU Assessment Framework) ....	<b>Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.</b>

Appendix 12   A guide to assessment for placements and thesis (derived from VU Assessment Framework)	Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.
Appendix 13   VU Assessment Framework 2019 (complete version)	Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF THE FACULTY ASSESSMENT POLICY

The assessment policy of the Faculty of Science (BETA) serves as an assessment framework within the faculty and describes the faculty principles with respect to assessment, as well as all measures and requirements to assure and promote the quality of the assessment. In addition to the faculty vision for assessment, the faculty assessment policy also contains a description of the quality assurance of assessment and the different tools available for this.

The VU Assessment Framework<sup>1</sup> was taken as the starting point in drawing up this policy. The Faculty of Science assessment policy provides a framework for the degree programmes of the Faculty of Science, within which each degree programme is given the opportunity to put its own emphasis on the interpretation and implementation of the assessment policy. The Appendices also include guidelines for Programme Directors and examiners for the promotion of the quality of assessment within the Faculty of Science.

Based on the faculty assessment policy, Examinations Boards, Programme Directors, examiners and Programme Committees gain insight into the use and role of quality assurance systems for assessment. The faculty assessment policy will also be used to account for the quality of and procedures related to assessments in accreditations.

### 1.2. REVISED VERSION

The faculty assessment policy will be updated every three years. The original faculty assessment policy of the Faculty of Science was adopted by the Faculty Board in February 2019. The Faculty Board adopted the revised version on 12 February 2022.

### 1.3. POSITIONING OF POLICY DOCUMENTS RELATED TO ASSESSMENT

The Faculty of Science assessment policy is derived from the VU Assessment Framework and can be considered to be a further and detailed elaboration at faculty level. The underlying principles of the VU Assessment Framework are observed, unless otherwise indicated. Similarly, the assessment plan is a programme-specific supplement to the faculty assessment policy. In order to prevent duplication in the provision of information, not all information is repeated. Unless otherwise indicated in the assessment plan, the key principles of the Faculty of Science assessment policy remain in force.

In addition to the VU assessment framework, the Faculty of Science assessment policy and the programme assessment plan, the Academic and Examination Regulations also describe rules and procedures for assessments and evaluations. This information can co-exist. In order to prevent duplication, those provisions that already form part of the Academic and Examination Regulations are not also included in the Faculty of Science assessment policy and/or the programme-specific assessment plan.

### 1.4. READER'S GUIDE

Chapter 2 contains a description of the vision for assessment, followed by a description of the quality assurance of assessment. The different tools available for this are set out in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 describes the working method and responsibilities of the Examination Board as a quality assurance body. Chapter 5 contains a brief description of the responsibilities of all actors in the assessment process. Appendix 1 contains a description of assessment-related terms included in the list of key terms. Other faculty formats and VU-wide guides have also been included as appendices.

<sup>1</sup> See [the 2019 VU Assessment Framework](#)

## 2. VISION FOR ASSESSMENT

### 2.1. VISION FOR ASSESSMENT (DERIVED FROM THE VU ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK)

The faculty vision follows the VU vision for assessment. It focuses on the fact that high-quality academic education requires a professional educational organisation. A number of key principles have been identified to support this:

- A degree programme consists of a coherent package of programme components within which education is structured according to the principles of 'constructive alignment'. The Programme Director incorporates this into the assessment plan for the respective degree programme.
- A degree programme uses appropriate instruments to monitor and optimise the quality of the individual components of education, their collective coherence and the final attainment levels that are to be achieved.
- Programme Directors and lecturers form a team of professionals and receive support in a professional manner.

The quality of the lecturers determines the quality of education. Good education is characterised by the provision of specific feedback to students, at appropriate moments and at all levels of learning. Lecturers apply a broad repertoire of forms of working and forms of assessment and are therefore able to offer students differentiated education. The use of activating forms of working and an appropriate form of assessment are essential.

The degree programme should focus on assessment as a means of guiding and managing students' approach to studying and of assessing their academic performance. The Faculty of Science adheres to the VU vision by implementing the vision for education in terms of offering degree programmes that are inspirational, innovative and that involve active learning.

[...] In essence, the VU Assessment Framework stipulates that examiners must be transparent with regard to the assessment of programme components, and that checks must be performed in relation to the reliability, validity and usefulness of tests and assessments before assessments are administered. The examiner records the results of these checks in the assessment dossier.

#### 2.1.1. CONSTRUCTIVE ALIGNMENT

All education within the Faculty of Science is designed according to the principle of constructive alignment, as also set out in the VU Assessment Framework. Constructive alignment is visible both at programme level as well as at course level.

Constructive alignment is based on a coherence between a degree programme's final attainment levels, the courses available and the assessment of the degree programmes' learning objectives (Biggs & Tang, 2011). The final attainment levels of all degree programmes within the Faculty of Science are all linked to the Dublin Descriptors and form the starting point for constructive alignment.

At degree programme level, constructive alignment means that the learning objectives of all programme components jointly cover all the degree programme's final attainment levels at the required final level of proficiency and that the form of assessment is in line with these final attainment levels. In addition, both the curriculum as well as the assessments during the degree programme build towards the required final level of proficiency of the final attainment levels. This can be expressed, for example, in an increasing complexity of teaching material and assessments, as well as an increasing student autonomy in lessons and assignments. Thus, all programme components within a degree programme form a coherent whole. The assessment programme clearly presents the relationship between the degree programme's final attainment levels and the learning objectives of each programme component. In addition, the assessment programme also comprises an overview of the forms of assessment of each programme component, which are in line with the learning objectives of the programme components and contribute to meeting the final attainment levels at the required final level of proficiency. Close consultation within the programme, between the Programme Director and the

examiners, but also among the examiners<sup>2</sup> themselves, is essential to harmonise the curriculum and its assessment.

At course level, the constructive alignment is shown in the coherence between the forms of assessment and the teaching methods of the individual programme components. The learning objectives for each programme component are derived from the degree programme's final attainment levels. These learning objectives are used as a starting point for determining the most appropriate forms of assessment, (for assessing the learning objectives) and the teaching methods (for achieving the learning objectives).

When the principle of constructive alignment is applied at both course level and degree programme level, it will demonstrate that a student has achieved the degree programme's final attainment levels if all the individual programme components have been successfully completed. For this purpose, it is important that the faculty assessment policy, the assessment plan and the assessment programme of the degree programme and the assessment of the individual programme components are all fully coordinated with each other and form a coherent whole.

### 2.1.2. SUMMATIVE AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

All degree programmes within the Faculty of Science make use of both a formative assessment and a summative assessment, which assessment thus forms part of the constructive alignment.

- A summative assessment determines whether a student has sufficiently mastered the learning objectives of the individual programme components. A successful completion of a summative assessment will be awarded with credits, with which the summative assessment contributes to the completion of the degree programme. All individual programme components within the Faculty of Science are concluded with a summative form of assessment.
- Formative assessment aims at providing students with feedback, supporting the learning process and increasing the learning effect. There is no formal assessment related to this, in the form of obtaining credits. The Faculty of Science therefore encourages examiners to assess students not only summatively, but also formatively.

Below is an overview of forms of assessment used by the faculty, including the examinations that are subject to the form of assessment and in brackets the code used to register the results.

Form of assessment	Examinations covered by this form of assessment include:	Associated protocol on administering assessments
Written tests with open and/or closed questions, whereby use is made of an answer key	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examination (T)</li> <li>- Written test (T)</li> <li>- Assessment (T) with (a mix of): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Open questions</li> <li>o Closed questions</li> <li>o Case questions</li> <li>o Short questions with short answers</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Above forms of assessment can also take place in digital form.</p>	Written tests
Assessments whereby use is made of a scoring rubric with assessment criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Report (V)</li> <li>- Presentation (P)</li> <li>- Professional conduct (PG)</li> <li>- Assignments (O)</li> <li>- Peer review (PR)</li> <li>- Discussion (D)</li> <li>- Poster (PO)</li> <li>- Feedback (FB)</li> </ul>	Other assessments: assessments with a scoring rubric

<sup>2</sup> Where it says 'examiner', it can also read 'lecturer'.

### 2.1.3. PRACTICAL GUIDELINES ON ASSESSMENT WITHIN THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE

Each degree programme has elaborated the final attainment levels in learning objectives for each individual programme component. These learning objectives, including the form of assessment, are set out in the [VU Study Guide](#). The Programme Director is responsible for clearly formulated final attainment levels for the degree programme and ensures that the final attainment levels of the degree programme are reflected as a whole by the assessments to be administered for all programme components together.

The Faculty of Science is committed to active teaching formats in which students are encouraged to become actively involved from the start of the course. An important role is reserved for active learning that follows the cycle of the scientific process: theory, hypothesis, assessment, feedback.

For the Faculty of Science's assessment policy this means that:

- the total set of forms of assessment corresponds to the intended learning behaviour of the students in the successive phases of the curriculum;
- the students are regularly formatively assessed during a course and are given feedback as a result. This feedback can be provided by the examiner on an individual basis or take the form of peer-based feedback.
- a written test consists of both knowledge questions, comprehension questions and questions of application<sup>3</sup>
- the student can gain insight into whether or not they are at the level that meets the requirements set by the examiner. For example, by a practice test of other formative assessment methods;
- skills, such as presentation skills and writing skills, are explicitly practiced, assessed and provided with feedback. The assessment of these skills are explicitly included in the programme's assessment plan;
- the form of assessment is appropriate for the final attainment levels of the programme component to be assessed;
- there is one resit per academic year for each programme component<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> See [the VU Assessment Framework 2019](#), Appendix 1.2: framework for the assessment matrix (as of page 30).

<sup>4</sup> See the Academic and Examination Regulations (part A) ([TER](#)) for each degree programme.

### 3. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF ASSESSMENT

The purpose of assessment is to check whether the students meet the objectives of a particular programme component. An adequate assessment ensures that students awarded a degree at the Faculty have attained the correct academic level. In addition, the extent to which the assessment process is valid, transparent and reliable has consequences for the academic success of individual students and the academic performance of the programme as a whole. Finally, the students' study behaviour is determined to a large extent by the form and content of the assessment that they expect and by the moment at which the assessment takes place.

The purpose of assessment is based on the following key principles:

- The assessments are in line with the form, content and character of the education, i.e.: predetermined and inspired by the final attainment levels;
- The assessments are valid, reliable and transparent, i.e.: based on a predefined assessment matrix, and sufficient information provided in advance;
- The assessments steer the students' learning behaviour in a positive manner;
- The assessments are usable, i.e.: taking into account the efficiency, fairness and time available for the assessment, including a comparable level of difficulty in the different examinations;
- The language of the assessment is in the language of instruction<sup>5</sup>.

#### 3.1. ASSESSMENT PLAN

##### 3.1.1. OBJECTIVE AND KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE ASSESSMENT PLAN

Each degree programme within the Faculty of Science has a fully developed and detailed assessment plan. The assessment plan outlines the degree programme's vision for education, the final attainment levels of the degree programme and the manner in which these final attainment levels are demonstrated in the degree programme. The assessment plan is an elaboration of the faculty assessment plan and may be considered a detailed supplement specific to the degree programme. The underlying principles of the faculty assessment policy of the Faculty of Science remain in force. Where necessary, a degree programme may deviate from the faculty policy and the formats offered based on reasons.

If the degree programme deviates from the Faculty of Science assessment policy, for example in terms of the application of assessment procedures or additional quality criteria, this has to be substantiated in the assessment plan as well. If a degree programme has multiple specialisations, including deviating final attainment levels if applicable, these are also to be set out in the assessment plan. In addition, the assessment plan describes the programme-specific quality assurance, if this deviates from the provisions set out in the faculty assessment policy.

##### 3.1.2. ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

The assessment programme forms part of the assessment plan. The assessment programme is a visual overview of the relationship between learning objectives, teaching methods and forms of assessment. All assessments in the curriculum, including the constituent examinations, are included in this assessment programme. With regard to the constituent examinations, these must also include the applicable rules for weighted grading.

##### 3.1.3. PARTIES INVOLVED

The Programme Director is responsible for the contents of the assessment plan and its up-to-date status. This comprises the development and maintenance of the assessment plan, including the coordination with the examiners about the different programme components. The Programme Director is responsible for the annual check and update, if applicable. The midterm review is considered an appropriate time to check the assessment plan. The Programme Committee and the Examination Board fulfil an advisory role with regard to the contents of the assessment plan. The Programme Committee has the right of approval on the assessments in the curriculum via the approval procedure for the Academic and Examination Regulations. See Chapter 5 for

<sup>5</sup> This may be departed from under certain conditions, e.g. when all the teaching material used is in a different language. However, this **must** be communicated before the start of the programme component, for example, through the appropriate channels such as: the study guide; reader, digital learning environment, etc.

an overview of the responsibilities of all parties involved. The programme annual report which the Programme Director annually submits to the Faculty Board reports on the assessment quality in relation to the assessment plan, and any areas of improvement.

### 3.1.4. FACULTY FORMAT OF THE ASSESSMENT PLAN

A faculty format for the Faculty of Science has been developed for an assessment plan (in Dutch and English). This format has been drawn up according to the 'VU Quality handbook, chapter 'Assessment framework' and the Faculty of Science assessment policy. This format is intended as a guide for programmes that are going to draw up, fine-tune and/or update their assessment plan. Each programme is free to make use of this format, or to develop an assessment plan at their own discretion. Each assessment plan contains the following components, at the very least:

CONTENT OF THE ASSESSMENT PLAN	DETAILS
<i>Programme-specific assessment policy</i> <i>How is the structure of the degree programme and the choice of forms of assessment influenced by the vision for the degree programme, the final attainment levels, learning and assessment?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of the principles of the degree programme's vision for assessment;</li> <li>• Further elaboration or specification of the faculty assessment policy, in line with this vision;</li> <li>• Cross-reference to a passage from the self-evaluation report.</li> </ul>
<i>Description of the final level of proficiency</i> <i>How do the final attainment levels of the degree programme match the Dublin Descriptors that are associated with the level of the degree programme?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link between the Dublin Descriptors and the final attainment levels for the degree programme. Also see 3.1.5. This can be detailed in an assessment matrix, assessment matrix or a block plan;</li> <li>• Overview of the 'palette of final projects' (see also 3.1.6): the programme components that are used to assess the final attainment levels at the final level of proficiency.</li> </ul>
<i>Learning paths</i> <i>How do the learning outcomes of the various courses/programme components (learning objectives) contribute to the final attainment levels of the degree programme?</i> <i>Which programme components form a coherent block that guides the student towards the achievement of a final attainment level or a cluster of final attainment levels?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A description of the components of the curriculum which describes the relationship between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The learning objectives of the programme components. Also see 3.1.7.</li> <li>○ The final attainment levels. See also 3.1.5.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• It is possible to make the following differentiations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The final attainment level is addressed by the programme component, but is not assessed, or only assessed formatively;</li> <li>○ The final attainment level is assessed at an intermediate level in the programme component;</li> <li>○ The final attainment level is assessed at the final level of proficiency in the programme component;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Further details can be provided diagrammatically in an assessment matrix, assessment programme or block plan.</li> </ul>
<i>Constructive alignment</i> <i>How is alignment ensured between the final attainment levels, learning objectives, educational activities and forms of assessment? And how does this reflect the knowledge and skills that are required in the professional field? Which forms of assessment are used in the degree programme, how are they distributed across the degree programme and to what extent can they compensate one another?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description/overview of the assessments including their form, weighting and compensation opportunities, in relation to the knowledge or skills that are acquired and assessed.</li> </ul>
<i>Quality Improvement</i> <i>What quality assurance provisions are there within the study programme at the level of individual assessments, programme components and the degree programme as a whole?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elaboration of the different quality assurance cycles used within the degree programme and the way in which they are integrated into working methods;</li> <li>• Requirements set at the degree programme level in relation to the assessment dossier: content and method. The assessment plan also specifies who has access.</li> </ul>



### 3.1.5. FINAL ATTAINMENT LEVELS FOR THE DEGREE PROGRAMME

The final attainment levels of a degree programme describe in which areas and on which final level the student has acquired expertise, skills and attitude once the degree programme has been completed. The Programme Director is responsible for formulating the final attainment levels of the degree programme. The Programme Director is also responsible for ensuring that the total of final attainment levels is covered by the individual programme components.

The final attainment levels are regularly assessed, for example during the assessment plan's evaluation, midterm reviews and re-accreditations, and can be revised if needed. The work field advisory board, the team of instructors and the Programme Committee may all be included in this process. As formal participation, the Programme Committee has the right of approval in relation to the final attainment levels of a degree programme, which is why the Programme Director holds close consultations with the Programme Committee.

In accordance with the Qualification Framework for Higher Education, the final attainment levels of each degree programme forming part of the Faculty of Science are described in relation to the five Dublin Descriptors:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Practical application of knowledge and understanding
- Opinion-forming
- Communication
- Learning skills

The degree programme's final attainment levels and the link with the Dublin Descriptors are included in the degree programme's assessment plan and/or assessment programme and in the degree programme's currently applicable Academic and Examination Regulations.

### 3.1.6. PALETTE OF FINAL PROJECTS

The assessment plan also clearly describes which programme components are part of the palette of final projects for the degree programme. In the palette of final projects, all the final attainment levels are assessed at the intended final level of proficiency. The palette of final projects may consist of more than one final project, for example both a research placement as well as a literature thesis. This may be necessary in order to demonstrate all final attainment levels at the final level of proficiency.

For each programme component that forms part of the palette of final projects, there is a course manual available setting out the learning objectives, teaching materials, the structure of the programme component, assessment criteria and assessment procedures, among other things. The assessment of the final projects is done by at least two independent examiners. The Faculty of Science will develop a faculty internship guide, further specifying the procedures and assessments. Any deviations from this faculty guide will be determined in the programme-specific assessment plan.

### 3.1.7. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The term 'learning objectives' refers to the learning objectives of the individual programme components. The learning objectives result from the final attainment levels for the degree programme. The examiner is responsible for formulating the learning objectives, in consultation with the Programme Director (to ensure constructive alignment). The learning objectives describe the knowledge, skills and attitude which a student will have acquired on successful completion of the programme component. The learning objectives describe the minimum level students are expected to achieve in order to pass the relevant programme component. After all, passing all programme components provides a guarantee that the student has fully and demonstrably mastered the final attainment levels of the degree programme.

At least five learning objectives are set for each programme component, which jointly cover all five Dublin Descriptors. Learning objectives consist of a content-related component, that which the student has to learn, and a behavioural component, i.e. how does the student demonstrate that the content-related component has been met. Bloom's taxonomy may be used when formulating learning objectives.

### **3.2. ASSESSMENT DOSSIER**

Part of the faculty assessment policy are the key principles for creating an assessment dossier for each programme component for every degree programme, among other things. The assessment dossier is a collection of documents that offers insight into the assessment and evaluation of a particular programme component.

Within VU Amsterdam, it is mandatory to create an assessment dossier for each programme component. The specific content requirements and the identity of those responsible for compiling the assessment dossier are specified per faculty in the faculty assessment policy.

#### **3.2.1. OBJECTIVE AND PRINCIPLES OF AN ASSESSMENT DOSSIER**

The purpose of creating an assessment dossier is to show the logic behind the relevant education and its assessment, what the results are, and what can be learned from this. This provides an opportunity to reflect on assessment quality and to implement improvements.

At least three parties make use of the assessment dossier:

- It is first of all a tool for the examiner to reflect on teaching and assessment and to implement improvements where necessary.
- The management of the degree programme keeps track of the quality of implementation by compiling assessment dossiers and scanning these according to specific criteria.
- The Examination Board consults the assessment dossier on the basis of its role in assuring the quality of assessment.

The assessment dossier must in any event be accessible to:

- The examiner
- Fellow examiners in the context of the peer-review principle
- The Programme Director
- The Examination Board
- Upon request: any staff members involved in quality assurance in relation to visitation preparations (e.g. policy officers education, the Director of Education, quality assurance managers)

The examiner is responsible for adding the documents to the assessment dossier; the Programme Director has final responsibility for the assessment dossiers as part of the quality assurance of the assessments. Paragraph 3.2.3 provides an overview of all documents to be recorded in a Faculty of Science assessment dossier. The Programme Director, in consultation with the Examination Board, may set additional requirements specific to the degree programme. These additional requirements will be included in the assessment plan.

#### **3.2.2. STORAGE OF THE ASSESSMENT DOSSIER**

There is no central digital storage facility for assessment dossiers. Some faculties make use of the Digital Education Dossier, however the Faculty of Science does not (yet) make full use of the Digital Education Dossier. In addition, the Digital Education Dossier explicitly has a no record-keeping feature, making it unsuitable for storage of assessment dossiers for the purpose of quality assurance. It is up to the degree programmes to decide where and how the assessment dossiers are stored and managed, as well as who is to add the documents to the assessment dossiers.

As a rule, the Faculty of Science requires one assessment dossier for each programme component. The assessment dossier can be requested by:

- The Programme Director
- The Examination Board
- Those parties involved in accreditation procedures and midterm reviews

The assessment dossier is then to be made available to the requesting party within 24 hours.

### 3.2.3. DOCUMENTS IN THE ASSESSMENT DOSSIER

A complete assessment dossier contains all the documents listed in the table below. As a number of documents are also made available in other locations (such as CanVas, the Programme Committee surfdrive folders, study guide, etc.), the degree programmes do not have to include these documents in the assessment dossiers within the Faculty of Science. This will avoid duplication of effort and those involved already have access to these documents via other channels. These limited assessment dossiers are referred to as *internal assessment dossiers*, which are used for internal quality assurance purposes by Examination Boards, Programme Committees and for midterm review purposes.

However, in the event that the assessment dossiers are used for external quality assurance purposes at degree programme level ((re-)accreditation purposes), these documents do form part of the complete assessment dossier. The quality assurance faculty staff - in collaboration with the Programme Director - need to find the missing documents and add them to the assessment dossier. These complete assessment dossiers are called *external assessment dossiers*.

Document	Is the requested data also accessible elsewhere?	Part of the internal assessment dossier (internal use, MTR)	Part of the external assessment dossier (accreditation or re-accreditation)
1. (Reference to) study guide text	Yes, online <a href="http://studiegids.vu.nl">studiegids.vu.nl</a> (also serves an archival purpose)	-	✓
2. The complete examination and resit. Including cover sheet, if available	No	✓	✓
3. The answer key and scoring for the examination and resit	No	✓	✓
4. Assessment matrix and/or table of specifications for the examination and resit	No	✓	✓
5. Transcript (anonymous, and if available), representing the constituent marks for each assessment moment of the course in question	No	✓	✓
6. Forms used for the assessment of assignments, essays and presentations, if such forms of assessment are used <i>The accreditation panel is allowed access to the CANVAS environment of the course in question. Document with reference to CANVAS suffices.</i>	Yes, the course's Canvas page. Accessible for a maximum period of three years.	-	✓
7. Proof of peer review (for examinations and resits) <i>This could be a signed form. Other documentary evidence, for example an email exchange, may also suffice. If an assessment report is used, the peer review may be included in that report.</i>	No	✓	✓
8. Mock exams with answer key or practical assignments <i>The accreditation panel is allowed access to the CANVAS environment of the course in question. Document with reference to CANVAS suffices.</i>	Not applicable to all courses. If applicable, accessible via the course's Canvas page. Accessible for a maximum period of three years.	-	✓
9. Statistical analysis of the exam results	Not standard. If the examination was not taken via TestVision,	✓	✓

	it may be taken via the examination service of the Central Department of Education, Quality Assurance and Process Management, if so requested by the examiner.		
10. Student evaluations	Yes, these are made available to the Programme Committee through OWB (surfdrive)	-	✓
11. Study guide <i>The accreditation panel is allowed access to the CANVAS environment of the course in question. Document with reference to CANVAS suffices.</i>	Yes, the course's Canvas page. Accessible for a maximum period of three years.	-	✓
12. In the event of any irregularities during the examination or assessment: Assessment report of examinations and resits <i>This document is not required in cases of regular assessment, i.e. no irregularities during the examination, no modifications in assessment scales afterwards, etc.</i>	No	✓/- (only where applicable)	✓/- (only where applicable)

### 3.2.4. FORMATS

The Faculty of Science has a format available for the following documents:

- The assessment matrix<sup>6</sup>
- The peer review form<sup>7</sup>
- The assessment report<sup>8</sup>

In all cases, the format is a guideline, and degree programmes are free to adapt it as long as the required documents are included in the assessment dossier.

As to the peer review form, the formal recording of the peer review by means of a printed form is considered cumbersome. Other proof of peer review also suffices, such as a copy of an email message for example.

## 3.3. QUALITY CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT

Assessment is used as an instrument to check the extent to which a student has achieved the learning objectives. In the case of (summative) assessment, the most important quality requirements are: usefulness, validity, reliability, comparability and transparency. Each quality requirement is accompanied by a brief explanation and a number of guidelines applicable within the Faculty of Science. The guidelines on the peer-review principle are also included.

### 3.3.1. VALIDITY

A valid assessment is an assessment that measures what its developer aims to measure. An important tool in ensuring that an assessment accurately reflects the material studied and measures the intended level of proficiency is the assessment matrix. Each programme component has an up-to-date assessment matrix. The assessment matrix can be used for the assessment's design, and to check whether the assessment is a good reflection to assess the learning objectives.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 4

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 5

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 6

Guidelines on validity:

- A maximum of 30% of the examination consists of questions that have already been used in examinations administered in previous years. If the nature of the assessment renders this guideline unreasonable, a reasoned departure from it may be made.
- Questions and exercises from sample examinations are not used in the summative assessment.
- Ensure a proper balance between the number of questions and the length of the assessment. Too many questions in too short a time span assesses stress tolerance, not knowledge and/or skills.

### 3.3.2. RELIABILITY

A reliable assessment should always lead to the same result when repeatedly administered. The reliability is determined by the structure, the circumstances during the administration of the assessment and the form of assessment.

Guidelines on reliability:

*Structure*

- Formulate questions unambiguously and make sure that items can be answered independently of each other. Do not ask multi-interpretable questions and avoid duplicate questions (several questions/assignments in one question).
- Ensure a proper balance between the number of questions and the length of the assessment. An assessment's reliability depends on the quality of the questions as well as the length of the assessment.
- Make sure that the assessment's content and level of difficulty is in line with the learning objectives.

*Evaluation/Assessment*

- Make use of an answer key (for open questions) or an assessment form with criteria (for essays and reports) in order to ensure the assessment's objectivity as much as possible. The answer key has a scoring structure.
- Placements, research projects and theses make use of additional assessment criteria and procedures, which are included in the respective course guide or the faculty internship guide.
- Oral assessments are almost always assessed by two examiners. If an oral examination is assessed by one single examiner, there will be additional measures to guarantee the reliability, such as the use of a script or scoring table.

*Group products*

- For group products, it is important that students work as a team and are able to integrate their knowledge and understanding to arrive at a joint end product. Group products tend to reflect more complex skills and are less suited to acquiring basic general knowledge and basic skills.
- For a group assignment that contributes to a student's individual final mark for a programme component, an individual mark demonstrates how each individual group member contributed to the end product.
- There are different ways to arrive at an individual assessment in addition to a group assessment. See for example: <https://tauu.uu.nl/kennisplatform/beoordelen-van-groepswork-en-groepsproducten/> or <https://tauu.uu.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Zeven-manieren-om-tot-een-individueel-cijfer-te-komen-bij-groepswork.pdf>

The VU examination service offers a psychometric analysis for multiple-choice examinations, which provides information about the assessment's reliability and the validity of the separate items. Upon request, such analysis may also be provided for open questions. The Faculty of Science recommends the use of this service.

### 3.3.3. TRANSPARENCY

It is clear to a student in advance what is expected during the assessment. The table below shows which information is published at which location, so that students have access to all the necessary information to prepare for the assessment.

Document	Assessment-related information
Course Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning objectives</li> <li>• Teaching method/Form of assessment</li> <li>• If applicable: the assessment form</li> <li>• For constituent examinations: weighting of the constituent examinations and possible compensation arrangements between the constituent examinations</li> <li>• Time for the administering of the assessment</li> <li>• Permitted materials and study aids during the assessment</li> <li>• Information about the assessment scales and cut-of score</li> <li>• Information relating to the administering of the assessment/handing in the assignments, resits and inspection (a link to Canvas may be provided for this purpose)</li> <li>• If applicable: a description of the assessment procedure (information and rules for submitting assignments, etc.).</li> <li>• If applicable: assessment criteria and information about scoring</li> </ul>
Study guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The name of the programme components, the number of EC, the form of assessment and the period in which the assessment is offered.</li> </ul>
Academic and Examination Regulations (AER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Academic and Examination Regulations describe the curriculum and links the final attainment levels to the Dublin Descriptors. Rules on organisational matters (exemptions, resits, compulsory attendance, etc.) are also included.</li> </ul>
rooster.vu.nl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The examination timetable (date, time and place of the assessment).</li> </ul>
The (faculty) internship guide and thesis guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duties and responsibilities of parties involved</li> <li>• The applicable working methods</li> <li>• The method of supervision and assessment</li> <li>• The options for complaints and issues</li> </ul>
The Examination Board's Rules and Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exam registrations, inability to sit examinations due to illness or other circumstances</li> <li>• Questions and assignments, study material and the duration of examinations</li> <li>• Procedure for written degree components/final degree assessments and practicals</li> <li>• Classifications</li> <li>• Exemption or substitution</li> <li>• Academic misconduct and plagiarism in final degree assessments</li> <li>• Irregularities</li> <li>• Retention periods</li> </ul>
VU Dashboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessments/results</li> </ul>
Assessment cover page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The total time available to complete the assessment;</li> <li>• The number of pages and questions;</li> <li>• Instructions for completion (how to answer the questions);</li> <li>• For open questions/case studies: marks available for each question (weighting of components);</li> <li>• Indication of the minimum number of points required to pass;</li> <li>• The time and place where students can inspect their marked work.</li> </ul>

### 3.3.4. COMPARISON

The examiner ensures that the content and form of assessment are comparable every time an assessment is carried out. The assessment matrix serves as a tool.

### 3.3.5. USEFULNESS

The form of assessment is appropriate for the size of the group and the teaching method. There is a good balance between the time it takes the examiner to develop, administer and mark the assessment, the time it takes the student to prepare for and take the assessment, and the information that the assessment will generate about the learning objectives to be achieved. For example, in assessments with large numbers of participants, the time investment of the examiner in relation to the assessment may become skewed.

### 3.4. QUALITY ASSURANCE INSTRUMENTS

#### 3.4.1. THE FOUR-EYE PRINCIPLE

The Faculty of Science applies the *four-eye principle*, also referred to as the *peer-review principle*, which means that the assessment is reviewed by a colleague (or several colleagues). This colleague is familiar with the contents of the course and is preferably someone who can properly assess the level and pace of the students. Having a colleague review the assessment beforehand reduces the chance of irregularities in the assessment, which benefits the quality of the assessment.

The appointed examiner is responsible for marking the final result (weighing with other assessments/constituent assessments), and determines whether an examination has been sufficiently concluded, i.e. rounded off to 6.0 or higher, or inadequately concluded, meaning rounded off to 5.0 or lower. The guide for examiners<sup>9</sup> explains how the peer-review principle<sup>10</sup> can best be applied.

#### 3.4.2. EVALUATIONS

Students receive timely feedback after the assessment. This can be provided on an individual basis or take the form of group feedback by the examiner, or peer-based feedback. The examiner evaluates the assessment of the programme component on the basis of:

- the assessment results;
- the evaluation results of teaching;
- any panel discussions with students (for example through the annual representation);
- feedback from other parties involved in the assessment;
- information from a possible item analysis.

The examiner reflects on the evaluation results and, where necessary, adjusts the form of assessment, its design, its administration and/or the assessment of the test. If there is reason to modify the assessment, an improvement plan is drawn up by the examiner and submitted to the Programme Director.

The assessment evaluations are included in both the respective programme's annual report and in the Examination Board's annual report.

#### 3.4.3. QUALITY ASSURANCE – ASSESSMENT PROFICIENCY

The Programme Director's duty is to monitor the need for professionalisation among examiners. This can be achieved by initiating and facilitating the exchange of assessments and the assessment quality, the exchange of good practices, the organisation of information sessions on new developments in testing and assessments and the compilation and/or updating of guides. The assessment policy's Appendix includes a few guides that may contribute to increasing the examiners' assessment proficiency<sup>11</sup>.

Teaching is carried out by capable and academically trained lecturers in order to implement the faculty's teaching programmes. The measurable quality criteria applied by the faculty are as follows:

- For Bachelor's programmes: a minimum of 75% of the teaching staff in de Bachelor's programme holds a doctoral degree;
- For Master's programmes: a minimum of 90% of the teaching staff in de Master's programme holds a doctoral degree;
- Within the faculty at least 85% of the scientific teaching staff has the University Teaching Qualification for assistant professors (UTQ);
- All lecturers have mastered at least the C1 level of proficiency of the European Reference Framework Languages in the language of instruction of the education provided by them in the English or Dutch language.

The teaching evaluations of staff and their wishes in terms of professional development constitute a permanent fixture in the annual interviews. When it transpires that teachers have a need for additional training or coaching, their manager gives them the opportunity to meet such needs.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 9

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 9

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix 9

In addition to the University Teaching Qualification (UTQ), a Senior Teaching Qualification (STQ) is also offered for further development in the field of coordinating and/or management duties, subject didactics and educational theory.



## **4. STRUCTURE AND WORKING METHOD OF THE EXAMINATION BOARDS**

### **4.1. RESPONSIBILITY**

In accordance with the Higher Education and Research Act, the Examination Board establishes, in an objective and professional manner, whether a student has met the conditions set by the Academic and Examination Regulations regarding the knowledge, insights and skills required to obtain a degree. In addition, the Examination Board has a duty to assure the organisational and procedural quality of all examinations and tests, adopting guidelines and instructions and granting exemptions.

### **4.2. STRUCTURE**

#### **4.2.1. FACULTY EXAMINATION BOARD**

The Faculty of Science has two Faculty Examination Boards: the NSM - IS Examination Board, covering the domains of Natural Sciences, Chemistry and Mathematics and Information Science and the HLS - EEE Examination Board, covering the domains of Health and Life Sciences and Earth, Ecology and Environment. The two Faculty Examination Boards are each represented by their own chairperson. The two Faculty Examination Boards work according to the same faculty guidelines and are supported by a joint administrative secretary. The Faculty Examination Boards are aimed at learning from each other's working methods, seeking advice on any difficult issues, and harmonising rules and decisions in so far as possible.

The Faculty Examination Boards each have their own meeting schedule for joint meetings, which meetings take place on an average of six times per year, to which all members of the Examination Sub-boards (see 4.2.2) are invited. A minimum of one member per Examination Sub-board is expected to attend each meeting.

There is also a structural meeting between the chairpersons of the Faculty Examination Boards, the Director of Education of the Faculty of Science, the head of the Education Office and the administrative secretary. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss and coordinate current issues and to learn from best practices. On average, these meetings are held every two months. If needed, the number of meetings can be increased in the event of exceptional circumstances, such as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **4.2.2. EXAMINATION SUB-BOARDS**

The two Faculty Examination Boards each consist of a number of Examination Sub-boards: the Examination Sub-boards are set up for one degree programme or a cluster of degree programmes. Each Examination Sub-board has its own chairperson. The Examination Sub-boards meet as often as needed for the performance of their duties, which usually means once a month. The Examination Board decides by simple majority. In the event of a tie, the chairperson will have a deciding vote. The chairperson chairs the meetings. It is possible to involve advisers from a Examination Sub-board in the meetings. The Examination Sub-boards are assisted by an administrative secretary. The Examination Sub-board's administrative secretary checks the students' incoming requests and - if needed - obtains additional information (in writing) or seeks advice from a specific lecturer before the request is placed on the agenda. Matters that exceed the remit of a Examination Sub-board will be dealt with by the Faculty Examination Board.

Formally, the Examination Sub-board remains responsible for the performance of all the Examination Board's duties with regard to those degree programmes under its charge. The Examination Sub-board's chairperson is mandated by the Faculty Examination Board. The Faculty Examination Board's chairperson is authorised to sign and act as their deputy in the absence of the members of the Examination Sub-board.

#### **4.2.3. DIVISION OF ROLES FOR THE EXAMINATION SUB-BOARDS**

Members can be mandated for certain tasks. This is laid down by the Examination Board. Mandated members make decisions based on the Academic and Examination Regulations and previously formed policies and are accountable for their actions. The way in which this accountability takes place is documented. In case of deviations from previously formed policy, the entire Examination Sub-board will make a joint decision.

The degree programme's Examination Sub-boards have the following mandates:

All decisions appropriate to the policy regarding examinations, final degree assessments and degree certificates for the degree programmes within the designated clusters of degree programmes.

Each member of the Examination Board for specific degree programmes is authorised to sign. This is added to the central signing register of VU Amsterdam.

The Examination Sub-boards see to it that this working method is sufficiently known to students via the website and student portal.

### Duties of the Examination Board

- Academic misconduct: The degree programmes' Examination Sub-boards handle all common forms of academic misconduct reported by the programme's examiners who are responsible for the programme component in question, i.e. a course, thesis or student/work placement report. If a student from a different degree programme follows a programme component that is covered by the Examination Sub-board, in case of service educational programmes, minors and free-choice options, amongst others, the Examination Sub-board will then contact that degree programme before making a decision. The student's Examination Board determines the penalty.
- Quality assurance of final projects: One of the responsibilities of the degree programme's Examination Sub-board is to assure the quality of the final projects or student/work placement reports by means of an annual audit. The Examination Sub-board is committed to an independent assessment procedure by at least two assessors, clear assessment forms with assessment criteria, and the requirement of a minimum grade of six on all parts to be assessed. In order to assure the quality of the final projects, it is important that this (student/work placement) process proceeds properly. The Examination Board checks the assessment of the student/work placement proposals. Procedural details on student/work placements are set out in the faculty internship guide of the Faculty of Science.
- Appointing examiners: The Examination Sub-boards of the individual degree programmes are responsible for appointing the examiners. As a rule, the lecturer appointed as an examiner for a course is the lecturer requested/appointed by the Programme Director to teach the relevant subject. The aim is that all subject examiners hold a University Teaching Qualification and a doctoral degree. The Examination Sub-board may deviate from this rule and appoint another examiner. In such cases, the Examination Sub-board will report this to the Programme Director as soon as possible, stating reasons. The same applies to the appointment of a second lecturer/assessor for giving substantive marks to student/work placement reports. Requirements to be appointed by the Examination Board as an examiner for the internships are a) to hold a doctoral degree and b) to be appointed by VU Amsterdam/VU University Medical Center Amsterdam. Programme Directors may submit exceptions to the Examination Board with supporting arguments.
- Exemptions and the approval of selected subjects: the Examination Board consults advisers, such as teaching staff, programme coordinators and master or track coordinators. As a rule, this advice will be followed. The Examination Board may decide otherwise, in which case it will inform the respective coordinator, stating the reasons.
- Assessment quality assurance: For a number of degree programmes, the Examination Board has set up an Assessment Committee which has taken over the task of quality assurance. The *Examination Board* acts as an Assessment Committee in those cases where there is no separate programme assessment committee. In the annual report, the Examination Board will also examine and express an opinion on whether, based on the annual evaluation, the degree programme's intended final attainment levels have been achieved to a sufficient extent in the entirety of tests, assessments and examinations, therefore not per programme component, but as a conclusion on the assessment of all the programme components checked. Indication will be given of the extent to which the assessment evaluation was carried out: randomly, through course evaluations, through complaints or through remarks made by the Programme Committee<sup>12</sup>.

#### 4.2.4. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE EXAMINATION BOARD

If there is a vacancy, it is recommended that the Examination Board looks for a replacement. The Programme Director of the programme that falls under the Examination Sub-board may propose a new member. All

<sup>12</sup> See also [Examination Board and Assessment Committee](#) VUweb.

members of the Faculty Examination Boards and Examination Sub-boards are appointed by the Faculty of Science's Faculty Board.

#### **4.2.5. ROLE OF THE EXAMINATION BOARD IN ACCREDITATIONS, RE-ACCREDITATIONS AND MIDTERM REVIEWS**

In the event of midterm reviews or accreditations of one of the degree programmes, the chairperson or vice-chairperson of the Faculty Examination Board and the members of the specific Examination Sub-board will serve as discussion partners.

#### **4.2.6. PROCEEDINGS AND FORMAL REGULATIONS WITH RESPECT TO ASSESSMENT AND DEGREE PROGRAMME**

- Procedures and guidelines are further detailed in the Academic and Examination Regulations, the [Examination Board's Rules and Guidelines](#) and the [Examinations protocol](#).
- Formal rules relating to examinations and final degree assessments are laid down in the [Academic and Examination Regulations](#) of the degree programmes. These rules cover, among other things, the form of the examinations, the admission requirements, the frequency and possibilities of taking examinations, the correction period, the establishment and publication of the examination results, the right of inspection, the period of validity of examinations and exemptions.
- The [Examination Board's Rules and Guidelines](#) set out the working method of the Examination Board with regard to examinations, assignments and final degree assessments. As stipulated by law, the Examination Board is responsible for the content of the rules and guidelines.

#### **4.2.7. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT**

The programmes' Examination Sub-boards are assisted by a team of administrative secretaries. An administrative secretary takes care of:

- Suggesting meeting schedules and drawing up the agendas, together with the chairperson;
- Convening meetings;
- Independently handling and substantively formulating student requests according to the Academic and Examination Regulations and the Examination Board's Rules and Guidelines: admission, complaints, making exceptions;
- Discussing a selection of special cases with the chairperson;
- Drafting agendas for approval of processed applications, further consultation regarding special cases, drawing attention to policy changes, and notifications (the Academic and Examination Regulations) and adoption of the Examination Board's Rules and Guidelines, the examiners list, sampling of student/work placement reports, theses and examinations, the latter either via the Assessment Committee or otherwise.
- Reporting of the meetings and archiving;
- Carrying out the correspondence following the meetings and consultations, if needed, with the relevant examiners, chairpersons of the Programme Committee or Honours Programme, the VU Amsterdam lawyer or International Office;
- Preparing, taking notes and handling the hearings related to suspicions of academic misconduct;
- Preparing appeals (COBEX);
- Preparing the annual report;

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Below is an overview of the responsibilities of each actor in the assessment process at faculty level, programme level and programme component level. This is current faculty policy. A number of duties are also set out in the VU Assessment Framework.

### 5.1. FACULTY LEVEL

#### 5.1.1. FACULTY BOARD / PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR TEACHING

- Has final responsibility for the contents of the faculty assessment policy, ensures that the assessment policy corresponds as much as possible to the VU Assessment Framework.
- Supervises the enforcement of the faculty assessment policy and, where necessary, addresses the Programme Director on non-compliance with the quality assurance cycle;
- Has final responsibility for the quality of the degree programmes, including the quality of the assessments;
- Appoints the members of the Programme Committees and the Examination Board and ensures the expertise and independence; including the ability to address any non-compliance with the quality assurance cycle, and offering training opportunities;
- Monitors an efficient and effective assessment organisation;
- Annually establishes the Academic and Examination Regulations for the degree programmes.

#### 5.1.2. DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

- Represents the Faculty Board;
- In response to the Examination Board's annual report, holds an annual meeting with the Examination Board's chairperson;
- Has a monthly meeting with the Programme Directors, during which meetings quality assurance and the assessment policy are listed as items on the agenda;
- In response to the Degree programme's annual report and the Examination Board, holds an annual meeting with the Programme Director and the Programme Committee's chairperson;
- Is involved in all midterm reviews and visitations;
- Ensures the implementation of the faculty assessment policy;
- Takes care of the communication involving the faculty assessment policy;
- Is responsible for drafting the annual teaching report based on programme annual reports, including the assessments.

#### 5.1.3. EXAMINATION BOARD (FACULTY)

- Establishes the Examination Board's working methods for the quality assurance of assessments and evaluation;
- Establishes the requirements for examiners;
- Reports annually to the Faculty Board on the previous academic year;
- Establishes the Rules and Guidelines of the Faculty of Science's Examination Board with regard to the quality of assessments and testing, according to the VU Amsterdam model and within the frameworks of the Academic and Examination Regulations, and monitors compliance with these guidelines.

#### 5.1.4. (HEAD OF THE) EDUCATION OFFICE

- Is responsible for the (logistical) organisation of examinations and final degree assessments;
- Facilitates support in relation to examinations and final degree assessments;
- Is responsible for archiving the results in the relevant system;
- Is responsible for the supporting IT systems;
- Organises the provision of information on examinations and final degree assessments.

#### 5.1.5. THE FACULTY POLICY OFFICER EDUCATION

- Is responsible for adjusting and fine-tuning the assessment policy;

- Ensures the monitoring of quality assurance;
- Is jointly responsible for reporting the current state of play with regard to the implementation of the assessment policy.

## **5.2. PROGRAMME LEVEL**

### **5.2.1. THE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR**

- Has final responsibility for the assessment quality and quality assurance in accordance with the Faculty of Science assessment policy, including the set up of a programme assessment plan, and monitors compliance with the programme assessment plan and presence/contents of assessment dossiers;
- Is responsible for coherence between the individual programme components to ensure that the final attainment levels are adequately assessed, and, where necessary, monitors this process by means of assessment matrixes, among other things;
- Annually assesses the accuracy of the assessment programmes, and - where necessary - the assessment plan, and verifies whether all final attainment levels are covered based on input from examiners and other information, and makes adjustments where necessary;
- Is responsible for drawing up the annual Academic and Examination Regulations of the degree programme, in consultation with the Programme Committee, to be adopted by the Faculty Board;
- Ensures that the education on offer is actually provided and in line with the quality standard set out in the assessment plan;
- Introduces staff members whom the Programme Director wants to appoint as examiners to the Examination Board. If a proposed examiner does not meet the requirements set by the Examination Board, the Programme Director must submit a substantiated request for an exemption to the Examination Board;
- Ensures that the examiners are familiar with the assessment plan and the place and role of their course within the relevant degree programme;
- Monitors and facilitates professionalisation in the field of assessment proficiency among examiners, Examination Board members, Faculty Board members, Programme Committee members and management of the programme;
- Ensures frequent calibration with regard to assessments, in particular the assessment of final projects.
- Identifies potential bottlenecks relating to assessment on the basis of information from examiners, course evaluations, conversations with students and/or year representatives, the Programme Committee or the Examination Board, and can request the Examination Board to conduct an investigation;
- Listens to the recommendations of the Examination Board and, if necessary, acts on the recommendations received. If the Programme Director decides not to take action, the Programme Director is responsible for justifying this decision to the Examination Board.

### **5.2.2. EXAMINATION BOARD (EXAMINATION SUB-BOARD)**

- Annually appoints examiners to carry out the assessments for specific courses and to determine the results of these assessments;
- Advises on the programme assessment plan;
- Guarantees the quality of examinations and final degree assessments, including the right of inspection in relation to assessment dossiers, by means of samples and/or evaluations for example. Specifically, the Examination Board regularly takes note of the quality of assessment in relation to final projects;
- In the case of a Joint Degree, the joint Examination Board guarantees the final level of proficiency achieved by graduates;
- May grant exemptions within the frameworks of the Academic and Examination Regulations and the rules for implementation described, as drawn up by the Central Examination Board;
- Is responsible for reporting any issues involving assessment based on complaints reported to the Examination Board and information obtained by the Examination Board through sampling. If the Examination Board requires information about an assessment, it will request the examiner to provide this information;

- The Examination Board reports its findings, evaluations, suggestions and recommendations to the Programme Director. Any findings related to a course may also be reported to the examiner;
- Establishes whether graduates meet the final attainment levels and signs the degree certificate.

#### **5.2.3. PROGRAMME COMMITTEE**

- Advises the Programme Director on the Academic and Examination Regulations as a whole and has right of approval on parts of the Academic and Examination Regulations, including the programme's curriculum and assessment.
- Advises the Programme Director, upon request or at its own initiative, on the content of the assessment plan, particularly in relation to the assessment programme's feasibility and manageability. Please note: the recommendations are given to the Programme Director and relate to quality and attainability. The recommendations do not form part of a formal participation process. The Programme Committee formally participates in the decision-making process of the Academic and Examination Regulations. As such, the Programme Committee has the right of participation with respect to part of the assessment plan, i.e. the curriculum, which is exercised on the Academic and Examination Regulations through the right of advice and approval.

### **5.3. PROGRAMME COMPONENT LEVEL**

#### **5.3.1. EXAMINER**

- Has primary responsibility for the content of the assessment, the form of assessment and the quality of assessment. The assessment aligns to the learning objectives and is valid, reliable and transparent.
- Is responsible for a clear communication to students regarding assessments and is responsible for making all relevant assessment information available;
- Provides education and assessment<sup>13</sup> as part of a degree programme, within the parameters of the assessment plan of the programme;
- Adjusts the teaching, also on the basis of the interim evaluation of assessments;
- Determines the achieved result of the completed work, including the development of an answer key; the coordination between multiple assessors; the observance of the peer-review principle in the assessments; and the provision of access to the completed work and the assessments.
- Contributes the necessary documentation to the assessment dossier, as established by the Programme Director in the programme assessment plan.
- Works in accordance with the guidelines as laid down in the faculty assessment policy and the programme assessment plan.

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<sup>13</sup> And is also a lecturer as such.

## 6. PROCEDURES FOR ASSESSMENT

### 6.1. PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Every assessment requires a proper provision of information. Within the Faculty, content-related information is published in the digital learning environment ([CANVAS](#)), and the [study guide](#). When it comes to assessments, the courses' information pages will in any event communicate about: the form of assessment, the duration of the examination, the use of any permitted tools, cut-off scores and compensation possibilities.

Practical information for teaching staff on education, assessment and their organisation are included in the [Faculty of Science information guide for teaching staff](#).

### 6.2. ORGANISATION AND LOGISTICS OF ASSESSMENT AND THE ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE

The educational logistics organisation of the centrally structured timetables and digital assessments/programme components is handled by the [VU Faculty of Science Education Office](#) in consultation with the central scheduler. This also includes the match between the appropriate assessment room and the form of assessment as well as the number of students.

See below procedures and regulations for further information:

- [Examination protocol](#): Information on the educational logistics organisation of the Faculty of Science assessments, for shared exam locations on [vu.nl](#), including information about written and digital examinations, invigilators, academic misconduct and irregularities, provisions, inspection;
- [Structure of the academic year](#) for educational activities and periods for examinations and resits. The annual timetable is based on optimal attainability.
- [Rules and Guidelines for the Faculty of Science's Examination Board](#) covering the working methods, duties and procedures of the Examination Boards, including any procedures involving academic misconduct, exemptions, retention periods, etc.

### 6.3. ARCHIVING

In accordance with the VU Assessment Framework,<sup>14</sup> exam question papers and answers, including any assignments and other written materials for which a mark (or constituent mark) is awarded, and exam results, are retained for at least two years, whether or not as part of the assessment dossier. Final projects, such as Bachelor's theses and Master's theses, are retained for at least seven years with the assessment criteria, the corresponding independent assessments and the final assessment. See also the [Rules and Guidelines for the Faculty of Science's Examination Board](#).

Formally, the Programme Director has overall responsibility for the archiving of assignments, answers and results from examinations, and the archiving of final projects including signed assessment forms. The executive responsibility is mandated to the [Education Office of the Faculty of Science of VU Amsterdam](#).

The archiving procedures of written and digitally made examinations are laid down in the [Examination protocol](#). The protocol for graduation requests includes the archiving of final projects: the final project is handed in (and archived) when the corresponding result is entered into the student information system.

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<sup>14</sup> See [the 2019 VU Assessment Framework](#), Appendix 2.7.2.2.: Guide for the Faculty Board (as of page 63)



## APPENDIX 1 | GLOSSARY

Lecturer	Responsible for the content and organisation of the education offered by the programme, and in this context also authorised to administer assessments. See also: Examiner.
The Examination Board	The Examination Board has a duty to assure the organisational and procedural quality of all examinations in the degree programme in relation to assessment. The Examination Board has also set up Examination Sub-boards for all degree programmes or clusters of programmes as well as a separate Assessment Committee for a number of degree programmes. General VU Amsterdam-related information can <a href="#">be found here</a> .
Examiner	Examiners, both first and second examiners, have final responsibility for the quality of the assessment, including the examination, the assessment matrix, the answer key and the evaluation. General VU Amsterdam-related information can <a href="#">be found here</a> .
Faculty assessment policy	The faculty elaboration of the VU Assessment Framework which provides a framework for the assessment plans of the degree programmes of the Faculty of Science.
Manual for Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning	VU Standard for the educational quality framework, see the <a href="#">Manual for Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning</a> .
Programme component	A programme component as defined in Section 7.3, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the <a href="#">Higher Education and Research Act</a> .
Programme Coordinator	Supports the Programme Director in coordination and management duties for the degree programme, and acts as a contact person for the educational organisation.
The Programme Director	Is responsible for the contents, the coordination and the performance of a specific degree programme.
Assessment committee	The Faculty Examination Board has established an Assessment Committee for a number of degree programmes to carry out some of its duties in the area of quality assurance. The <i>Examination Board</i> acts as an Assessment Committee in those cases where there is no separate programme assessment committee. General VU Amsterdam-related information can <a href="#">be found here</a> .
Assessment dossier	A collection of documents relating to the assessment of a course. The assessment dossiers form part of the Digital Education Dossier to account for the quality.
The assessment matrix	Specification table: This table directly compares the content of the material being assessed with the level of proficiency. And can be used both when designing the assessment and when checking the balance of the finished assessment.
Assessment plan	The degree programme's assessment policy based on the relevant final attainment levels, the degree programme's vision for education and the <a href="#">VU Assessment Framework</a> (Appendix 1.3: assessment plan framework, as of page 32)
Form of assessment	Each form of assessment that can be used to conclude a programme component: written examinations, presentations, reports or papers, practical assignments, fieldwork, theses or student/work placements.
VU Assessment Framework	The Executive Board adopted the <a href="#">Framework</a> for the assessment policy in May 2018, with the latest version in 2019.



## **APPENDIX 2 | PROCESS DESCRIPTION ON UPDATING THE ASSESSMENT POLICY OF THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE**

### **PARTIES INVOLVED**

The Faculty Board of the Faculty of Science is responsible for a timely review and update of the assessment policy. The policy officer education implements the changes.

The proposed changes to the assessment policy are discussed in the design phase with:

- The Faculty of Science's management team meeting, the Director of Education and the quality manager for education and training of the Faculty of Science
- Programme Directors, via programme directors' consultations
- Chairpersons of the Faculty Examination Boards and Examination Sub-boards

### **PROCEDURE**

After all parties involved have been consulted, their input will be processed. The modified assessment policy will be presented for adoption to the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Science. After it has been adopted, the amended document will be published via

- VUweb
- Provision of information via Bèta-zine
- An email to all parties involved: the Examination Boards via the administrative secretary, the programme directors, chairpersons of the Programme Committee for information purposes.

## **APPENDIX 3 | QUALITY REQUIREMENTS AT THE FACULTY LEVEL, THE DEGREE PROGRAMME LEVEL AND PROGRAMME COMPONENT LEVEL, DERIVED FROM THE VU ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK**

### **QUALITY REQUIREMENTS AT FACULTY LEVEL**

1. Each faculty has formulated a faculty assessment policy which is derived from the VU Assessment Framework and which provides a framework for the assessment plans.
2. The faculty assessment policy formally allocates duties and responsibilities at the levels of assessment policy, assessment proficiency and assessment organisation and incorporates these into the relevant PDCA cycle. The faculty assessment policy or assessment plan specifies which assessment information is archived, the length of the various cycles and which bodies are involved as stakeholders.
3. In order to promote transparency for students, the Academic and Examination Regulations specify who is entitled to make decisions regarding alternative assessment options for students with a disability, and how these decisions are made.
4. The Faculty Board ensures that the responsibilities for archiving all relevant assessment material (assessment dossier) are included in the faculty assessment policy.
5. The Faculty Board supports examiners in carrying out their duties in the field of assessment in a professional manner. This means that the personnel and training policy includes provisions for examiners to (further) enhance their proficiency in the field of assessment. To this end, the Faculty Board will ensure that staff can access an appropriate programme of training.
6. The assessment proficiency of examiners, Programme Directors and members of the Examination Board and Assessment Committee is a standard item on the agenda of performance appraisal meetings. The VU Teaching Performance Framework is used for this purpose.

### **QUALITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT AT THE DEGREE PROGRAMME LEVEL**

1. The Programme Director draws up an assessment plan. This assessment plan formally allocates the duties and responsibilities at the levels of assessment, programme component and assessment programme and incorporates these into the relevant PDCA cycle. The assessment plan includes the final attainment levels stated in relation to the Dublin Descriptors, the degree programme's assessment programme, and the accompanying explanation and methods for optimising assessment quality.
2. The Programme Director has overall responsibility for establishing clearly formulated final attainment levels for the degree programme and ensures that the degree programme's final attainment levels are reflected in the education and assessments that are provided. This is laid down in the assessment plan; the Programme Director is responsible for the annual evaluation and amendment of the assessment plan. The assessment plan is submitted to the Examination Board and the Programme Committee for their advice prior to its adoption.
3. The assessment plan sets out the requirements for compensation opportunities for assessment within programme components and/or within the assessment programme.
4. The Programme Director monitors the coherence and structure of the degree programme, ensuring that it provides a varied and balanced distribution of forms of assessment and opportunities for assessment, including the alignment of the learning objectives and forms of assessment used in the programme components with the final attainment levels of the programme.
5. With regard to practising and acquiring the relevant skills (e.g. writing papers, giving presentations, IT skills), the Programme Director is responsible for defining the required levels (or levels in relation to the various years of the degree programme) and the relevant assessment criteria, which are derived from the final attainment levels for the degree programme. These criteria apply to all programme components which involve the application of these skills and are made known to the students participating in the degree programme. The Programme Director determines which programme components these skills are practised and assessed in.
6. The Examination Board provides clear and concisely formulated rules and guidelines, preferably following the university-wide model. The measures to be taken in the event of academic misconduct are included in

the Examination Board's Rules and Guidelines, in accordance with the model provisions issued by the Executive Board.

7. The Examination Board takes regular note of the quality of assessment in relation to programme components in which final attainment levels are assessed in relation to the final level of proficiency (final projects). A procedure for this is laid down by the Examination Board.
8. In relation to the placement guide and thesis guide, the tasks and responsibilities are set as clearly and comprehensively as possible with regard to each degree programme. An explicit indication is given of how supervision and assessment are implemented and which opportunities there are for resolving complaints or issues.
9. In the case of a compulsory placement, the degree programme is responsible for helping students to find a placement. A degree programme designates responsibility for this, for example to a specific lecturer or placement coordinator.

#### **QUALITY REQUIREMENTS AT THE PROGRAMME COMPONENT LEVEL**

1. The examiner is accountable to the Examination Board for the development and implementation of assessment and the determining of results, and provides the Examination Board with information on the quality of the assessments carried out [Higher Education and Research Act, Section 7.12 c, hereafter the WHW].
2. When developing assessments, the peer-review principle is always applied to ensure quality (validity, reliability, transparency, usefulness and comparability).
3. The examiner collects information from all the steps in the assessment cycle in order to implement improvements in the assessment and/or to communicate the need for particular improvements to the Programme Director.
4. The examiner ensures that the learning objectives can be assessed and that these are aligned with the final attainment levels for the degree programme and the other programme components that make up the curriculum.
5. Assessment is examined according to the principles of constructive alignment: it must reflect the learning objectives that have been formulated and the teaching methods selected. The relative weighting of the learning objectives is also reflected in the assessment.
6. Examiners ensure that students are aware of the learning objectives and method of assessment used for a particular unit of study before it begins, and that the instructions accompanying the assessment are clear and comprehensive.
7. The pass mark is set and announced in advance of every assessment. Either an absolute pass mark or compromise methods may be used. A fully comparative pass mark can only be used in specific circumstances, under specific conditions and on the basis of fully substantiated arguments.
8. The weighting and the compensation opportunities for constituent assessments are specified in advance for every programme component. The final assessment is determined on this basis.
9. In relation to the learning objectives, the student is provided with formative feedback on their progress at the earliest opportunity, as well as with feedback on the assessment criteria that apply to passing the programme component or parts thereof.
10. The last standard assessment/the final submission date must fall within the period of the programme component, to avoid the assessment intervening with the teaching in the next period. Work submitted late is counted as a resit opportunity. The deadlines for assessments beyond the programme component are set in the assessment plan.
11. The student is given two opportunities per academic year to take examinations in each component of the degree programme.
12. Assessment results are announced within ten working days of the assessment taking place, with due observance of the regulations for the protection of personal data. Thesis results are announced within twenty working days of the official submission date for the thesis. The student then has the right to inspect the work within the period specified in the Academic and Examination Regulations.
13. Information that is relevant for one or more of the quality control cycles relating to assessment is archived centrally (preferably in the Digital Teaching Dossier (DOD)) and can be consulted by the Examination

Board, the Programme Director and programme coordinator, as well as by designated programme stakeholders.

14. It must be possible to assess the final project (or an assignment that is part of the 'palette of final projects') on the merits of the work completed by the individual involved. In cases where a final project is completed by two or more students, clear agreements must be made regarding which tasks, components or research questions are to be addressed by each individual. The contribution made by each individual student must also be clearly stated; it must be possible to arrive at an individual assessment in relation to the primary goals of the final project and the final attainment levels of the programme. Details regarding the final project or palette of final projects must be provided in the assessment plan.
15. The assessment criteria for a final project (e.g. the placement or thesis) are operationalised in an assessment matrix. These assessment criteria are consistent with the final attainment levels of the programme and have already been addressed as part of the degree programme. The internship guide or thesis guide or the study guide supplement for the final project sets out how and at which point assessment will take place.
16. The final product of the Master's placement or Master's thesis is assessed by the supervisor and an independent assessor who is involved in the degree programme, both of whom have been trained in the use of the assessment criteria. Both assessors substantiate their assessment; their substantiations are also both archived. External supervisors can take on the role of informant, providing the supervisor with an additional evaluation of the placement student's process and attitude.
17. The final project for Bachelor's programmes is assessed by the supervisor and an independent assessor involved in the degree programme, both of whom have been trained in the use of the assessment criteria. In exceptional cases where the work is assessed by only one assessor, this role must be fulfilled by someone other than the supervisor.
18. In cooperation with the Programme Director and the Faculty Board, the Examination Board provides guidelines specifying how the final mark for final projects is arrived at and how differences between the assessments of the first and second assessors are handled (Section 7.12 b, paragraph 1(b) of the Higher Education and Research Act).

## **APPENDICES ASSESSMENT POLICY FACULTY OF SCIENCE**

*The following documents may be found via: [Appendixes Faculty of Science Assessment policy](#)*

### **APPENDIX 4 | FACULTY FORMAT ASSESSMENT MATRIX**

[4a. Facultaire formats toetsmatrijs \(NE-versie\)](#)

[4b. Faculty format assessment matrix \(EN-version\)](#)

### **APPENDIX 5 | FACULTY FORMAT ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW**

[5a. Facultair format intercollegiale toetsing \(NE-versie\)](#)

[5b. Faculty format assessment peer review \(EN-version\)](#)

### **APPENDIX 6 | FACULTY FORMAT ASSESSMENT REPORT**

[6a. Facultair format toetsverslag \(NE-versie\)](#)

[6b. Faculty format assessment report \(EN version\)](#)

### **APPENDIX 7 | FACULTAIRE STAGEHANDLEIDING BETA**

[7a. BETA Thesis- en stagerichtlijn \(NE-versie\)](#)

[7b. BETA Thesis and placement regulations \(EN-version\)](#)

### **APPENDIX 8 | TIPS TO CONDUCTING AN ORAL ASSESSMENT (FROM VU ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK)**

[8a. Tips voor het inrichten van een mondelinge toets \(NE-versie\)](#)

[8b. Tips to conducting an oral assessment \(EN-version\)](#)

### **APPENDIX 9 | GUIDE FOR EXAMINERS (FROM VU ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK)**

[9a. Handreiking voor examinatoren \(NE-versie\)](#)

[9b. Guide for examiners \(EN-version\)](#)

### **APPENDIX 10 | GUIDE FOR PROGRAMME DIRECTORS (FROM VU ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK)**

[10a. Handreiking voor opleidingsdirecteuren \(NE-versie\)](#)

[10b. Guide for programme directors \(EN-version\)](#)

### **APPENDIX 11 | GUIDE FOR EXAMINATION BOARDS (FROM VU ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK)**

[11a. Handreiking voor examencommissies \(NE-versie\)](#)

[11b. Guide for examination boards \(EN-version\)](#)

### **APPENDIX 12 | A GUIDE TO ASSESSMENT FOR PLACEMENTS AND THESIS (FROM VU ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK)**

[12a. Handreiking voor stage- en scriptiecoördinatoren \(NE-versie\)](#)

[12b. A guide to assessment for placements and thesis \(EN-version\)](#)

### **APPENDIX 13 | VU ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK 2019**

[13a. VU toetskader 2019 \(NE-versie\)](#)

[13b. VU assessment framework 2019 \(EN-version\)](#)