



## **Amsterdam University College**

***Excellence and Diversity in a Global City***

**Rules and Guidelines AUC Board of Examiners**



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## **1. Scope**

1. These Rules and Guidelines apply to the examinations in AUC's Bachelor's programme and exist in conjunction with the Academic Standards and Procedures (AS&P).
2. These Rules and Guidelines apply to both faculty and students. The current version of the Rules and Guidelines applies irrespective of the year a student joined the programme.

## **2. General provisions**

1. The definitions of terms given in the Academic Standards and Procedures (AS&P) also apply to these Rules and Guidelines.
2. In the event that a provision in these Rules and Guidelines conflicts with a provision in the AS&P, the provision in the AS&P shall prevail.
3. The Board of Examiners annually advises the AUC *Bestuur* on the AS&P.

## **3. Composition of the Board of Examiners**

1. The Board of Examiners (BoE) shall consist of five or six members, all of them experts in the areas covered by the study programme. At least one member shall be part of the teaching staff of the programme concerned. There is at least one external member, not associated with the programme. Members of the Executive Board or any person who has any type of financial responsibility in the institution shall not form part of the BoE.
2. The members of the BoE shall be appointed by the AUC *Bestuur* on the basis of their expertise in the fields covered by the programme.
3. The BoE shall nominate one of its members, but not the external member, as its chairperson. The chairperson is responsible for the day-to-day management of the BoE. If necessary, he or she will designate another member to deputize during his or her absence.
4. Before the appointment of a member, the Dean consults with the BoE on the proposed appointment.
5. Members of the BoE shall be appointed for three years and may be reappointed.
6. The AUC *Bestuur* shall ensure that the BoE is able to operate independently and professionally.

## **4. Duties of the Board of Examiners**

The duties of the BoE are set out by law (the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW)). These include determining the rules for the execution of duties and powers and taking measures with regard to:

- determining objectively and professionally whether a student satisfies the requirements laid down in the AS&P with regard to the knowledge, understanding and skills that are required for obtaining a degree;
- ensuring the quality of all examinations;
- establishing guidelines and instructions within the framework of the AS&P as the basis for marking and awarding results in interim and final examinations;
- granting exemptions from taking one or more examinations;
- taking measures in the event of plagiarism or fraud;
- appointing examiners to conduct examinations and determine their results;
- issuing degree certificates, with the diploma supplements appended to them, as proof that the study programme has been successfully completed;
- granting students permission to follow a flexible curriculum, the successful completion of which will lead to the obtaining of a degree;
- issuing certificates for successfully completed examinations to students who have successfully taken more than one examination, but to whom a degree certificate cannot be issued;

- drawing up an annual report on its activities.

## **5. Working method used by the Board of Examiners**

1. As a rule, the BoE shall meet five times a year or whenever the chairperson deems such to be necessary. The schedule of meetings will be published in good time. The meetings are not held in public.
2. During term time, a delegation consisting of at least two BoE members meets biweekly to take decisions on requests submitted to the BoE. In case a request is not covered by established policy, it is discussed with the full BoE.
3. The BoE is assisted by an official secretary.
4. In the event of a request or complaint involving a member of the BoE, this shall be handled in the absence of the member concerned.
5. Requests or complaints must be submitted to the Secretary. The request or complaint must always include the reasons for the request or a description of the complaint.
6. Any request should be supported by documentation whenever possible.
7. During term time, the BoE shall make a decision within six weeks of receiving a written petition.
8. Under responsibility of the BoE, the relevant Head of Studies is authorized to decide how courses taken abroad will count towards degree requirements.
9. Under responsibility of the BoE, the Director of Education is authorized to decide, in consultation with the relevant Head(s) of Studies, appropriate credit transfer and course waivers in relation to courses completed prior to admission to AUC.
10. Decisions on credit transfer and course waivers are taken by the Director of Education in case the student is not yet enrolled in the AUC programme, and by the BoE after enrollment.
11. Credits transferred do not contribute to the credits needed for BSA as addressed in article 3.7 of the AS&P.
12. If a credit transfer has been granted, students can apply for study abroad from their third semester at AUC onward.
13. If credit transfer is granted, students can follow off campus courses starting in their second semester at AUC.
14. First year course requirements as mentioned in AS&P article 2.5.2 apply, unless courses have been specifically identified as waivers or credits have been transferred specifically for these requirements.

## **6. Tests / examinations**

1. The BoE shall oversee the quality of all examinations.
2. The questions and assignments included in examinations shall not relate to areas outside the examination subject matter announced in advance. The examination subject matter shall be announced in broad outline before the start of the course that leads up to the examination. The exact extent of the areas covered by the examination shall be published at the beginning of the course (in the course manual).
3. The duration of examinations shall be such that students can be reasonably expected to have sufficient time to answer the questions.

## **7. Assessment**

1. Each examination, including oral examinations, shall involve a testing of students' knowledge, understanding and skills by the examiner and an assessment of the results of this test.
2. Written exams shall be assessed according to documented standards.
3. If more than one examiner is involved in the assessment of an examination, the BoE requires that all examiners apply the same standards when assessing the examination.
4. The method of assessment shall be such that students are able to verify

- how the grades of their exams have been determined.
5. Grades obtained off-campus (including during study abroad) are converted to the AUC grading scheme. If a numerical grade is available, it is converted by linear interpolation between the passing grade and the maximum grade. If only a letter grade is available, it is used without conversion, with the exception that any passing grade below C will be converted to a C in the AUC grading scheme.
  6. Off-campus courses (including study abroad) count towards the AUC degree (including calculation of the GPA) in the chronological order in which they have been taken. If off-campus courses run simultaneously, and if more off-campus courses will be taken than can be counted towards the AUC degree, the student has to indicate to the BoE which of them should count towards the AUC degree prior to commencing them. If the student fails to indicate this, or fails to indicate this prior to commencing the courses, off-campus courses will count towards the AUC degree in the order in which the grades have been submitted to the registrar

## **8. Quality assurance**

1. In assuring the quality of all examinations, the BoE shall apply the Assessment Policy Framework, unless specified otherwise in the AS&P or these Rules and Guidelines.
2. The BoE regularly advises the Director of Education on quality assurance issues regarding assessment. The assessment subcommittee of the BoE establishes expectations for proper quality care, including requirements for a robust peer review system and independent assessment sampling, and checks that the system for quality care is operating effectively.
3. The BoE regularly advises the Director of Education on the quality care of the Capstone theses, taking into account the annual report of the Capstone Assessment Committee, which assesses whether the grades for the Capstone theses are justified (including appropriate use of the grading forms, as stipulated in the Capstone Guidelines).
4. The BoE regularly checks that the assessment plan guarantees that every student who completes the degree requirements achieves the learning outcomes described in the AS&P. Students perform a graduation check under the guidance of the registrar. The BoE then checks that every graduating student has completed the degree requirements.

## **9. Procedure during written examination components**

1. When taking an examination, students may be asked to show valid proof of enrolment (student card) and a valid identity document with a signature and a photograph bearing a clear resemblance to the holder.
2. The examiner shall ensure that a sufficient number of invigilators are appointed to oversee written examinations and make sure that examinations proceed in an orderly fashion. If there are more than 50 students, at least two invigilators must be present. Every additional 50 students require one additional invigilator.
3. Students must follow the instructions given by the invigilators.

## **10. Exemptions and other requests**

1. Requests for exemptions from taking a course must be submitted to the secretary to the BoE using the electronic form intended for that purpose no later than six weeks before the start of the course.
2. After having sought the advice of the relevant examiner, the BoE may grant an exemption from taking a course on the grounds of:
  - a. a successfully completed course at higher education level in the Netherlands or elsewhere, the content, level and study load of which correspond to the course for which an exemption is being requested; or
  - b. knowledge and/or skills of similar content, level and scope, acquired outside the field of higher education.
3. Students may ask the BoE for an exemption from taking part in practical

work. Such exemptions may be granted to students who have moral objections, for example. The BoE shall decide, in consultation with the examiner, what additional requirements students in this category should meet.

4. Any student wishing to meet the requirements of any particular AUC examination by studying at another faculty or university, in the Netherlands or elsewhere, must first obtain the approval of the BoE.
5. The BoE will consider off-campus course requests and study abroad programme requests in the following circumstances only:
  - a. the course/programme is offered by an accredited, reputable university (i.e. maintaining standards similar to UvA and VU). If this concerns a foreign university which is not a partner university of AUC, UvA or VU, then documentation demonstrating the international reputation must be provided by the student;
  - b. there is a sufficient match in level and content with AUC programme. The BoE will consult with the relevant Head(s) of Studies as needed.
6. The BoE will consider off-campus language course requests in the following circumstances only:
  - a. the course is offered by an accredited, reputable university or those prestigious institutions (namely: Alliance Française, Goethe-Institut, Instituto Cervantes) previously approved by the BoE and the Head of Studies Academic Core;
  - b. the course operates according to the European framework (A/B/C levels);
  - c. the student receives a transcript for the course;
  - d. approval is obtained from the BoE in advance of the course.
7. The BoE will grant accommodation to attendance, course load, examination and assessment requirements on the basis of disability or medical conditions, in the form of a license indicating the permitted accommodations and time frame of validity, in the following circumstances only:
  - a. following a request from the student to the BoE with appropriate documentation;
  - b. on the basis of criteria for accommodation outlined in the AS&P.
8. Requests regarding the attendance policy that fall outside of the accommodation procedure for long term, ongoing, foreseeable circumstances constitute exemption requests and are considered after completion of the course only. Such exemptions may be granted in case of an unexpected medical condition, other 'force majeure', or on recommendation of the Dean. Documentation supporting the request must be submitted for all absences beyond the permitted maximum number stated in the AS&P.

#### **11. Procedure for accommodations for exceptional personal circumstances**

1. The BoE makes a procedural distinction between accommodation requests due to long-term, ongoing, foreseeable circumstances and exemption requests due to acute, unexpected circumstances.
2. Request for accommodations due to long-term, ongoing, foreseeable circumstances must be submitted to the secretary to the BoE using the electronic form intended for that purpose. Requests for accommodation can be submitted at any time, but to obtain a declaration in time for the start of the semester students must submit their request at least six weeks prior. This category includes:

- a. Long-term (mental) health conditions;
  - b. Long-term learning difficulties;
  - c. Topsport athlete status or cultural top performer status at the (inter)national level, as designated by either UvA or VU;
  - d. Membership of AUC co-governance bodies.
3. Request for exemptions due to acute, unexpected circumstances must be submitted to the secretary of the BoE using the electronic form intended for that purpose as soon as possible after the circumstance occurs (except in case of attendance policy exemption requests).
  4. In all cases, documentation supporting the request must be submitted.

## **12. Criteria for weighing exceptional personal and mitigating circumstances**

1. The BoE considers the following the *spirit of the AUC programme*: in principle AUC is a six semester residential honors program amounting to 180 EC, with the possibility of accumulating additional credits within the six semesters. Only exceptional personal and mitigating circumstances allow for seven or more semesters with honors.
2. To treat students equally and to respect reasonable expectations, in making decisions, as much as possible previous decisions are followed (precedent) and the *spirit of the AUC programme* is taken into account (see also art. 6 AS&P – stipulations are not to be interpreted in such a way that the goal of the AUC program is not reached; the AUC learning outcomes are the baseline for all BoE decisions).
3. The criteria for understanding and weighing exceptional personal and mitigating circumstances to decide accommodations and exemptions are:
  - a. Criteria listed in the Higher Education Act
  - b. Criteria listed in the AS&P
  - c. Responsibility by AUC
  - d. A highly unusual circumstance that reasonable people cannot be expected to take into account (force majeure)
  - e. Disability
  - f. The student has demonstrated personal responsibility
  - g. The relevant circumstance has been reported to the tutor or Life Officer within three weeks of the student becoming aware of the situation
  - h. A link (established either by common sense or testified to by a credentialed professional, such as a medical doctor or a psychologist) between the circumstances and the student's request (the precise nature of a medical problem does not have to be raised)
  - i. Documentation (the relevant information to demonstrate causality between the circumstance and the request)
  - j. In general, the burden of proof (e.g. the demonstration of causality between a circumstance and impaired academic performance) is on the student making the request.
4. Criteria to be considered for some particular requests to the BoE, weighted in the light of the *spirit of the AUC programme*:
  - a. Possible unreasonableness of a serious nature or manifestly unfair consequences of the BSA regulations:
    - Responsibility by AUC
  - b. Late applications for CP/I:
    - Responsibility by AUC
    - Other exceptional personal and mitigating circumstances
  - c. Not fulfilling all requirements for CP/I:
    - Responsibility by AUC
  - d. Late applications for study abroad:
    - Responsibility by AUC
    - Other exceptional personal and mitigating circumstances
  - e. Not fulfilling all requirements for study abroad:
    - Responsibility by AUC
  - f. Not taking courses during an intensive:
    - Progress in the AUC program

- Having fulfilled all graduation requirements
- g. Retaining honors in case of 7<sup>th</sup> semester or beyond:
  - Course load reductions corresponding to the study delay have been granted
- h. Taking additional courses in a 7<sup>th</sup> semester or beyond:
  - Availability of space at the end of the queue
- i. Extensions:
  - Reflection by the lecturer
  - Responsibility by AUC
  - Other exceptional personal and mitigating circumstances
- j. Course load reductions:
  - Exceptional personal and mitigating circumstances
- k. Major changes after the first two semesters:
  - It is possible to complete the degree requirements, including required prerequisites, for completing the new major without extending the completion of the degree program beyond six semesters
- l. Prerequisite exemptions:
  - Approval by the Head(s) of Studies
- m. Completing the capstone before the final semester:
  - Completing a double major
  - Exceptional personal and mitigating circumstances
  - AUC responsibility

**13. Retention periods**

1. Digital versions of the Capstone theses shall be retained for at least seven years.
2. For examination papers and model answers, including any essays and other written materials for which a (partial) mark has been awarded and examination results, a retention period of two years shall apply.

**14. Annual Report**

The BoE shall compile a report of its activities in the previous academic year by 1 December. The BoE shall send a copy of the annual report to the Dean. The annual report is a public document.

**15. Amendments to these Rules and Guidelines**

No amendments will be made that apply to the current academic year, unless there is a reasonable expectation that this will not infringe the interests of the students.

**16. Hardship clause**

The BoE may make exceptional arrangements in cases in which the provisions of these Rules and Guidelines have unreasonable or unacceptable repercussions for students.

**17. Entry into force**

These Rules and Guidelines shall enter into force on 7 December 2021.

Adopted by the BoE on 7 December 2021.