

# Procedure for online written examinations taken remotely

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The University of Duisburg-Essen assists examiners in converting to and conducting online written examinations and similar forms of assessment. Please find essential information on this topic from an organisational, technical and legal perspective below (including the necessary steps to be taken and contact persons for support for the relevant activities), as well as references to further didactic information regarding examination tasks, taking into account central overall conditions and regulations in the context of the pandemic. These guidelines were agreed within the [task force for teaching and learning](#) and will be revised as required.

## Before the examination

### Notifying the Examinations Office

Pursuant to Section 9 (3) of UDE's directive for the implementation of the Corona Epidemic University Ordinance (CEHVO; current German version: [here](#)), students must be informed of changes to the format of an examination two weeks before the examination date at the latest. In order for such information to be communicated in due time, another three working days must be allowed for processing at the Examinations Office.

Therefore, the person responsible for the relevant course at the Examinations Office must be informed first to ensure that the examination format is changed in the system and students receive an automatic notification of the format change (by email). The updated examination format and, if spec-

ified, the system used for the examination will then be displayed to students in the campus management system. Please find the person responsible for the relevant course at the Examinations Office here (in German): <https://www.uni-due.de/verwaltung/pruefungswesen/studiengaenge.shtml>

### Notifying the relevant system operator

A notification regarding the examination specifying

- the date,
- the start and end times, and
- the anticipated number of participants

must be submitted to the operators of the relevant systems to be used for the examination, ideally at the same time as your notification to the Examinations Office and, at the latest, one week before the exam to ensure that the examination can be set up within the system in due time. Please use the email addresses below for this purpose:

- [jack@paluno.uni-due.de](mailto:jack@paluno.uni-due.de)
- [lplus@uni-due.de](mailto:lplus@uni-due.de)
- [moodle@uni-due.de](mailto:moodle@uni-due.de)

*This information is particularly important to ensure that examinations can be rescheduled if necessary due to server capacity.*

### Preparing the students

- a. When using systems that the students (and teaching staff) do not yet know, sufficient time must be allowed for them to *familiarise* themselves with the relevant system. Particular consideration should be given to the instructions and manuals for the individual systems for remote computer-aided examinations made available at <https://www.uni-due.de/de/covid-19/lehrende-en.php>.
- b. Students should be given the opportunity to *try out the system* to be used and familiarise themselves with it before the examination, e.g. by means of a mock exam. If the number of participants for a mock exam is expected to be high (more than 400), the system operators must also be informed of the relevant date and time.
- c. Students must be *informed about the procedure* for the examination in good time. In doing so, information should be provided in particular about the selected examination format and the overall conditions.
- d. Students should also be informed about the *technical equipment that is required*. In order to participate in an online written examination remotely, candidates need a computer with an up-to-date browser and a stable Internet connection. Please see the instructions on the individual systems for further requirements for using JACK and LPLUS. Up until the publication of the relevant manuals, these will be provided by the system operators upon request.

### Declaration of own work and instructions on possible sanctions

A declaration of own work, which must be confirmed by the students, may be prepared prior to the examination. The declaration of own work is to be submitted exclusively online, e.g. by means of an acknowledgement of the consent form (in the form of a single-choice or free-text question) as part of the examination.

#### Proposed text for the declaration of own work:

*I, [candidate's name], hereby declare that I will work on the [exam title] examination on my own, using only the relevant aids (as communicated and permitted by the person conducting the examination), and within the defined time frame. In particular, I confirm that I will not solicit unauthorised help from others and will not communicate with others during the examination, apart from the person conducting the examination.*

*Moreover, I declare that I have not passed on the access information for this examination to others and will not do so in future.*

*I am aware that an untruthful declaration may entail legal consequences and, in particular, result in my receiving a 'fail' on the examination. Furthermore, I am aware that the examiner may ask me further questions on the subject matter within the marking period if they suspect misconduct.*

Prior to the examination, candidates should also be made aware of possible sanctions in case of examination offences. Acknowledgement of the relevant instruction can also be confirmed online.

#### Proposed text for the instructions on possible sanctions:

*If an examination offence, which includes plagiarism, can be proven, the relevant assessment will be marked as 'insufficient (5.0)'. In serious cases, the Examination Board may exclude the student from repeat examinations (Section 22 (4) of the General Examination Regulations for Bachelor's Degrees (RPO BA)/Section 21 (4) of the General Examination Regulations for Master's Degrees (RPO MA)). In addition, a deliberate examination offence may be punishable as an administrative offence (Ordnungswidrigkeit) with a fine amounting to up to €50,000 (Section 22 (6) of the RPO BA/Section 21 (6) RPO MA).*

*In cases of multiple or otherwise serious examination offences, the candidate may be removed from the register of students (Section 22 (6) of the RPO BA/Section 21 (6) RPO MA).*

*Relevant software for detecting plagiarism or other electronic means will be used in order to detect examination offences.*

*The responsible examiner or invigilator may exclude a student who disturbs the orderly progress of an examination from participating in the further course of the examination following a warning. In this*

*case, the relevant assessment will be marked as 'insufficient (5.0)' (Section 22 (5) RPO BA/Section 21 (5) RPO MA).*

*In addition, please be advised that any case of forgery of official documents issued by the University of Duisburg-Essen that are suitable and intended to be used as proof in legal matters, such as student ID cards, will be reported.*

#### Instructions regarding the tasks to be set

- When composing varying examinations (e.g. through randomisation), it must be ensured that the different examinations set for different candidates are equivalent. This applies in particular to different examinations set for different cohorts.
- Please find information on the design of tasks for online examinations, bearing in mind aspects of university didactics, [here](#) (German only).

#### Immediately before and during the examination

##### Identity checks and video monitoring

The candidates' identities may be checked before the examination starts. Faculties are responsible for organising and conducting identity checks.

In doing so, please consider that the time required for this is not included in the time allowed for the examination. Please bear in mind that students may have other commitments immediately before or after the examination. Therefore, it is important that the newly resulting time frame be communicated in good time (e.g. the initial time frame of 2–4pm for the exam could be extended to a new 1.15–4pm time frame).

To enable a check of the candidates' identities before the examination and, if required, video monitoring of the students during the examination, an option must be available to connect a camera and microphone.

Both an identity check before the examination and video monitoring of students during the examination are only permissible **if an alternative solution is available to the students**. Thus, students who cannot fulfil the technical requirements or who do not want to participate in this form of identity check and/or monitoring for other reasons have **the opportunity to opt out**.

In this case, the students participate in the online examination without having their identities checked and/or being monitored and must be aware that their performance may be subsequently reviewed, if necessary on University premises.

This process is not an additional examination that the student takes but serves to establish whether or not there has been an examination offence, which can also happen after a face-to-face examination. For this process to be applied, there must be an initial suspicion that goes beyond the student's opting out.

*(Note: if a student refuses to have their performance subsequently reviewed because they are suspected of having committed an examination offence, this may result in the assessment being considered an examination offence.)*

The relevant faculty is responsible for organising and conducting video monitoring and subsequent reviews. Moreover, the burden of proof in cases of suspicion lies with the faculties – as is the case with face-to-face examinations.

#### Option for communication with students during the examination

Irrespective of the options for identity checks and video monitoring, communication options must be provided for students to contact the teaching staff if necessary.

This can be done, for example, via video conference, by email or, in case of a local failure of the Internet, by (mobile) phone. The candidates must be informed of the available communication channels including the relevant contact information before the examination.

#### Handling disruptions

These channels must also be used by the students to report locally occurring disruptions that complicate or even prevent their further participation in the examination.

Lasting issues are to be documented by means of photos and screenshots. Section III.3. (Noteworthy incidents) of the [‘Guidelines on conducting oral examinations via online video conferencing systems from within and outside of the premises of the University of Duisburg-Essen’](#) can be applied accordingly in order to assess such situations (termination, rescheduling for a later point in time, fail):

- *If the examination is interrupted due to a failure of the Internet connection, a reconnection to the video conference is to be established as quickly as possible. Questions that had been asked or topics that were being discussed when the interruption occurred, are to be re-approached or replaced with new questions as is deemed appropriate.*
- *If the transmission fails to an extent that impacts the examination to a significant degree, the examination must be terminated and rescheduled for a later date.*
- *If a candidate can be proven to intentionally interrupt the video conference during the examination, the mark to be assigned for the examination is ‘insufficient’ or ‘failed’.*
- *In all other respects, the rules and principles applicable to face-to-face examinations, especially with regard to proving examination offences and disturbances, continue to apply in this scenario.*

Thus, similar to face-to-face examinations, noteworthy incidents during the examination must be documented.

Furthermore, it should be confirmed whether (or rather: that) the examiner can contact a member of staff of the faculty during the examination time frame in order to resolve minor technical issues. Contact information for this purpose should also be displayed (e.g. central or decentral generic email address, using a forum).

## After the examination

Examination scripts can also be viewed online, e.g. via video conference. If necessary, students can be provided with a digital copy of their examination script. (See also Section 64 (2) No. 10 of the North Rhine-Westphalian Higher Education Act (HG NRW): 'In particular, higher education institutions' examination regulations must include stipulations regarding: opportunities for viewing the examination files following the individual examinations and the provision of copies or other forms of duplicates that are true to the original.'<sup>1</sup>)

In accordance with the overall legal situation, the teaching staff/module coordinator must save the final versions of the electronic examination scripts at a documented point in time. These versions are to be used as the basis for viewing examination scripts and reporting the marks to the Examinations Office. Please consult the operators of the relevant system for further details and if you have any questions.

The retention periods stipulated in [UDE's archiving regulations](#) apply to the storage and archiving of electronic examination scripts.

## Concluding notice

In case of disagreements, objections and legal proceedings that may arise in the context of examinations conducted in an online environment, the University of Duisburg-Essen supports the examiners and teaching staff as a matter of principle if the legal regulations regarding examinations and applicable legal requirements were adhered to.

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<sup>1</sup> An official English version of the HG NRW is not available. This passage has been translated as part of this document for your information only.