

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS RELIGION, CULTURE AND SOCIETY.

Rules and Regulations as referred to in article 7.12b, first and third paragraph of the Higher education and Research Act (WHW) for the Bachelor's programs Theology (180 ECTs) and Religious Studies, (180 ECTs), the Master's program Theologie en Religiewetenschappen (60 ECTs), the Master's program Theology and Religious Studies (Research) (120 ECTs), the Minor program Religion in the Modern World (15 and 30 ECTs), the Minor program Art and Religion (15 ECTs), the minor Climate Change and Inequality and the courses of the Minor program Anthropology that the faculty Religion, Culture and Society offers.

The Board of Examiners for the above mentioned programs and academic minors considering article 7.12b first and third paragraph of the Higher education and Research Act

DECISION:

the following rules and regulations to be established for the programs:

Article 1 Concept definitions

In these rules and regulations we define the following:

- **TER:** the teaching- and exam regulations for the aforementioned programs and academic minors, last defined 1 September 2024.
- **examinator:** they who have been appointed by the Board of Examiners to conduct exams and define the results of which **volow tekst hier 1**
- **examinee/examinanda:** they who take the exam;
- **exam ("examen"):** the closing Bachelor's/Master's exam for the program that is completed successfully, if all obligations of respectively the entire Bachelor's- or Master's program have been fulfilled
- **exam ("tentamen"):** an examination of the knowledge, insights and skills of the examinee/examinanda, as well as the assessment thereof
- **student/studente:** they who are enrolled to the university as to follow the education and/or taking the exams of the program

Article 2 Tasks and code of conduct of the Board of Examiners

1. The Board of Examiners is the body that is assigned the objective and professional determination of whether a student satisfies the conditions of knowledge, insights and skills that are necessary to receive an academic degree as set by the TER.
2. The tasks of the Board of Examiners include among other things:
 - a. supervision over the correct use of the TER and advising on it; complaints about the use of the TER are handled by the Board of Examiners first. The Board of Examiners does not make any decisions about the contents of the organization of the education program.
 - b. assuring the quality of the exams unabated article 7.12c of the WHW;

- c. establishing regulations and directions within the framework of the education- and exam regulations, as referred to in article 7.13 of the WHW, to assess and establish the results of exams.
 - d. decisions regarding the approval of course packages of an examinee and the setting of an exam date (i.g. “vrij onderwijsprogramma”); a “vrij onderwijsprogramma” and the incorporation of a non-regular element in the program require approval by the Board of Examiners of the program in advance.
 - e. decisions regarding arrangements that differs from the standard that can be made upon request of the student
 - f. decisions regarding exemptions
 - g. decisions regarding the approval of educational units to a foreign university; if a student is taking part of the program at a foreign university, this has to be submitted to the Board of Examiners in advance for approval and established in a learning agreement
 - h. preparing the establishing of the results of exams;
 - i. taking measures in case of disruption of peace during an exam, and in case of fraud or plagiarism
 - j. handing out the diplomas on behalf of the institutional management
 - k. specific tasks regarding the examination policy as set by every faculty management:
 - a. the appointing of those responsible for the execution of (the various elements of) the examination
 - b. the establishing of the manner of periodic evaluation regarding examination and the assessing of the entirety of the examination
 - c. seeing to it that examination is being done conform the examination plan
 - d. seeing to it that students fulfill the final objectives conform the examination plan at the end of the program
3. The Board of Examiners appoints from her midst a chair, a secretary, a deputy chair and a deputy secretary. The Board of Examiners is assigned an official secretary who will support the board with her duties.
 4. The Board of Examiners can appoint a committee to be in charge of daily affairs from her midst, as referred to in article 2.2 (a, d, e, f, g, h, I, j, and k) of the Board of Examiners. This committee owes responsibility to the Board of Examiners.
 5. The Board of Examiners takes care of the agenda and the minutes for every meeting. All decisions are to be recorded in the minutes. The agenda and the reports will be sent to all members of the Board of Examiners. Archival of the papers is done by the student administration.
 6. The Board of Examiners has established the following in appendices to these Rules and Regulations:
 - a. the tasks that are mandated, including the responsibility regarding decision-making
 - b. the internal processes regarding:
 - appointing examiners
 - guaranteeing the quality of exams
 - taking action in case of fraud of plagiarism (see appendix: Regulations fraud and plagiarism)

Article 3 The conducting of exams

1. The Board of Examiners appoints one or more examiners for the conducting of every exam
2. Every exam contains the knowledge, insights and skills of the student as defined by the examiner as well as the assessment of the results of which
3. The Board of Examiners makes sure that the base quality of the examination is o.k. (valid, reliable, and transparent)
4. The examiner decides whether the conditions for participation in the exam have been met
5. If the student has already taken the exam for a course before and received a passing grade, they cannot re-take the exam

Article 4 Alternative forms of examination

If those who will be taking the exam and the Board of Examiners both agree, an examiner can decide that a specific exam may be taken orally rather than in writing.

Article 5 Establishing of the results of exams

1. In the event that both examiners disagree, the Board of Examiners will appoint a third examiner to give a definitive assessment. Results of formal closing exams, dates of certificates, and ceremonies will be revealed in writing by the student administration on behalf of the Board of Examiners and sent to the student in question and the Board of Examiners.
2. As proof that the student passed the exam, the Board of Examiners will award this person with a certificate on behalf of the management of the institution
3. All members of the Board of Examiners (with the exception of the external member) are authorized to sign the certificate

Article 6 Storage periods

1. With reference to potential appeal procedures, all assessed or assessable materials should be saved for at least two years after publishing the results
2. In regards to the re-accreditation of the programs, deviating from the first paragraph, final essays that meet the conditions for the Bachelor's- and Master's programs should be saved for seven years. Additionally, the research proposal and thesis contract should be saved for seven years.
3. In the event that results are not published, or in the event that these were not allowed to be published, the term mentioned in the first paragraph starts on the date that the exam was taken.
4. The results of the exams and theses should be saved for at least seven years
5. These terms are based on the "Basis Selectie Lijst Universiteiten"

Article 7 Times

1. Written exams will be conducted at times decided at least two months before the start of the semester in question, heard the examiners in question and observing what is decided in the TER.
2. When establishing the times, referred to in the first paragraph, clashing exam times are avoided as much as possible.
3. Changes of a time referred to in the first paragraph can only take place in case of force majeure, such as if the necessary exam hall is not available.
4. Oral examinations are conducted at to be determined times by the examiner or examiners in question, if possible after discussing with the examinee.
5. The determined in the fourth paragraph applies to exams not taken orally or in writing as much as possible.

Article 8 Registration

1. Students who fulfill the entrance- and continuation obligations for a course do not have to make an effort to be able to participate in the exams for said course. For types of examination for which registration takes place in Ocasys, this means that the student is automatically registered for the exam after registering for the course in Ocasys.
2. Students who receive a grade below 5.5 for an exam with automatic registration in Ocasys are automatically enrolled for the re-sit exam.
3. Students who are not enrolled for a course but do want to participate in the (re-sit) exam and fulfill the entrance obligations for which, are obligated to register for the exam themselves within a set term, electronically through Ocasys.

Article 9 Requests for irregular exam possibilities

1. The examinee can request the Board of Examiners grant an irregular exam possibility (such as conducting the exam outside the dedicated time or replacing a written exam by an oral one).
2. Such a request can be granted if the examinee did not pass the exam in question due to force majeure and not granting the irregular exam possibility causes study delay of one semester or more.
3. Granting an irregular exam possibility can only be done for a student's last remaining course. The examinee has to have participated in the last two regular exam possibilities of the course for which they are requesting an irregular exam possibility and have scored at least the grades 4 and 5. The exam for the course in question cannot have been passed before. The study delay caused by not granting the irregular exam possibility amounts to at least one semester.

Article 10 Exemption requests

1. An exemption request is submitted fully reasoned to the Board of Examiners through the online form intended for this purpose.
2. The Board of Examiners or the committee as referred to in article 2 paragraph 4 makes a decision within six weeks of receiving the request from a student, observing that which is decided in the TER. The student is immediately informed of the decision. Before making a decision, the Board of Examiners can choose to hear the student, professor(s), examiner(s), and/or study advisor.
3. A decision to not (entirely) grant exemption by the Board of Examiners is not made until after the student has been given the opportunity to be heard.
4. Appeals against decisions made by the Board of Examiners can be made following that which is determined in art. 19.

Article 11 The order during an exam

1. For the benefit of written exams, the student administration takes care of the appointment of examination supervisors who will see to it that the exam proceeds in good order.
2. The examinee is required to identify themselves by way of their university card.
3. The examinee is required to follow the directions of the student administration or the examiner/supervisor, as they are published before the exam, as well as directions given during or immediately after the exam.
4. If the examinee is to not follow any of the directions as referred to in the second and third paragraph, the Board of Examiners or examiner can decide to exclude the examinee from participating in the exam any further. This means that no results will be established for this exam. Before the Board of Examiners or the examiner makes a decision, they will give the examinee the opportunity to be heard.
5. The length of every exam will be as such that the examinee has reasonable time to be able to answer the questions.
6. The exam questions are, unless decided otherwise by or on behalf of the Board of Examiners, handed in by the examiner/supervisor after the exam ends. This also goes for any draft paper used during the exam.

Article 12 Fraud and plagiarism

1. Fraud consists of (whether purposeful or not) acting or omitting by an examinee through which forming a correct judgment about the knowledge, insights and skills of the person becomes either partially or entirely impossible. Fraud also includes committing plagiarism, which is taking one's own or someone else's work without proper sourcing and citing. Additionally, outsourcing work to AI and presenting it as the student's own work counts as fraud too. Professors are expected to report suspicions of fraud with reasonings to the Board of Examiners.

2. The Board of Examiners differentiates between the following forms of plagiarism:
 - a. mild plagiarism: partial or unclear sourcing or citation
 - b. medium plagiarism: copying small pieces of text without (clear) citation, suggesting someone else's ideas are their own
 - c. severe plagiarism: copying large pieces of text without (clear) citation; suggesting that someone else's ideas are their own; re-submitting previously written essays
3. Severe fraud includes at the very least:
 - a. pretending to be someone else during an exam
 - b. being represented by someone else during an exam
 - c. letting someone else take the exam
 - d. obtaining the assignments or answer key for the exam before the time of the exam in question
 - e. feigning and/or forging survey-, interview- and/or research data
4. The board of Examiners is taking measures to prevent fraudulent activity, like:
 - a. clear communication about the consequences of fraud
 - b. organizing exams in such a way that fraud is impeded as much as possible
 - c. requiring the use of the plagiarism scanner for Bachelor's- and Master's theses before they are graded
5. In case of fraud during an exam, the Board of Examiners can prevent the student in question from taking one or more of exams. In the event of severe fraud, the University Board can decide to definitely terminate the enrollment for the program at the request of the Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners announces to the student in advance that they will advise the University Board to do so.
6. The decision regarding exclusion is taken in response to written report from the supervisor of perceived or suspected fraud, hearing the student and potential closer research from the Board of Examiners. The examinee must have committed fraud beyond reasonable doubt. In the event of doubt, the Board of Examiners must give the student the benefit of the doubt.
7. Before the Board of Examiners makes a decision, as referred to in the fifth paragraph, they allow the examinee to be heard. Prior to the hearing, the Board of Examiners informs the examinee of his or her right to remain silent.
8. In urgent cases, the Board of Examiners can make a provisional decision to exclude on grounds of an oral report from a supervisor. This person shall ensure that this report is put in writing immediately after the examination and that a copy is provided to the examinee.
9. Exclusion has the result that no result can be established for the exam determined in the fifth paragraph. If a result has been established, it can be declared invalid.

Article 13 Questions and assignments

1. The questions and assignments of the exam do not exceed the previously announced sources from which the examination material is taken. These sources are announced before the teaching that the exam is connected to starts.

2. The questions and assignments of the exam are spread over the examination material as evenly as possible and the exam connects to the intended learning outcomes of the element in question in terms of contents and form.
3. The questions and assignments of an exam are clear and unambiguous and contain enough directions for the required detailing of the answers.
4. No later than four weeks before the examination is to be held, the Board of Examiners or the examiner will announce how the provisions of art. 9.7 of the TERs for the Bachelor Theology and for the Bachelor Religious Studies, and art. 4.7 of the TERs for the Master's program in Theology and Religious Studies and the Master of Theology and Religious Studies (Research) will be implemented, respectively, with regard to the manner in which the examination will be administered.
5. At least four weeks before an examination is to be held, the Board of Examiners or the examiner shall give examinees the opportunity to take note of a written sample of such an examination, as well as the model answers and the standards on the basis of which the assessment was made.

Article 14 Assessment

1. The student passes the Bachelor's exam if all exams are taken with a passing grade (5.5 or higher). The Bachelor's- and Master's theses can only be marked as passing, if these are assessed with the non-rounded mark of 6.0 (or higher). Practicals may also be assessed using the following marks: Fail = 0 ("Onvoldoende"), Pass = V ("Voldoende").
2. Exemption from having to participate from an exam or practical is deemed equal to the mark of Pass (V) and is indicated using the letters VR ("Vrijstelling").
3. Unabated that what is decided in article 3 paragraph 3, the assessment of written exams happens on the basis of previously established written standards, which may be adjusted as a result of corrections to the work produced.
4. The mode of assessment is as such that the examinee can check how the result of the exam came to be.
5. The Board of Examiners will announce in a timely manner in which cases it will itself initiate an investigation as referred to in article 10.1 paragraph 4 of the TER for the Bachelor's degree program in Theology and the Bachelor's degree program in Religious Studies, and in article 5.1 paragraph 3 of the TER for the Master's program Theology en Religious Studies and the Master's program Theology and Religious Studies (Research).

Article 15 Exam review

1. As soon as possible after the results of an oral exam is announced, a review will take place, whether requested or initiated by the examiner, between the examiner and the examinee. The result is explained during this review.
2. During a six-week term that starts on the day on which the results are announced for a non-oral exam, the examinee can request a review from the examiner in question. The review will take place at a time and place to be decided by the examiner.

3. If a collective review is organized by or on behalf of the Board of Examiners, the examinee may only submit a request as referred to in the previous paragraph if they were present at the collective review and provide reasons for the request, or if they were prevented from attending the collective review due to force majeure.
4. The determined in the third paragraph applies *mutatis mutandis* if the Board of Examiners or the examiner offers the examinee the opportunity to compare their answers with key answers.
5. The Board of Examiners or examiner may allow deviations from the determined in the second and third paragraphs.

Article 16 Examination authority

1. An (external) examiner is responsible for an individual educational unit at the Faculty of Religion, Culture and Society of the University of Groningen and has been appointed for the assessment of students through the conducting of exams about the educational unit and determining the results thereof by the Board of Examiners. In principle, they who are ultimately responsible for the educational unit are also responsible for all examinations of elements for which ECTs are awarded. An examiner is also responsible for examining whether a student has fulfilled the conditions for entrance to the exam, conducting exams, and determining the results thereof.
2. The responsibilities as determined in the previous paragraph apply per academic year and per educational unit. To this end, the program director submits a list of examiners for approval. The secretary of the Board of Examiners keeps the list up-to-date during the academic year. This list is public and can be viewed by anyone upon request. The Board of Examiners considers the following criteria:
 - a. examination-qualified are members of the staff (Lecturer, UD, UHD, Professor) of the University of Groningen who are BKO-certified
 - b. members of staff with a temporary appointment who are not BKO-certified, including postdocs and assistants-in-training, can be declared examination-qualified by the Board of Examiners on the basis of a successfully-completed course didactic skills. The validity term and the field of expertise must be mentioned with the decision.
 - c. members of staff of universities and other instances that are not the University of Groningen can also be declared examination-qualified by the Board of Examiners
 - d. examination qualification is limited to the domain in which members of staff are recognized as experts
3. Students can make a request to the Board of Examiners to appoint an 'external examiner' as the second reader for Master's thesis at the start of their thesis procedure. The main supervisor has to come from the own faculty. Such requests must be awarded before the student formulates the thesis contract with the supervisors in question.
4. The Board of Examiners can, if requested by a student, award examination qualification to:
 - a. a second supervisor from *outside* the faculty but *within* the UG
 - b. a second supervisor connected to a *different university* than the UG
 - c. a PhD-awarded second supervisor *not connected* to a university

5. In the event that the second supervisor is a non-PhD expert who is not connected to a Dutch university, at minimum a third supervisor has to partake as an examiner to the assessment of the thesis.
6. When defending the Master's thesis, at least two and at most five examiners must be present, among whom at the very least the main supervisor and the second supervisor.

Article 17 Criteria

The Board of Examiners and/or the examiners consider the following criteria as guidelines when making decisions:

- a. maintaining the quality- and selection requirements of each examination
- b. efficiency requirements, aimed at, among other things:
 - Limiting time loss for students
 - Ensuring timely discontinuation of studies by students who are unlikely to pass an exam
 - Limiting study delays for students who have experienced delays by efficiently organizing the further course of their studies
- c. leniency towards students who have experienced study delays due to circumstances beyond their control

Article 18 Decisions

The Board of Examiners and/or the examiners consider the following when making their decisions:

- a. legal-, university-, and faculty regulations and policies
- b. general principles of good governance

Article 19 Professional law

An appeal against decisions made by the Board of Examiners or examiners may be made (within six weeks) with the Board of Appeal for Examinations as referred to in article 7.60 et seq. of the WHW. Information about this can be found at www.rug.nl/clrs

Article 20 Changes in rules and regulations

No changes that apply to the current academic year will be made, unless student interests are not reasonably harmed by this.

Article 21 Coming into effect

These rules and regulations come into effect on 1 May 2026