Examiners' Handbook of the Faculty of Archaeology

Board of Examiners Archaeology

2017-2018

Contents

Definitions:

Examiner:	Authorized to take exams and determine the results; the examiner is appointed by the Board of Examiners (based on WHW 7.12)
OER:	Onderwijs- en Examenregeling, the Course and Examination Regulations, determined by the Board of the Faculty and Faculty Council before the start of each academic year: https://www.student.universiteitleiden.nl/organisatie/reglementen/facultaire-en-opleidingsreglementen/facultaire-en-opleidingsreglementen
e-study guide:	the online guide with course descriptions is part of the OER
R&R:	Regels en Richtlijnen van de Examencommissie, the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Examiners, includes specifications of general procedures defined by the OER: http://media.leidenuniv.nl/legacy/rr-archeo2017-18.pdf
BKO:	BasisKwalificatie Onderwijs, a Basic Qualification of Education based on training as well as experience. It is provided by the BKO committee of the Faculty of Archaeology based on the assessment of the portfolio of the staff member.
BKE:	BasisKwalificatie Engels, a certificate for basic fluency in English for university teaching.
WHW:	Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek, Dutch legislation on higher education and scientific research

1. Goal & objective of the document

The goal of this document is to provide examiners with a practical guide to the rules and regulations regarding education at the Faculty of Archaeology. The objective is to improve the overall quality of our education by clarifying basic procedures around course information, course assessment and thesis assessment. It is meant as a concise guide for practical use, not as a formal document covering all rules and regulations. The document therefore has no status in possible disputes.

2. Qualifications of examiners

Examiners are appointed as such by the Board of Examiners. The examiner is authorized to take exams and determine the results. Every course, internship and thesis has at least one examiner linked to it. In your role of instructor, you help students to understand the course content. In your role of examiner, you test whether students have grasped the content at a sufficient level, in other words: as examiner, you test the effectiveness of instruction. Not everyone who teaches a class will also be the examiner of the course, because the appointment as examiner is based on:

- a position of at least 0.4 fte at a university (universitaire onderwijsinstelling) ánd a teaching position (at least partially);
  and/or:
- a BKO certificate

Additional conditions for the role of examiner for the MA and RMA are both a PhD and a BKE certificate and, for the role of examiner for the English BA, a BKE certificate.

Examiners are appointed formally through a letter of the Board of Examiners, stating for which courses they are appointed examiner. The examiner of a course is responsible for course design, learning objectives, and adequate assessment of student performance. Examiners are expected to acquaint themselves with the OER and the Rules & Regulations of the Board of Examiners.

3. Course and the curriculum

The course(s) that staff members are teaching, are part of a curriculum that leads to a set of qualifications and competences, described in the OER. Students earn the diploma on the basis of their performance in all the courses of the curriculum. Courses involved are building blocks towards that fixed set of qualifications and competences and form part of the general education of students. Examiners are expected to know the role and position of their course in the curriculum as a whole. This means that examiners need to be aware of the knowledge that students already have gained when entering the course taught, and also how the learning objectives of their specific course contribute to the end qualifications of the BA, MA or RMA curriculum.

3.1 The e-study guide – leading role in course information

When teaching a course, it is important to know that the information in the e-study guide is leading in disputes and claims. The e-study guide is a part of the OER, the Course and Examination Regulations and as such is 'law'. The e-study guide defines:

- the attendance policy: is there obligatory attendance or not?
- the learning objectives and general information on the course
- the form of assessment and the retake
- the ects and how the ects are divided over the course

Because the e-study guide is available at the start of the academic year whereas the course involved may be much later, it is important to be consistent in the information to students at the beginning of a course.

The faculty uses as the following guideline for 1 ec (equivalent to a workload of 28 hours):
- 28h of self study
- *or* 14h of lectures;
- *or* 20h practical;
- *or* 140 pages literature study;
- *or* 3.5 days of fieldwork;
- *or* an essay of 1800-2000 words.

3.2 Course assessment

Teaching is a skill, and the key is assessing what the student has actually learned from the teaching involved and whether this is of sufficient level to pass the class. Course assessment is critical. Article 4.2 of the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Examiners describes what a good test should look like. Some of the most important points are:

- The exam is an investigation in the knowledge, insight and competence of the student.
- It consists of clear and unambiguous questions.
- It investigates ONLY the learning objectives of the course as described in the OER (c.q. e-study guide).
- It is specific for the level of education (BA, MA, RMA).
- The questions are distributed equally across the topics of the course.
- It is clear beforehand how and on what students will be assessed.
- The time for the exam is sufficient to answer the questions.
- <u>Grading is based on explicit criteria, that are written down beforehand (answer model).</u>

3.3 Types of exams

The Faculty of Archaeology uses an assessment framework that includes the following types of exams:

- Written exams (open questions including essay questions, multiple choice questions, open book exams)
- Essays (or papers)
- Assignments (includes exercises such as discussion points as well as practical components e.g. fieldwork or material practicals)
- Presentations (individual or group) and participation in discussion

There is no oral examination.

3.4 Guidelines for test construction: the test matrix and "four-eyes"-principle

A test matrix is normally used to design assessments. The test matrix is a good tool to ensure that the assessment covers all learning objectives at the appropriate level and to maintain equivalence between exams and retakes. A matrix like below can be used

	Knowledge	Insight	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Learning objective 1	Open questions 1-3	Open questions 4				
Learning objective 2		Report				
Learning objective 3	Presentation					

The "four-eyes"-principle is used to make good exams. A good practice in constructing good tests is to discuss the questions and answers with another examiner. The examiner of the course asks another examiner to check the answer model for the test. As documentation, both examiners sign and date the answer model for approval. After the examination, the exams with both signatures are handed in (together with the student results) at the Education Office.

IN SHORT

- Make an exam as well as a retake with clear and explicit answer models (and/or assessment criteria for papers, essays, discussion points etc. using rubrics)
- Ask one or two colleagues to check the exam and answer model on the criteria above
    - Are the questions clear?
    - Is it representative of the topics and does it cover the learning objectives?
    - Is the answer model good for objective grading?
- Discuss, improve and finalize the exam and the answer model
- Date and signatures on the assessment files are important for the paper trail demonstrating the use of a test matrix and the "four-eyes"-principle in practice.

In principle, the exam and answer model should be made in such a way that another examiner will grade the exams in the same way, leading to an objective assessment and grading of student performance.

3.5 The grading system

The Faculty of Archaeology uses a grading system from 1.0 to 10.0. An exam is passed if the score is 6.0 or higher. To avoid confusion and discussion, no grades between 5.0 and 6.0 are given (OER 4.6.4).. Generally, the grades are normally distributed around a mean of 6.5-7. A grade of 9 is a very good mark, whereas a grade of 10 is exceptionally rare and only used for more than outstanding performances (normally less than 1% of the student population).

Grade Point[1]	US / UK[1]	Frequency[1]	Description
10	A+	0.1	Exceptionally outstanding, extraordinary understanding, could not be better
9	A+	2.4	Very good, high level of understanding of all issues, no mistakes
8	A	12.5	Good, high level of understanding of key points, not in all *finesses*
7	B+ / B	34.3	Sufficient, satisfactory level of understanding of key points, some mistakes
6	C / D	38.5	Pass, basic level of understanding of key points, elementary, not beyond minimum level expected
5	F	10.7	Fail, poor level of understanding, insufficient knowledge or competence of key objectives of the course
4 – 1	F	1.5	Very poor level of understanding, very limited knowledge and competence in many respects

[1]Based on *Grading systems in the Netherlands, the United States and the United Kingdom* (www.nuffic.nl, accessed 1 June 2015)

3.6 Checklist of Procedures

The quality of an exam is the responsibility of the examiner. The following procedures should be complied:

- *Making the exam*: test matrix, clear questions and assignments, answer model, "four-eyes"-principle, colleague's approval of the exam and assessment criteria
- *Taking the exam*: there is a protocol for written exams; rules about order and about irregularities are in the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Examiners; think of prevention of fraud; the Education Office arranges the rooms for the exams, extra surveillance etc, but the examiner is responsible in the end
- *Assessing the exam*: grades, based on the explicit criteria of the answer model, have to be registered within 15 working days of the exam (this includes all types of exams, also essays and papers, and theses); if there are serious circumstances hindering this, then the Education Office as well as the students should be informed
- *Archiving the exam:* within 15 working days, the following course materials should be archived: all exams, all answer models and rubrics, assessment form with the test matrix, to send to the Education Office (onderwijs@arch.leidenuniv.nl).
- *Retake*: the retake is equivalent to the first exam, retakes of papers / essays consist of a new topic (assessing and archiving as first exam).

A final note on grading: if a student does not agree with a grade (for whatever reason), the student can go to the College van Beroep voor de Examens (Examination Appeals Board) of Leiden University. The examiner will have to appear and defend the decision (see https://www.organisatiegids.universiteitleiden.nl/en/university-committees-and-confidential-counsellors/examination-appeals-board).

3.6.1 Special attention: Turnitin / SafeAssign

Plagiarism is an important problem to be taken seriously. In order to prevent and control for plagiarism, all papers and essays should be submitted in a Turnitin or SafeAssign assignment in the Blackboard module of the course involved. This signals to students that their work is compared with web sources as well as other student papers and it creates documentation in case of a suspicion of fraud (for procedures in case of a suspicion of fraud, see paragraph below).

- Papers, essays, lab reports, fieldwork reports etc. should be handed in through Turnitin / SafeAssign in the Blackboard-module of the course involved
- Make use of clear and unambiguous deadlines (stick to the rooster linked to the e-study guide)
- Make clear whether a hardcopy should be submitted (if a paper is submitted digitally before the deadline, but a hardcopy is late, the Board of Examiners will usually consider the paper as submitted in time)

3.6.2. Practical work

All practical work, including laboratory work of finds as well as field work, needs to be assessed and graded. The work should be organized in a such a way that students can be assessed individually. Assessment follows the same guidelines as for any other test: use of test matrix, answermodel, 4-eyes-principle. And the documents need to be archived!

4. The final thesis

The curriculum at BA, MA and RMA level includes research of a topic of archaeological relevance that results in a final thesis. The student should demonstrate that s/he is able to perform an investigation of at least sufficient quality at the appropriate level and report on the methods, results and significance in an academic style. The final thesis is the written proof of his/her research skills.

4.1 Thesis supervision

Thesis supervision starts with the initiative of the student. Students should start with developing a research topic and look for a supervisor (an examiner of the Faculty of Archaeology), who is best qualified to guide their research and supervise their performance. The supervisor should keep in mind that the topic is sufficient for a student demonstrate the level of competence. S/he should be able to fail, get a 6, but also excel and get a 9, independent of the topic.

Important is that the supervisor and student agree on a research plan, written by the student, that includes:

- a problem definition,
- research questions,
- a materials & methods section,
- a time schedule and
- a list of key publications.

The time schedule should include the deadline of the first version (with 15 work-days for the supervisor to give adequate feedback) and final version (about 6 weeks after the first version, depending on the quality of the first version). It is the responsibility of the student to decide when the version is final and definitive and ready for assessment.

Another important aspect of supervision is the degree of involvement: it should be the work of the student that is assessed and not the editing / rewriting / analysis / interpretation of the supervisor. A basic norm for supervision is about 5 meetings, including:

- start: discussion of topic
- feedback and discussion of research plan
- feedback on chapter 1 and thesis outline
- discussion of progress
- feedback on the first version.

4.2 Thesis assessment

The final thesis is assessed by two examiners: the supervisor and an independent 2nd examiner from another Leerstoelgroep. Both examiners assess the final thesis using the appropriate assessment form. Then they compare their evaluations and decide on the final grade.

The **1st examiner (the supervisor)** is in a better position to assess the content and context of the research. S/he is also able to evaluate the work attitude and the degree of independence of the student, e.g. the number of versions and the use of feedback. However, the examiner should also be aware of the risks of personal involvement: whether an examiner likes or dislikes a student will affect the judgement; whether the topic is of personal interest, e.g. part of an on-going research project, will affect the judgement; whether the student agrees or disagrees with one's own interpretation or take on archaeology, will affect the judgement.

The risk of subjective judgement is balanced by the **2nd examiner**. It is his/her task to assess the final thesis itself (the written document and only the written document as submitted for assessment). S/he does not have to know the student or the process and just look at what is written down. However, the 2nd examiner should be aware that s/he should judge the work of the student and not evaluate whether the topic or supervisor's research is interesting or whether s/he likes the kind of archaeology presented.

The 1st and 2nd examiner decide on the final grade in consultation. Accountability of the assessment is the thesis assessment form, that includes a description of the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis leading to a fair and balanced assessment and well-argued final grade.

4.3 Fail – the thesis is insufficient
Also fails (5 or lower) must be accounted for on the thesis assessment form in such a way that it is clear in which respects the thesis does not comply with minimum requirements. The assessment form is returned to the Education Office. Based on the assessment, the student can improve the thesis and resubmit for assessment within six weeks after notice.

4.4 Disputes over the final grade
In case of dispute of the final grade between the 1st and 2nd examiner, the Board of Examiners assigns a 3rd examiner, whose assessment of the thesis is decisive. The 3rd examiner takes into account the assessment forms filled in by the 1st and 2nd examiner.

4.5 Thesis deadlines
The final version of the thesis can be submitted at any time during the year and should be assessed within 15 workdays after registration of submission (OER 4.6.2-3). In order to participate in the graduation ceremonies, there are two deadlines

- September ceremony: deadline of submission is 15 June

- February ceremony: deadline of submission is 15 December

5. Fraud and fraud protocol
Fraud takes place. Over the last few years, five to ten cases have been investigated each year. The sanctions are usually the dismissal of an exam and exclusion for the retake, but more severe sanctions are possible. The procedures when a staff member suspects fraud are formulated in the R&R of the Board of Examiners. It is important to inform the Board of Examiners immediately and provide all documentation about the suspicion of fraud, such as course information, Turnitin reports, email communication, and copies of original work (in case of plagiarism). The Board of Examiners investigates the suspicion, hears the student (and the examiner or others if necessary), and sanctions if the case is considered to be proven. If a student does not agree with the decision, s/he can go to the Board of Appeal of the University and the staff member may be requested for hearing.

More in Chapter 7 of the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Examiners.

6. Conclusion

When does a staff member need to have approval of the Board of Examiners?

- If one wants to change the assessment of the course (i.e. different from the description in the e-study guide)

How to make request?

- Only written requests are considered, not oral communications.
- They should be sent to: examencommissie@arch.leidenuniv.nl
- The request should be clear, concise and argumentative and include all relevant information
- The request should take into account that the response time for requests is a maximum of 30 workdays

When does the Board of Examiners need the involved staff member?

- If there is a request about the course of which the staff member is examiner, e.g. the request for an extra retake or an extension of the deadline, e.g. due to personal circumstances
- If there is a dispute about the examination of a course of which the staff member is an examiner

The Board of Examiners will first of all use the information in the e-study guide about the course involved and will request from the examiner all the information necessary to come to a decision.