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## GUIDELINES ON THE FORMULATION OF EXAM ASSIGNMENTS, INCLUDING REUSE

### Introduction

Predominantly, CBS's exams are of a very high quality reflecting our lecturers' great dedication and efforts, however, unfortunately some cases have resulted in uncertainty about the formulation and reuse of exam assignments/questions. In some cases, this has led to the annulment of exams because some students would have obtained an advantage from having seen the text before as opposed to students who have not. Moreover, these cases have led to bad press for CBS and high additional costs for all parties. To minimise uncertainty and doubt, CBS has initiated a cross-cutting initiative, including these guidelines. The purpose of this initiative is therefore to clarify guidelines for the area and support the assigner and others in preparing the exam assignment. An exam assignment is solely understood as questions etc. **handed out** to students at a given time as part of their exam.

### The purpose of the test

In pursuance of s. 2 of the Examination Order, the purpose of an exam is to assess if and to which extent the student's qualifications match the learning objectives, competences and academic requirements laid down for the programme in the University Programme Order, the programme regulations etc. The final exam forms the basis of the issue of a diploma.

### Formulation of exam assignments

The exam must reflect the teaching activities of the course, the academic learning objectives and the syllabus, and this principle must therefore be applied in the preparation of the exam assignment. To ensure the quality of the exam, the formulation of an assignment must vary from test to test. In principle, the academically substantive content must not come as a surprise to a well-prepared student. The student should be able to analyse cases which have not been touched on during teaching. An exam assignment can always include questions to all parts of the syllabus.

### Payment and division of roles



Remuneration for the preparation of exam texts is allocated separately to the course coordinator in question, so in principle a new exam text is expected to be prepared for each exam. The course coordinator is responsible for ensuring compliance with the rules, including the assignment's relevance in relation to the learning objectives.

When preparing the assignment, it is also the responsibility of the course coordinator to assess the extent to which an assignment structure or partial elements can be reused in a way that supports a fair and equal assessment of the students. This also applies to differences between exam attempts for the same course.

If the course coordinator/assigner is unsure whether the assignment is within the realm of allowed reuse, the course coordinator/assigner should consult the person responsible for teaching at the department or programme director for further guidance.

If the course coordinator/assigner would like to provide against errors etc. in the assignment, it is recommended to discuss the text with a colleague, however, it is not mandatory to have colleagues conduct a peer review.

### **General guidelines on the reuse of exam assignments**

In principle, exam assignments or parts hereof cannot be reused verbatim and must be new and unique.

Furthermore, exam texts may not generally be reused and shared by programmes, as lecturers often use previously used exam texts as practice in class and students may already have done the assignment. Additionally, students have access to already used exam texts in Digital Exam if they have attended the exam, know other students in other years/programmes/universities or if they request access to documents in Digital Exam. There is thus a considerable risk that students may have had access to previously used exam assignments as well as marking instructions.

### **Exceptions**

There will be a number of exceptions where a certain overlap with content from previously used assignments can be allowed if significant changes have been made to figures, or questions can be asked about other concepts than those originally used.

In large multiple-choice assignments, repeating some questions might be fair, for instance if they are about defining technical terms etc. (Re)using public material as a basis for an assignment, e.g. annual reports, judgments/convictions, etc. can also be considered.

It is also allowed to ask generic questions within previously applied fields of study. Some examples are cases in which the students in their own words give an account of theories, write an essay, or carry out an analysis based on data material etc. Other examples are questions in courses that are typically more quantitative, where the acquisition of, for example, statistical concepts, is put to the test. In principle, the test must be taken on unused relevant data. These categories of examples are not exhaustive.

A course coordinator can ask the same exam questions across programmes/courses if the assignment is handed out simultaneously. This will not be a case of reuse from a previous exam.

Case exams, including Harvard cases and other purchased cases, can be reused if changes to the questions are ensured, e.g. in one or more main questions and/or with the supplement of different sub-questions. Alternatively, the questions can be reused if the case is varied and ensures testing students on a new basis. In that respect, it is important to ensure that students are not able to easily copy answers from an earlier exam paper. This can be done by using different key figures, vary the case description and ask different sub-questions.

### Specifics regarding type of exam

Below is a short list of attention points for the exam types currently used by CBS to ensure clarity and support the course coordinator/assigner.

#### Written sit-in exams without exam aids (closed book exams)

Attention must especially be on avoiding reuse, however, please refer to the above exceptions.

In terms of multiple-choice exams, please read the Exception chapter.

#### Written sit-in exams with exam aids (open book exams)

In this type of exam, the attention must be on avoiding reuse, however, please refer to the above exceptions.

#### Oral sit-in exams

In principle, students can be presented with the same questions as previous years considering the oral exam form and the learning objectives to be achieved.

The students are allowed to receive the questions in advance as the examiner can ask about everything within the syllabus in relation to the academic learning objectives.

It is recommended to always have the same number of questions placed on the table. Used questions can be put back on the table.

#### Oral sit-in exams based on projects etc.

In this type of exam, which is based on a project/essay etc., the questions asked at the oral exam will be based on the learning objectives of the course.

#### Take-home exams

In this type of exam where the assignment is handed out, attention must be on avoiding reuse, however, please refer to the above exceptions.

#### Approval activities in connection with teaching activities

Since approval activities are teaching activities and therefore not an exam, nothing hinders reuse in this case. For similar reasons, careful attention should be focused on not reusing questions from teaching activities in the exam based on the above guidelines.

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