

Explanatory notes for the Remote Assessment Decision Tree

Introduction

Due to the closure of Avans's buildings, some tests cannot go ahead as planned. Adapting tests and assessments may improve the feasibility and teachability of our study programmes in both the short and the long term. The 'Remote Assessment Decision Tree' is designed to help you make informed decisions when making adjustments to tests and assessments. A few general recommendations:

- Do not take unnecessary risks. Making changes to tests can have a significant impact; the consequences of errors made during the test can be even greater. Make sure that tests do not have to be declared invalid.
- Collaborate with the committees within your department as well as other experts (educationalists, technical (ICTO) and legal specialists).
- Maintain high standards (validity, reliability and transparency). Always use the current learning objectives as a starting point and minimise the risk of fraud.

In this document, we start by outlining the ways in which the potential approaches vary from assessment period to assessment period (periods 2, 3 and 4), after which we highlight a number of things to consider in the event of missing data and materials in period 4. We then discuss in more detail each of the recommendations outlined in the decision tree ('Assessment recommendation' column). Finally, we explain the decision-making process regarding changes and how to record and communicate those changes.

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Choosing an alternative

Approaches vary per period

For **resits in period 2**, the general advice is to postpone them until we once again have access to the buildings. It is particularly difficult to make changes to these tests since the modules have already been taught and the first examination opportunity has already taken place. Resits must, therefore, have the same format as the first test.

The same applies for **resits in period 3**; the corresponding modules have also already been taught. Students have prepared themselves for a particular assessment format. Keep in mind that, should you make any changes, these must not be to the disadvantage of the students. Consult the examination board to determine what is and what isn't realistic. Make sure that all changes are coordinated centrally (e.g. by an education committee) and that decisions regarding such changes are taken in consultation so as to avoid peaks in the workload (in relation to feasibility and teachability).

We advise making adjustments for **period 4**. We do not expect to be able to use our buildings for large-scale education and teaching before the summer holidays. With regards to tests, these will be administered online to the greatest extent possible. If we are allowed to use the Avans buildings after 1 June, we will have to observe the '1.5 metre social distancing rule'. As a result, only about 25% physical space would be available compared with the 'normal' situation. We are not permitted to expand the space currently available for exams by making use of external locations, such as events and sports halls.

Run through the decision tree for tests planned for period 4 and make adjustments where possible, without compromising quality. This will facilitate transparent communication about the tests in period 4 at the very start of the period. Students will then also be able to prepare for the (possibly new) test type, and educational activities can be tailored to that as much as possible. It will also relieve the pressure on the buildings, which is likely to occur as soon as they are open again.

Looking ahead to period 4: Missing data and materials

Before we discuss the decision tree in more detail, we would like to start with a recommendation for assessments that cannot be completed by the students because **they are unable to collect data** due to the current circumstances (for example, internships that are cancelled, company data that cannot be collected, laboratories at Avans that are unavailable, etc.). Where possible, students may use data from previous years, or detailed case studies. However, you must make sure that the learning objectives are achieved. If the collection of data or the development and demonstration of skills forms part of the learning objectives, then it is not possible to go ahead with those assessments at this time. The same applies **if it is not possible to make a physical product in a workshop or as part of a group**. See comments under points 7 and 9.

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Explanation of the recommendations in the decision tree

The decision tree is organised from relatively minor to more far-reaching changes. For all summative tests that cannot go ahead as planned at an Avans location, run through the questions in the first column. The responses will lead you to a recommendation in the 'Assessment recommendation' column. The numbers below refer to the numbers in that column. For each recommendation, we provide some background information and point out the issues that you need to pay attention to.

1. A physical product needs to be assessed.

This might be an installation (Architecture and Construction Engineering, Communication & Multimedia Design or Mechatronic Engineering) or a piece of art (School of Fine Art and Design | St. Joost) etc., produced individually by the student (for group work, the above comment concerning physical products that cannot be produced in a group applies).

Recommendation

In accordance with the applicable guidelines, it may be possible to set up a regulated system for submitting work, whereby students must hand in their product at the agreed Avans location at a specific time (taking into account the RIVM guidelines; for example, this is not an option for students who have a cold). The assessing lecturers will then assess the physical products at Avans at agreed times (with due observance of RIVM guidelines). This option is most likely only possible from 1 June onwards and in consultation with the School Board and the crisis team.

Another option is to send the products by post. If you choose this option, you must make clear agreements with the students in advance about the location to which they should send their products, how they can claim back costs and what steps will be taken in the event that test products go missing or are damaged, for example. This option is most likely only possible from 1 June onwards and in consultation with the School Board and the crisis team.

2. Students can present their test product via Blackboard or MyMedia.

This includes, for example, assignments for which students have to give an oral pitch or presentation. This option can also be used to test speaking skills for language modules as long as no interaction is required. The test type itself remains the same; the only difference is that the test is carried out digitally rather than in person.

Recommendation

Students submit the product digitally via Blackboard or MyMedia. If you use this option, you must make sure that the product was actually made by the student or students who are being assessed. The student or students must be visible on the screen, in such a way that they can be clearly identified. Ask your ICTO coach about the best way and location for students to submit their products

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3. The assessment requires you to communicate remotely and in real-time with the student or students.

This includes assessments, the presentation and defence of dissertations, discussions, role-plays or skills for language modules that require interaction. The test type itself remains the same; the only difference is that the test is carried out digitally rather than in person.

Recommendation

Administer the test remotely, for example, via Skype for Business or Microsoft Teams. A few practical things to consider:

- *Provide the students with technical instructions as to what you expect them to do (medium, time, alternative if it is not possible to establish a connection).*
- *Students should make sure they organise a suitable place in which to take the test.*
- *Consult the examination board to determine which rules apply if it is not possible to establish a connection or if the connection fails in the middle of the test.*
- *If necessary, the conversation can be recorded so that a second assessment is possible. Inform the students that the test will be recorded and that the recording will be kept until after the objection period. Delete the recorded tests after the objection period.*

4. Change the test type

This might be a viable option for many test types, for example, organise an oral exam instead of a written or digital knowledge test or convert a knowledge test into an assignment that students can do at home.

Please note: this is **not** simply a matter of converting a physical written test into a digital written test that is sat at home! See heading 8 on tests sat without proctoring.

Recommendation

- *Oral examination instead of a written or digital test*

Ask the students questions individually via Skype for Business or Microsoft Teams. In order for such a test to be valid, it must be underpinned by the learning objectives and the corresponding test matrix.

- *Each student is asked questions about all elements of the test matrix, which are also weighed as per the test matrix. Time management is especially important here; do not dwell on one subject for too long.*
- *In order for such a test to be reliable, there must be a sufficient number of questions available; this will prevent the last students to be assessed from having an advantage if the first students to be assessed share the questions with them.*
- *If you use this option, be particularly mindful of the lecturer's workload. Calculate in advance how much time will be needed per student and how much time it will cost in total.*
- *If necessary, the conversation can be recorded so that a second assessment is possible. Inform the students that the test will be recorded and that the recording will*

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be kept until after the objection period. Delete the recorded tests after the objection period.

- *Convert a knowledge test into an assignment*

In order for such an assignment to be valid, it must be underpinned by the learning objectives. If necessary, learning objectives can be tested at a slightly higher level (apply instead of reproduce).

- *Devise an assignment that covers the learning objectives and create an assessment form for the assignment. Students must be familiar with this assessment form beforehand, as is usually the case with assignments.*
- *Special attention is required if you choose this option for period 3. Students have prepared themselves for a particular assessment format. Keep in mind that, should you make any changes, these must not be to the disadvantage of the students. Consult the examination board to determine what is and what isn't realistic. Make sure that all changes are coordinated and decided upon centrally (e.g. by an education committee) so as to avoid peaks in the workload (in relation to feasibility and teachability).*

5. Combine tests

If several tests cannot currently go ahead as planned, they could be combined into one test to be administered at a later date in order to reduce student and lecturer workload in the future. This might include, for example, a combined knowledge test, merging several smaller assignments into one large assignment or a combination of knowledge tests and assignments.

Recommendation

In order for this type of assessment to be valid, the new combined test must cover all the learning objectives that are also covered in the individual tests. Together, these combined tests form an integrated assignment (plus assessment form) that maintains the relationships between the learning objectives, as specified in the test matrices. In order for an integrated knowledge test to be reliable, sufficient information must be collected from the students for each learning objective (in other words, there must be sufficient questions relating to each of the objectives). If you choose this option, you must bear in mind the feasibility for the students.

6. Accumulate tests

This option is particularly relevant if there is considerable overlap between the learning objectives of the current test and another (preferably the next) test. The current test will then not go ahead; it will be 'postponed' until the moment at which the related test is administered. The other test that is yet to be taken (for example in the next academic year) will be expanded slightly, ensuring that all the learning objectives to be tested are covered.

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Recommendation

Communicate to the students which test will be postponed and indicate in which test the relevant learning objectives will be tested. In order to ensure that the test is valid, make sure that all learning objectives are covered. The results obtained by the students for this test are also entered under the OSIRIS code for the test that should have taken place now but was 'postponed'. We recommend that the 'postponed' test is still offered but as a formative test, so that students know how they are doing now and what they still need to work on.

7. Postpone test (but still administered within the current Education and Examination Rules [EER])

This option is only possible if Avans's locations are accessible again in the current academic year (i.e. before 31 August), but do not assume that this will be the case. Use this option only in very exceptional situations (e.g. national tests for Education or Accountancy). We are hopeful that these kinds of exceptions can be made, but there is a great deal of uncertainty at the moment. The crisis team is in charge.

Recommendation

Communicate the new dates for the test and the resit. The current test can be used as a formative opportunity so that the students know how they are progressing.

8. Administering tests without proctoring

Online tests without proctoring put the onus on the student's responsibility not to cheat, but can be a last option for knowledge tests, the content of which will be tested again (after being integrated) in the curriculum at a later stage. It is not an option for final-level tests.

Recommendation

The Network of Chairs of Examination Boards (netwerk voorzitters examencommissies, NVE) has issued the following statement regarding tests without proctoring:

These are not desirable, should be kept to a minimum, and can only go ahead under very strict conditions. These conditions are:

- there are no alternatives, i.e. it is the last option*
- it must not be for a core subject of the programme*
- it must not be a final-level test.*

Fraud is not entirely preventable, but it must be kept to a minimum. The chosen test type must offer a minimum set of guarantees for this, such as time slots and randomly chosen questions.

If you choose this alternative, please discuss this with your examination board beforehand.

9. Postpone test until the next academic year (outside the current EER)

We want to avoid postponing tests until the new academic year to the greatest extent possible because this would increase the work and study load and will probably cause unwanted delays.

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On top of that, we want the hard work of our students as well as our lecturers to be rewarded with the successful completion of the academic year. That is why the focus is now on options 1 to 7 and possibly 8 from the decision tree. Of course, quality is our highest priority in this.

If none of the options in the decision tree is sufficient, the assessment of the test can be postponed until next academic year. The test itself doesn't change, but it will no longer be administered in the current academic year.

Recommendation

Inform the students that the test will be postponed until the next academic year, in which they will have two opportunities to take the test. Determine in advance what to do with students who fail the test on both those occasions and, as a result, encounter problems with their study advice with a binding rejection (BSR) or thresholds. It goes without saying that the examination board will be sympathetic to students who request an additional opportunity for this reason. Consider including this point in the examination board's policy (Internal Regulations). The current test can be used as a formative opportunity so that the students know how they are progressing.

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Decision-making and communication about changes

Decision-making and communication about assessments in period 4 and resits in period 2

The study programmes will include any changes that are made in response to the current situation and that deviate from the Education and Examination Rules (EER) in an amended EER as soon as possible. A section on 'Coronavirus-related measures' will be included in the Framework EER (via EER Write) containing amended regulations regarding, for example, study recommendations and adjustments to the thresholds and the examination programme. The template for this will be available by 6 April at the latest; study programmes must then complete this section as soon as possible and re-establish and re-approve the EER. The regular decision-making and approval procedures apply to changes to the EER, on the understanding that the examination board has the right of approval for changes to the examination programme. The reason for this is that changes are being made to the examination programme during the current academic year. Changes to the examination programme are therefore made in consultation between the department and the examination board.

Changes are communicated via the publication of the amended EER; all students will receive a personal message about this from the School Board.

Decision-making and communication about assessments in period 3

Assessments that are planned for period 3, however, do not have the luxury of time. In accordance with Section 5.2 of the EER (*Unforeseen circumstances*), if unforeseen circumstances arise which are not laid down in the EER, the examination board and the School Board will take a decision on these in joint consultation. Based on the principle of equality, this provision, which normally applies to an individual student, is generalised to cover all students. Therefore, changing a test (in deviation of the examination programme and/or that which is laid down in the study planner/block guide, etc.) in period 3 is subject to the following:

- The changes must be approved by both the School Board (possibly represented by an education committee or a curriculum committee) and the examination board.
- The changes must then be incorporated in the amended EER (i.e. amendment to the examination programme).

All changes relating to assessments in period 3 will be communicated to students at the same time in a personal message from the School Board and the examination board. In accordance with Section 5.2 of the EER, this message will also outline what students can do if they disagree with this decision, and by when they should do so. In this message, all students will be informed about all changes to tests for all levels of study, so that they are aware of what will happen to outstanding tests from earlier levels.

Points for attention for all changes (resits in P2, tests in P3 and tests in P4)

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- When deciding on changes to assessments, the School Board (regardless of whether it is represented by an education committee or a curriculum committee) and the examination board must take into account the reliability, validity and transparency of the tests, as well as issues pertaining to organisation and student workload.
- The general rule is that the examination programme in Osiris will not be adjusted. Results will be registered within the current examination programme in Osiris. ECTS credits should not be 'shifted' within the examination programme. The basic principle remains the same, i.e. each test still belongs to the academic year and the period to which it is allocated in Osiris.

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