

Bezeichnung: Exam Guidelines	erstellt: Breinbauer Ebersberger (E)	frei-gegeben: Kollegium
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Exam Guidelines


for all degree programmes at the University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna

General Guidelines for Organising and Grading Exams

1. Exam Organisation

1.1. General information

- a. The written final exams at the UAS BFI Vienna last 60, 90 or 120 minutes.
- b. The course lecturer will award a total of 100 points for every subject irrespective of the duration of the exam.
- c. The exact distribution of points (for continuous assessment, written mid-term tests, written or oral final exam) has to be communicated to the students at the start of the course in a clear and binding manner.
- d. **No student** is permitted **to leave the exam venue** during a written exam (except for justified individual circumstances).
- e. As soon as the students receive the exam papers, this counts as a valid attempt to take the exam which students cannot appeal (e.g. because of sickness or illness).
- f. **Written exams** must be written with **non-deletable** and **not-easy-to-erase writing instruments** (e.g. ballpoint pens and felt-tip pens). **Grading** must be carried out by lecturers with the same type of writing instruments mentioned above.
- g. At the end of the exam, empty pages or spaces in the exam paper must be crossed out with a single line or marked with an X either by the student or the lecturer (during grading). This is to avoid any additional writing by the student on the exam paper after the exam.
- h. If a student's handwriting is illegible in any part of a written exam paper, this part will not be considered in the overall grading of the exam, and the student will therefore be awarded zero (0) points for that section.
- i. Besides basing the exam questions on topics dealt with in class, the lecturer can also set exam questions (about 1/3 of them) based on the reading list recommended already at the start of the course.
- j. The exam scripts can only be separated or taken apart during the exam after express permission of the invigilator (otherwise, no removal of staple pins from the scripts is allowed). If the exam papers are unstapled and taken apart without the invigilator's permission, the exam will not be graded, therefore rendering the

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participation in the exam nil and void. Tasks requiring longer instructions (e.g. balance sheets and case study descriptions) should have a separate instruction sheet which can be detached from the remainder of the paper if necessary. There will be enough writing space provided for answering each question.

- k. The exam papers must contain **information** about the **duration** of the written exam as well as a clear definition of the **exam aid allowed**, especially written material like **books, handouts etc.** For research-based tasks, **only non-programmable data processors** (without alphanumeric keyboard layout), are allowed. At the beginning of every course, all exam procedures (including the course grading scheme and permitted exam aids) must be clearly communicated to the students.
- l. Mobile telephones must be switched off during exams.
- m. Every written or oral exam must cover only those subject matters that were dealt with or communicated at least three days before the exam date.
- n. In case of a physical handicap, students are entitled to another exam-sitting mode if the handicap which makes the ordinary exam mode impossible is well-documented, and if the exam requirements are not impaired by this other exam mode.


The completed written and oral exam papers are stored at the university for a period of one year after the completion of studies. The university stores the following for an unlimited amount of time: bachelor and master theses.

1.2. Course types and exam structure

Integrated courses (ILV)

Integrated courses entail the academic assessment of students' participation in lectures and a practical part. However, only one final grade is awarded in the end.

- a. The usual number of points awarded for the written final exams is 70 out of a total of 100. A deviation from this distribution of points (if necessary) must be first considered by the director of the degree programme. A different distribution of points in a course that has already started is ruled out in principle, and can only be considered after the programme director has communicated this to the students and after the students have agreed.
- b. The practical part will be considered as an inherent part of the overall performance and awarded 30 points. For this, a written documentation by the lecturer is required, which must be forwarded to the degree programme coordinator at the end of the course. The following particular factors form the basis for the evaluation process:
 - a. The conduct of several short tests during the semester
 - b. Setting of an assignment
 - c. Homework
 - d. Preparing for and presenting a project work in the course
 - e. Evaluation of the students' oral contributions to group work in class during the semester

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f. Written mid-term test

- c. If the final, overall grade is negative, the written exam is to be repeated (2nd attempt). For the practical part, as long as this is not part of the written exam, the points of the first attempt are to be considered for grading. At the third attempt (board exam), the points from the practical part are not to be considered. This third attempt needs to be positively graded in its own right for the course to be passed.

Seminar / Project Seminar (SE, PS)

Seminars, as well as Project Seminars constitute continuous assessment: submitted written papers treating scientific and / or work-related issues will be graded, as well as the quality of assignments completed by students, and objectives reached after independent development of steps such as presentations, commitment, etc.

Lectures (VO)

The lectures are followed by a written exam at the end of the semester, which forms the basis of evaluation of that course (see point 1.1.a.)
In case of a fail result, the exam is to be taken again.

Practical courses (UE)


Exams for the practical courses will be set individually for each course; for instance, one part will constitute a written exam, one part continuous course assessment, and one part home assignments.

The final written exam must not be worth more than 50% of the total number of points.¹ In case of a fail result, it is only the written and/or the oral exams that need to be taken again (see 1.2.c. for Integrated Courses ILV)

Practical courses with with low assessment load (UE*):

In this course type, it will be assessed how well students have accomplished their tasks (e.g. presentations) and met the course goals (continuous assessment character). These practical courses are usually part of social skills courses. In case of a negative grade in the course (or if attendance falls below 70%), a written paper must be prepared within 4 weeks (2nd exam), points from the practice part can be taken along. The 4-week period starts at the earliest with the announcement of the grade, at the latest after the topic of the written paper has been determined by the responsible lecturer. If the grade of the second exam is negative, a new written paper must be prepared within four weeks of the announcement of the grade, which is graded by a board of examiners whose evaluation constitutes 100% of the grading for the course (points from the practice part cannot be taken along).

¹ There is one exception, ie. the compulsory elective languages in the EWUF programme that can still have written exams worth 60% instead of 50%.

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Recognition of ECTS for student representatives pursuant to §31 (3) Higher Education Act 2014 (HSG 2014)

Student representatives elected on programme level and federal representatives (chair persons, mandataries, clerks) are eligible for recognition of a certain number of ECTS within courses due to their position as representatives. Practical courses with low assessment load (UE*) will in general be seen as “marked courses” in terms of §31 (3) HSG 2014. If the accumulated ECTS of practical courses with low assessment load (UE*) are lower than the extent of recognition regulated by law, further courses or modules indicated as obligatory in the curriculum can be recognised.

Modules which are concluded by a module exam:

In the case of modules which are concluded by a single module exam, the present exam guidelines are supplemented by the Module Exam Guidelines.

Who bears full responsibility for a course?

If any of the courses is conducted by more than one lecturer, one of them must assume full responsibility for the course organization, especially regarding contents and requirements, and for the exam and grading criteria. In case of a negative evaluation or a fail, the student, irrespective of individual lecturers, must resit the exam or the subject in order to successfully complete the course. For every course there is only one grade.


Exam invigilation

The respective exam invigilators are to ensure that students use only the authorized exam aids (specification on the exam papers, or queries addressed to the course lecturer). Any violation of this instruction will result in the exam being considered a valid attempt to take the exam, and in the exam being declared nil and void (see point 2.4.1.).

Review of exam papers

Exam projects (written exams) and bachelor theses are to be made available for review and archiving to the degree programme coordination, **2 weeks after the grades have been published at the latest**. In case of a fail grade, the exam documents must be made available to the students affected at least 2 weeks before the next resit exam (=2nd sitting or oral board exam). If this deadline is not met, students are entitled to cancelling the next resit opportunity, and alternative appointment must be arranged with the students by the course coordinator.

At the request of the student representative, the course lecturer is required to facilitate a review of the exam results (after the grade points have been announced, and in the presence of the lecturer/examiner). The appointment is arranged by the degree programme coordination in agreement with the lecturer.

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Irrespective of the above, students can only review their exam results in the secretaries' office. They are not allowed to remove written exams from the secretaries' office in order to make photocopies of the exam paper. It is, however, permitted to take photographs of the papers. Any subsequent manipulation of the exam paper will lead to the grade being declared invalid (while at the same time one resit opportunity is lost), and both the managing director of the university and the programme director will be informed. A possible appeal against the grading of a written exam paper is to be primarily addressed to the lecturer.

Resitting exams with positive results (with the aim of receiving a better grade) is not permitted.


2. Grading

2.1. General information

The pass grade for integrated courses and practical courses is above 50% of the maximum number of points (above 60% for English and Elective Compulsory Languages French, Russian and Spanish). Here, the grading key is as follows:

- | | | | | |
|------------------------|-------|----------------------|------------|--|
| General grading | >50 | points – 62.5 points | sufficient | |
| | >62.5 | points – 75 points | | satisfactory |
| key: | >75 | points – 87.5 points | good | |
| | >87.5 | points – 100 points | | very good (100% = |
| | | | | maximum points; incl. practical and group work points) |
- Grading key **English** and **Elective Compulsory Languages French, Russian and Spanish**

Grading Key:	>60	points – 70 points	sufficient	
	>70	points – 80 points		satisfactory
	>80	points – 90 points	good	
	>90	points – 100 points	very good (100% =	
				maximum points; incl. points for practical and group work)

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The degree of difficulty of the exam must be chosen so that grading can reflect the differences in students' individual performances adequately.

In accordance with the Bologna requirements, the international ECTS grades (A,B,C,D,E), which are deduced from the points achieved, will also be shown as complement of the Austrian grades.

The points required for a pass grade in a course consist of the total points of all the individual parts of course requirements (e.g. written exam, participation etc).

2.2. Recognition of exchange semesters or courses

The courses students take at a foreign (or local) guest university or college are specified in a "Learning Agreement" prior to the semester abroad. After the commencement of the semester abroad, any changes can only be implemented with the consent of the degree programme director at the home university.

The completed course at the guest university (usually abroad) should be adopted into the Austrian certification (especially in the "Transcripts of Records"). The ECTS points will then be adopted and an equivalent Austrian grade ascertained.

Outgoing exchange students of our university are required to take the main exams of all the courses attended in the previous semester before they leave for their exchange semesters. If the result of any exam is a fail, then the student has to resit the exam as soon as possible, i.e. after the end of the semester abroad (for the rules on deadlines, see the mobility regulations).

2.3. Bachelor and master theses

The grading of bachelor and master theses is guided by the stipulations of the UAS standard regulations.


2.4. The use of unauthorised exam aids (cheating), and plagiarism

Using unauthorised exam aids (cheating) at written exams

The use of unauthorised exam aids (which constitutes cheating) or copying from other students at written exams will result in the exam being not valid and being counted towards the total number of attempts.

It is noted that plagiarism in written assignments that are not bachelor or master theses or seminar papers are also subsumed under the term 'cheating'.

2.4.1. Master and bachelor theses and other seminar papers

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These written projects are to be conducted in keeping with strict academic standards and copyright laws. Lifting the entire text or a part of a copyright-protected work without clear and sufficient reference is regarded as plagiarism and will result in the rejection of the written project as not valid. The same holds true if the student is suspected of not having personally written the whole or a part of the text (for instance, if students do not know parts of their own work).

To ensure the quality of education acquired at the UAS, those supervising the master and bachelor theses and seminar work are required to conduct appropriate random screening, using plagiarism software. Any breaches of academic conduct are to be brought to the attention of the director of the degree programme.

2.4.2. Expulsion from university

A repeated breach of the rules mentioned in 2.4.1 und 2.4.2. will result in expulsion from the University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna. In this case, the programme director will recommend to the university's CEO to rescind the studies contract.

3. Exam Dates

Pursuant to the relevant section of the Universities of Applied Sciences Act (FHStG § 16 (4) Z 1), the procedures to arrange for exam dates and the allocated examiners are decided upon by the chair of the university's Academic Council.


3.1. General information

Choice of 3 dates: For lectures and integrated courses, each student can choose to sit a maximum of 2 out of 3 written exams offered after the course has ended. All three exam dates offered must be held in the same exam mode (e.g. multiple choice, open-ended questions, oral exams). Different procedures have to be communicated at least two weeks before the exam date, with a reason for the change being given. It is not necessary for students to cancel an exam if they cannot or would not take the exam at one of the specific exam dates.

A failed final exam can be taken again twice, with the second repeated exam conducted as an oral board exam.

3.2. Further exam dates

The director of the degree programme decides, on a case-by-case basis, on the necessity for further written or oral exam dates after the third opportunity to take the exam (as mentioned in 3.1.) has elapsed.

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Exam dates 1 and 2

Preferably, the **final semester exam** takes place in the final course session. The 1st and 2nd alternative exam dates (resit exams) take place outside the semester period (e.g. from September for the summer semester, and from February for the winter semester). The first resit will always take place at 3pm, also for the part-time students. The second resit will be offered at ordinary study times. For ease of organisation, the resit exam dates for part-time students and full-time students are combined. As far as possible, preference is given to the part-time students' preferences (e.g. exams are to be held outside working times).

The 2nd alternative exam (i.e. the first resit) can take place 2 weeks after the student has been informed of his/her negative exam result at the earliest.

3.4. Exam sitting 3 – Board exam (oral or written)

If the 2nd written exam result also turns out to be a fail, the final and decisive written or oral exam will take place between two to four weeks after the result of the failed exam has been communicated. The board of examiners comprises 3 persons. Both the exam questions and results are to be documented. The exam result is to be signed by the 3 examiners.

3.5. An already assigned **date for a board exam** can only be postponed after considering the serious reasons put forward by a student in a particular petition (especially regarding illness and delays due to work), or by acceptance by the degree programme director in individual cases. In each case, a confirmation is to be submitted to the degree programme coordination.


3.6. Setting a deadline for written projects (seminar work and term projects, bachelor and master theses) as well as setting a date for oral exams (bachelor and master final exams and presentation of seminar papers and term projects) is based on the respective guidelines.

4. Regulations on absenteeism (and its consequences)

Attendance is compulsory in all degree programmes at the UAS BFI Vienna. To successfully complete the studies within the legally prescribed study period (§3 Abs2 Z4 FHStG), the following rules and regulations have been set:

4.1. Absenteeism regulations

- Firstly, establishing a student's rate of attendance is course-related.

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- Falling below the required 70% of attendance, students forgo one opportunity to take the exam (graded as a fail, compare AR). This is valid for all courses, and the presentation of a doctor's certificate does not affect this rule. A petition for a substitute compensatory assignment is not possible. Student representatives elected on programme level and federal representatives (chair persons, mandataries, clerks) are not affected by this.
- Please note: we assume that all illness and work-related absenteeism is covered by the maximum 30% flat rate for such contingencies, hence exceptions are not provided for, as a rule.
- In addition, only the director of the degree programme, on an individual case-by-case basis, can grant extensive exemptions from the attendance requirement in cases of serious or protracted illness or work duties.
- Duly-elected student representatives on the level of higher education institutions, representatives on programme-level, heads of departments (degree programmes), as well as chairs, mandataries, heads of departments and clerks of the Austrian Students Union (Federal Representatives) are generally not exempt from the mandatory attendance (less than 40% attendance) requirement. In exceptional cases, only the degree programme director can approve an exemption. If this provision results in the students not achieving the required group work or continuous assessment points, the points – at the student's request – can be excluded or extrapolated from the points scored in home assignments.
- Establishing a student's attendance is semester-related.
- Students who in the course of a semester have a cumulative attendance of under 50% will:
 - either be given a proposal for the revocation of their education contract by the managing director of the university
 - or be advised to take temporary leave from university


4.2. Attendance register fraud

The attendance register of the UAS is a legal document as stipulated by section iSv § 74 (1) Z 7 StGB (Criminal Code). Anyone signing the attendance register on behalf of a fellow-student who is not actually present is tantamount to forgery, which is a violation of the section of the law § 223 StGB. Repeated breach of this can lead to the studies contract with the student/s concerned being rescinded.

5. Repeating an Academic Year and Leave of Absence during an Academic Year

5.1. Repeating an academic year:

Pursuant to § 18 Abs. 4 FHStG, in the case of a student having a final fail grade in one subject in a semester he/she can repeat the academic year. He/she can petition the head of the degree programme for the repetition of the academic year

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within 14 days of receipt of the fail result. The degree programme director will stipulate which courses and exams should be repeated during the repeated academic year.

5.2. Leave of Absence:

In the case of students being, for inevitable and justifiable reasons (e.g. protracted illness, long business stays abroad) unable to continue their studies, they can petition the director of the degree programme for leave of absence.

The reasons for a leave of absence are to be proven or convincingly demonstrated. When deciding on the petition, compelling personal, health or professional reasons need to be considered. Aside from a compelling reason, the student also needs to convincingly demonstrate or prove that s/he will continue the studies after the leave of absence and the leave of absence does not constitute a deferred drop-out.²

During this granted period, no exams can be taken.

During this granted leave of absence, student fees including possible special contributions (Austrian Students Union fee/"ÖH Beitrag") need to be paid. Non-payment of these fees will result in the loss of admission to the degree programme.

² Cf. Passrucker (2017). Voraussetzungen für eine Unterbrechung. In: Hauser/Schweighofer (Hrsg.) FHStH, S. 673.