Rules for Conducting Exams in the Spring Semester 2020

PURPOSE AND DELIMITATION

The rules have been drawn up as a result of all students and staff without critical functions being sent home from Aalborg University (hereafter AAU) on Friday, 13th March 2020. On 14th April 2020, a statement was issued by the Executive Management of AAU that the exams of the remainder of the spring semester 2020 must be conducted online.

As a general rule, all re-exams in August must also be conducted as digital exams. In exceptional cases, and only if the campus is reopened to August, the Head of Studies may, in concert with the Study Boards, decide that the re-examination should be conducted as a physical exam. However, this must be notified at least 14 days before the exam.

The rules apply to all educational programmes at AAU and are intended to ensure that the exams in the spring semester 2020 are conducted online in a sound manner that it is in accordance with current regulations.

The rules apply to digital exams that are conducted until and including 31st August 2020.

The rules are being drawn up in a situation that must be considered as force majeure and where proper solutions must be found. The universities are continuously collaborating on how to handle examinations during the spring semester, which may give rise to updating the rules on an ongoing basis when deemed necessary. The rules are discussed in the Strategic Council for Education and subsequently approved by the Pro-rector.

The rules are a supplement to the Examination Order.

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1 This is a translation of the Danish version of “Regler for afvikling af prøver i forårssemestret 2020”. In case of any discrepancies, the Danish version prevails.
## 1.0 Conducting oral exams digitally

Oral exams scheduled for spring semester 2020 must be conducted digitally. Due to the situation, the Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education has made an exemption from the requirements of the Examination Order stating that a supervisor must be present with the student during the examination.

AAU provides some programs to run the digital exams. The Study Board decides which of these programs they would like to use for conducting the digital oral exams. However, it is a requirement that the selected program supports video so that the assessors can see the student or students during the examination. Therefore, the exam must be conducted with camera. Before the exam commences, the assessors must review the room in which the student sits. It is the examiner’s responsibility to ensure that the conditions for holding the exam are met. If the examiner assesses that the conditions for the exam are not met, the examiner must cancel the examination and the student uses an examination attempt. The student is awarded the lowest possible grade (−3 or not passed).

Oral exams may be conducted individually or in groups. For group exams, the students must participate in the exam in each of their rooms. Students must have their student card in the room in which the student sits during the exam, and this must be presented on request.

Students who participate in an oral exam without a written submission digitally must complete and submit a solemn declaration, no later than 12.00 noon 2 working days before the oral exam. This applies regardless of whether the solemn declaration is submitted by e-mail or in the Digital Exam System.

Students who participate in an oral exam with written submission digitally (e.g. a project exam) must submit the solemn declaration, no later than 12.00 noon 2 working days before the submission of the project report, if the solemn declaration is submitted by e-mail. If the solemn declaration is submitted in the Digital Exam System, it must be submitted together with the student(s) written assignment paper (e.g. the project report).

The Study Board decides who should receive the solemn declaration at the department. The Study Board that conducts the exam is responsible for ensuring that students are informed about the solemn declaration and how it should be completed. Submitting the solemn declaration is considered a prerequisite for participating in a digital oral exam. If the student does not submit the solemn declaration on time, the student will not be able to take the exam. In this case, the student uses an examination attempt and receives the grade “not assessed”.

In case of technical issues while conducting oral exams, the assessors must compensate the students by giving them extra time corresponding to the interruptions that occurred during the exam. The assessors must make a concrete, academic assessment of the influence of the interruptions for the examination and, viewed in the light of these, decide how much extra time the student or students should be allocated. If the assessors assess that the examination cannot be completed due to technical issues, the exam can be held at another time.

Audio and/or image recordings are neither allowed during digital exams unless the recordings are included as part of the examination process. AAU then does the recordings.
The assessors must (in the same way as in physical exams) take notes on the examination process (including any technical issues), the performance and the grading process for use in dealing with a possible complaint. The notes must be kept for at least one year, and in addition, until a possible complaint is closed.

The Study Board must inform the students about how the digital oral exam is conducted as quickly as possible and at least 14 days before the exam.

### 2.0 Conducting written on-site exams digitally

The Study Board must decide whether scheduled exams will be conducted as digital exams without aids at the student's home, or whether the format of the examination should be changed so that the exam can be conducted with aids. If the format of the examination is maintained, the students must complete the assignment from home, and the student must submit it to the Digital Exam System when the examination is over. The Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education has made an exemption from the requirements of the Examination Order stating that a supervisor must be present with the student during the examination. Therefore, it is not a requirement when students participate in digital exams at home during the spring semester 2020.

The Study Boards must be aware that it is not possible to invigilate whether the students use aids that are not allowed, if the on-site exam is conducted in the student's home.

The exams must be attempted to be conducted digitally, but some specific exams may not be converted to digital format. These exams must be extraordinarily postponed until AAU opens up for physical presence again.

Students who participate in a written on-site exam digitally must complete and submit a solemn declaration, **no later than 12.00 noon 2 working days before the written exam**, if the solemn declaration is submitted by e-mail. If the solemn declaration is submitted in the Digital Exam System, it must be submitted together with the student(s) assignment paper.

The Study Board decides who should receive the solemn declaration at the department. The Study Board that conducts the exam is responsible for ensuring that students are informed about the solemn declaration and how it should be completed.

Submitting the solemn declaration is considered a prerequisite for participating in a digital on-site exam. If the student does not submit the solemn declaration on time, the student will not be able to take the exam. In this case, the student uses an examination attempt and receives the grade “not assessed”.

The Study Boards must conduct digital on-site exams without the use of the digital invigilation system ITX Flex.

### 3.0 Exemption from current curriculum

Due to the current situation, it is possible to apply for an exemption from the current curriculum after the deadline for submission of exemption curriculums. Exemption from the current curriculum must be applied for if the Study Board wants to conduct an exam in another way than described in the curriculum. It is Educational Law that processes exemptions from current curriculums on behalf of the Pro-dean of Education. If the application for exemption contains academic matters, the decision on exemption is made in concert with the Pro-dean of Education.

If a Study Board wants exemption from a current curriculum, the application for exemption must be sent to studieordninger@adm.aau.dk. Students must be informed about the form of the exam no later than 14 days before the exam. Therefore, the application for exemption must be submitted, processed and approved in order to comply with this deadline.
Changing from physical to digital examinations does not require an exemption from the curriculum, e.g. conducting a digital oral exam that should have been oral at AAU, or a change from a written exam at AAU to a written exam at home.

3.1 Exemption to change the form of examination

There may be some forms of exams that can be difficult or impossible to conduct digitally. This applies, for example, on-site exams where the students have to sit in a hall for a certain number of hours and answer an assignment that they are given on the spot. Therefore, it may be necessary to apply for exemption from the exam format. Students still have the opportunity to submit written exams in the Digital Exam System during the home period. Therefore, the Study Board does not need to apply for an exemption if the exam format is maintained, the only change being that the exam is conducted digitally at the student's home.

If the duration of the on-site exam is specified in the curriculum, the Study Board can apply for an exemption for the on-site exam to be replaced by a written assignment at home, which is carried out on e.g. 24 hours, 48 hours, 72 hours or a week. If the duration of the examination is not specified in the curriculum, the Study Board can decide to change the duration of the examination. In that case, it will not require an exemption from the curriculum. It is only important that the scope and degree of difficulty of the examination assignment correspond to the time available to the student for the examination. It is also possible to exempt, so that a written examination will instead be conducted as an oral examination if it is considered academically meaningful.

The Study Board may also apply for an exemption for a written examination to be conducted as an oral examination instead, if the Study Board considers it academically meaningful.

Finally, the Study Board can apply for exemption from the exam format if the exam format is "continuous evaluation/active participation". Such an exemption can only be granted if the Study Board considers that it is not possible to make a continuous evaluation, because the lectures has been changed from physical to digital.

It must be stated in the application for exemption which module it is, when the exam is conducted and which form of examination is wanted.

3.1.1 Special exam conditions

If a change of exam format is approved, it may be of importance to students with physical or mental functional impairments. These students may need to apply for new or other special exam conditions to be equal with other students in the exam situation. Therefore, the Study Board must process exemption applications for special exam conditions as soon as possible.

3.1.2 Project exams (including final projects)

As the semester is underway and the students have started their projects, it is not possible to exempt from the examination format in project examinations, so students do not have to take the oral examination. First, because the students write the project jointly with the expectation that their individual performance will be assessed at the oral examination. Therefore, it is difficult to make an individual assessment of the students based on the written assignment alone. Second, it is an integrated part of AAU's way of conducting project exams that the written project report is followed by an oral exam. This also applies to projects prepared by a single student.

Therefore, it will be necessary to conduct the oral exam digitally in accordance with Section 1.0.

In some exceptional cases, an exemption may be granted for the oral exam to be conducted individually on the basis of a joint project report. The Pro-dean has the opportunity to approve an exemption application if
there is an academic justification for the oral exam to be conducted individually. No exemption will be granted for reasons other than academic ones. Applications justified in e.g. technical issues cannot be accepted, as the systems provided by the University support the variety of oral group exams digitally.

3.2 Exemption from prerequisites for participating in exams

Some Study Boards have laid down prerequisites for students to participate in the exams. For example, that students must actively participate in the lectures, or that students must continuously submit physical assignments or models in order to take the exam.

At first, the Study Board must assess whether it is possible to maintain the prerequisites in a way that the students can continue to comply with them. For example, by handing in assignments digitally, checking out digital attendance for lectures or the like.

If it is not possible to maintain the prerequisites as a result of the home period, the Study Board must apply for an exemption from the current curriculum. The Study Board must state in the application for exemption that the Study Board wants exemption from the prerequisites in the module, because the students cannot fulfil the prerequisites during the home period.

3.3 Exemption from learning objectives

The home period may cause the students to be unable to meet experimental learning objectives, since they cannot access e.g. laboratories. If the Study Board does not assess that the experimental work can be obtained after the home period, Educational Law may, on behalf of the Pro-dean of Education, in exceptional cases exempt from the learning objectives. If an exemption from the learning objectives is granted, the exemption will apply to the ordinary exam and the re-examination held in the same exam period.

It is important to distinguish between experimental master’s thesis (long master’s thesis) and ordinary projects that contain an element of experiment, laboratory exercise or the like.

Long master’s thesis
It is stated in the Ministerial Order, that if the thesis is more than 30 ECTS points, it must be of an experimental nature. Therefore, there can be no exception to the fact that there must be an experimental element in the long master’s thesis. Therefore, it is not possible to exempt from the requirement that master’s theses above 30 ECTS points must be of an experimental nature. If there are some specific issues, it must be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, if another academic solution can be found, where the thesis can still be considered as of experimental nature. If it is not possible to find another academic solution, it will be necessary to postpone the deadline of submission.

Other projects
For other projects, it is not directly stated by Order that these projects must be of experimental nature. However, it is important to continue to ensure that the students acquire the competences that appear in the competence profile of the programme. In these cases, an exemption can be applied for e.g. to move the experimental learning objectives to a project later in the education, if it is academically meaningful.

3.4 Exemption from the requirement of external examination

There may be digital exams where it is difficult to find an external examiner. If it is not possible to find an external examiner, an exemption from the requirement of external examination can be granted in two cases:

1) If the programme continues to meet the requirement of one-third external examination, even if the specific exam is conducted with internal evaluation.
2) If it is possible to move the external examination to one or more other modules later in the programme, so that the programme as a whole complies with the requirement for one-third external examination.

If it is not possible to comply with the requirement for one-third external examination, the exemption to conduct the exam with internal assessment will not be granted. In that case, it will be necessary to postpone the exam.

4.0 Postponement of exams
Students are expected to be active during their home period. This also means that they are expected to participate in the exams that are being conducted digitally. This means that the students cannot necessarily deregister for exams or postpone the submission of their project exams.

If the student wish to deregister from the exam or wish to postpone, the student must write an application for exemption from the deadline of submission to the Study Board. The application must be in writing and reasoned, and the student must provide any documentation. The Study Board that processes the application has the opportunity to grant an exemption if special circumstances apply.

There may be some exams that cannot be conducted within the current rules. If it is not possible to conduct the exams in accordance with the rules and in an academically sound manner, the exams must be postponed.

CONTACT / RESPONSIBILITY
The rules are drawn up by Study Service. The regulations have been discussed in the Strategic Council for Education and subsequently approved by the Pro-rector.

If there are questions regarding the regulations, they can be sent to:

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Christina Buhl, cbu@adm.aau.dk