

## RECOMMENDED GOOD PRACTICES

### FOR PREPARING FOR EXAMS

#### 2<sup>ND</sup> SEMESTER, 2019-2020

Adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic situation

In the light of the current state of calamity and the previous state of emergency, the normal and re-sit period exams will be taken remotely. This document outlines a set of good practices which have been put together by the Pedagogical Board and which have been complemented with concrete suggestions from several members of faculty.

This document has two main objectives. On the one hand, the promotion of practices which reduce the occurrence of cheating, and, on the other hand, the promotion of practices which enable students to take their exams in the most stress-free manner possible, to avoid any incapacitation.

#### 1. Declaration of a Commitment to Honour:

- All students are obliged to read and sign a declaration of honour in the following terms: “I hereby declare, on my honour, that the exams taken this semester will be approached by me with absolute honesty and complete respect for the stipulated rules and regulations, especially those regarding the requirement that the exam be individual and personal, without consulting third parties.”
- **The ISEG Services will ensure that all students sign this statement** before taking the exams. Faculty may be made aware if a particular student has not signed.
- In other words, **it is not necessary to include such a declaration in each examination.**
- Students may, however, be reminded of the existence of this declaration when they read the introductory information written on the first page of their exam.

#### 2. Identification of students:

*Aquila* and *MS Forms* enable the identification of those students who submitted completed exams. However, should faculty so choose, the exam script can include a section on the first page where the student is required to fill out their personal data:

- Full name
- Student number
- Email address

#### 3. Duration of the exam:

The total time for taking the exam should not exceed 90 minutes.

4. **Sub-Division of the exam into various modules:**

- The exams **should** be divided into several sequential and independent modules, with the suggestion that each module should not exceed 30 minutes (15 to 20 minutes per module is an already-tested solution which yields good results).
- At the end of each module, the invigilator will be able to verify whether all students were able to submit their answer for the module in question. Accordingly, you are advised to start the next module up to 15 minutes after completing the previous module (and so forth).

5. **Ranking of the questions by degree of difficulty:**

It is recommended that the degree of difficulty of the questions increase progressively throughout the exam, in order that students gain a certain familiarity and confidence with the system right from the start of the exam and are thus able to solve the final questions more calmly, with concentration (upholding the spirit which reduces the temptation to adopt unacceptable practices).

6. **Consultation of support elements during the exam:**

- In preparing the text of the exam, faculty should take into account the fact that students are not being monitored in person, and that they may be able to consult support information (a book, mobile phone, or even a third party) which is hard to detect (i.e., this is especially true if there is no video-invigilation in place). In addition to being able to count on the honour and integrity of students, the exams can be written in such a way as to attempt to prevent possible cheating, such as, for example:
  - The inclusion of some questions which imply the use and interpretation of different data by different groups of students. These questions have the possibility to imply a degree of choice between different options or combinations of paragraphs (for example), which reduces the likelihood of everyone choosing exactly the same combination. For example, by providing data regarding diverse economies (companies, or another entity) - A, B, C, D, E – and ask for the analysis of two of them, or just one of them.
  - A time limit for the answers for different sections. This recommendation is very sensitive and appeals to common sense – for instead of attempting to stop cheating, this approach can simply render it impossible for students to read and answer the question. There needs to be a reasonable minimum time to take a deep breath, think, and answer. Give the right amount of time. This is an art that members of faculty have to master.



7. **“The selection” question:**

- It is recommended that there be one last question which enables the assessment of the depth of the students' knowledge, with a score of, for example, up to 3 points. Examples include: asking to explain, to analyse, to give a reasoned and justified opinion, to explain why something was done, to appeal for the application to something which is unique (for example, the student can give the example of a brand, a game, a country, a function, a property, or of a theorem, etc...)

8. **Types of questions:**

The exams can combine a variety of different types of questions, such as, for example:

- Multiple choice questions, with a “closed” answer.
  - i. In the case of multiple choice questions, the *MS Forms* and *Aquila* platforms do not permit that once an answer option has been selected, the student cannot just submit a null answer by “deselecting” the selected single option, in order to “leave it blank”. In cases where the faculty team aims to penalise for submitting a wrong answer, an additional option must be created adopting the text “*I do not want to answer*”, or an equivalent, which enables the student to voluntarily leave the answer “blank”.
  - ii. The time allocation for a block of multiple choice questions should take into account that, on average, a student needs at least one and a half minutes to answer a question. Longer and more complex questions will naturally require more time.
- “Open” questions, where the student is obliged to write an answer using the computer keyboard.
- “Open” questions, where the answer’s format is an attached (“uploaded”) file.
  - i. The file to be attached can be a scan of a handwritten sheet by the student – this a good idea for those questions which require formulas, or when the student is asked to design a graph, or even to sign);
  - ii. Or it can be a file of a certain software or application (for example, a file in Word, Excel, PDF, ...).

9. **Different versions:**

Several versions of the same exam may exist, however it must be ensured that the questions focus on the same content and that they all have the same degree of difficulty (Note: The exams can be distributed in different “virtual exam rooms”, which can facilitate the distribution of different versions, should this be the desire of the member of faculty responsible for the Curricular Unit).

10. **Scores for the questions:**

The exam script must clearly indicate the maximum score for each question.

**11. Written answers:**

It is recommended that one of the questions should require a handwritten answer, which provides the opportunity to check whether the handwriting is really that of the student in question - as exemplified in Point 8 above.

Such an answer will have to be attached as a scan (via *MS Forms* or *Aquila*, for example), or a photo, for example.

**12. Backup of the exam script:**

It is important that faculty has a "backup" solution in place, with a version of the exam in PDF format which can be made available in a more "low-tech" manner in the event of a technical failure, namely by email.