

## **TITLE III – Examination regulations**

*IES additions in blue*

### **Chapter I - Organisation of exams**

#### **Article 100 (Tests)**

§1. Tests may only be held during the first block of exams of the first examination period for year-spanning programme units which form part of the first year of a full-time standard learning path in a Bachelor's programme.

§2. The faculties shall determine the necessary procedure guidelines in their supplementary faculty examination regulations.

§3. The manner in which the test results are incorporated in the end results for the programme unit in question shall be included in the course description.

#### **Article 101 (Number of exam opportunities)**

§1. Students are entitled to two exam opportunities for each programme unit for which they are enrolled, in so far as they have not obtained any credit certificate after the first exam opportunity. In view of the nature of a programme unit the number of exam opportunities (also at the exam unit level, if need be) may be limited to one. This shall be indicated in the course description.

§2. Under no circumstances may students present themselves more than twice for the same exams or exam units in the programme of one academic year.

#### **Article 102 (Partial or permanent assessment)**

§1. As regards programme units which consist of several learning activities every faculty may opt to assess the competencies associated with these activities separately.

Students shall be informed about the following aspects:

- A description of the various learning activities;
- The proportion in which the various learning activities are reflected in the final exam score;
- Forms of assessment and when assessment takes place, i.e. assessment outside exam periods;
- The possibility that individual assessment results may be announced to students;
- The possibility that individual assessment results may also be included in the resit exam score.

§2. The procedures under §1 shall be announced before the start of the academic year as part of the course descriptions.

#### **Article 103 (Resitting exams)**

Exams taken in the first block of exams of the examination period may not be resat until the resit examination period.

#### **Article 104 (Scheduling of exams)**

§1. Exams may not be scheduled on Sundays or on public or academic holidays.

§2. Except for reflex students, no exams or tests may be held outside the periods specified in article 5§1. If a public holiday occurs during the examination period, the relevant examination period already captures on the Saturday of the pre-exam study

week.

**§3.** For students participating in international exchange programmes as well as for students enrolled in study programmes of an interuniversity character any decision to make an exception is taken by the competent faculty authorities and recorded in the supplementary faculty examination regulations.

**§4.** In such exceptional circumstances as described in § 3 teaching shall not be suspended.

**§5.** A student can request a deviation to the programme director via the programme secretariat. The programme director will take a decision in conjunction with the respective professor. In case of an approved deviation, the respective professor and the student will be notified.

### **Article 105 (Exam schedule)**

**§1.** The exam schedule for both the first and second blocks of exams of the examination period must be posted a minimum of four weeks before the exams on the official notice boards and/or communicated by email at students' VUB email addresses. For the resit examination period this term is reduced to a minimum of two weeks.

**§2.** For determining the exam schedule, the specified model path is taken as basis. Students who have 2 exams at the same time, in the event of an individual learning path, combined enrolment or elective programme units, can notify the Chairman of the examination board thereof in writing within 5 calendar days from announcement of the exam schedule, in the way described in the additional faculty regulations. The student will then take the exam that comes first in the standard model path or the exam for the mandatory programme unit (versus the elective programme unit). For the exam for the other programme unit, the student must inform the lecturer in order to verify whether a new exam time can be arranged within the relevant exam period. In determining the exam schedule based on the model path, allowance is made for the spreading of the students' efforts. It is recommended that faculties, as far as possible organisationally, spread exams in such a way that exams are not held on consecutive days, unless they are several assessments which are associated with one and the same programme unit.

**§3.** The programme secretariat of the IES composes the timetable and the examination schedule for the students.

**§4.** Any change to the exam schedule caused by the institution after it was made public shall be communicated personally and without delay in the Students Self Service or to the students affected at their VUB email addresses. Changes may not lead to exams taking place earlier than previously announced.

**§5.** The implementation of this article falls within the responsibility of the Faculty dean.

## **Chapter II - Equal opportunities**

### **Article 106 (Inclusion)**

**§1.** All teaching activities must be open to everyone. Every student must be given equal opportunities. This may call for invoking reasonable flexibility (in compliance with the criteria of feasibility, acceptability and justifiability), whereby derogations are granted to individual students, in specific circumstances. A reasonably flexible deviation is considered a deviation that doesn't imply a disproportionate burden. A reasonably flexible deviation renders education more feasible for the student, remains acceptable to the lecturer and can be justified to fellow students and the education institute. The student asks for advice from the SBC, which in turn sends, on the basis of a professional

certificate and / or a professional interview with a psychologist of the SBC, a duly motivated request to the lecturer, under the responsibility of the dean. A decision to refuse the requested deviations can be motivated on the basis of a consideration made by the institution that the requested deviations compromise the possibility to achieve the essential learning outcomes of the programme. As described in article 155, students with disabilities may lodge an appeal against the refusal of the requested deviations.

§2. Every attempt is made to achieve a workable arrangement through dialogue. Should the dialogue be hampered by problems the faculty ombudsperson may be asked to intervene.

### **Chapter III - Taking exams**

#### **Article 107 (Taking exams)**

§1. Students shall only be permitted to take exams if they are properly enrolled for the academic year concerned and if their names appear on the examination list of the relevant programme unit. The examination list includes all students who are registered for the relevant programme unit. One exception to this is taking part in a written examination held at a time when the faculty secretariat is closed. Where that is the case, students will be admitted provisionally to the examination. If it emerges that the students are not properly enrolled, the examination will not be valid.

§2. Proper enrolment for exams is entirely dependent upon submission of the required certificates at the time of enrolment and full payment of the tuition fees.

§3. If a student has failed to settle the tuition and/or examination fees or has not produced all the necessary certificates enrolment can be suspended. As long as the suspension is not revoked, participation in exams (including exams already sat) shall be considered legally invalid. Any examination marks already awarded shall be considered null and void and no credit certificates shall be supplied.

§4. If a student's name does not appear on the examination list of a particular programme unit and the student is convinced he should nevertheless be admitted to the exam, he must immediately notify the faculty secretariat. The student will be notified as to whether or not he can participate in the exam no later than the first working day after the day on which the student notified the faculty secretariat.

#### **Article 108 (Taking exams - faculty criteria)**

§1. Without prejudice to the provisions of article 107 the faculties shall determine the conditions under which students are granted admission or refusal to participate in exams. These rules must be announced to students from the beginning of the academic year and shall be included in the supplementary faculty regulations.

§2. Students who are refused admission shall be informed in writing of the dean's decision stating the reasons for the refusal, at the latest two weeks before the start of the exam period or alternatively, two weeks before the end of the normal lecture period. A copy of the decision shall be sent to the faculty ombudsperson. Students may appeal against the decision with the examination board as described in article 152 provided they do so within five calendar days upon receipt of the decision.

#### **Article 109 (Resits)**

§1. Notwithstanding the provisions of Articles 107 and 108, students who want resit their examinations must register for the resit examinations for each programme module through the Students Self Service. For all the faculties, this must be done within two

weeks of the close of the first examinations session.

**§2.** If students have not registered by the deadline set, they may still apply to the Dean for permission to take part in the resit examinations. For this, students must submit a file to the faculty secretariat showing that a force majeure event has occurred. Documents supporting this force majeure event must be submitted to the faculty secretariat within three calendar days of its occurrence and, in any event, before the examinations start.

## **Chapter IV - Exam proceedings**

### **Article 110 (Force majeure)**

**§1.** Students shall observe strictly the timetable and location set for an examination. In the event of circumstances beyond their control students may ask for an exam to be rescheduled, provided that the necessary proof can be produced. Any incidence of force majeure and a request to re-schedule the exam as a result thereof, must be reported by the student in writing by e-mail the faculty secretariat at the latest on the day of the exam. To this end the student must duly and correctly complete the appropriate form. The various faculties shall indicate in their faculty regulations where the form can be obtained.

Original documentation to substantiate force majeure shall be submitted to the faculty secretariat within three calendar days of the exam date and, where applicable, at the latest on the day of the exam in the new exam regulations.

Reporting force majeure needs to be done in writing to the IES programme secretariat via [student.secretariat@ies.be](mailto:student.secretariat@ies.be).

Cases of *force majeure* include:

- 1) illness (corroborated by medical proof)
- 2) death of a family member in the first (parents / children) or second (grandparents, grand children, siblings) degree.

**§2.** The examiner shall decide whether a re-scheduled exam is organisationally possible and in the event of a positive decision shall set a new exam schedule. If possible, the exam will be organised within the same exam session/period.

**§3.** In cases of force majeure during the first block of exams of the examination period where it is not possible to reschedule an exam during the same exam period, the dean may decide in extraordinary circumstances and on the basis of the evidence submitted, to extend the period of the first block of exams or to grant permission to sit exams in the programme units concerned during the second block of exams of the examination period.

The decision shall be reported to the student within 3 calendar days of receipt of the request to re-schedule the exam.

The student addresses his request to the Academic Director of the IES no later than three calendar days after the end of the first examination period.

The Academic Director can, in conjunction with the respective programme director,

- 1) decide to prolong the first examination period of the first session by a maximum of three weeks. The student and respective titular(s) are informed of this

decision.

- 2) Grant permission to take the examination in the second examination period of the first session. In this case, the student will receive a request for confirmation by email from the programme secretariat before 15 May. In the event that the student confirms, the respective titular(s) are informed of this decision.

In both cases, the student shall contact the titular in order to organise the examination; the student will inform the programme secretariat of the agreed examination schedule.

**§4.** Examiners shall observe strictly the timetable and location set for an examination. In cases of examiner absence and where examiners fail to send notice of their absence the exam schedule is cancelled upon completion of a one-hour waiting period. Students shall report these circumstances without delay to the dean who, without prejudice to the provisions of article 105§4 and following consultation with the students concerned, shall draw up a new exam schedule.

#### **Article 111 (Medical certificates)**

In the event that the substantiation document as outlined in article 110 is a medical certificate it must be noted that the following medical certificates shall not be accepted:

- Incomplete certificates or certificates containing contradictory information;
- "Dixit" certificates (a "dixit" certificate is a doctor's certificate based on a patient's health claim rather than a medical examination or diagnosis);
- "Post factum" certificates (which are issued after an illness or when the medical consequences of an accident are no longer apparent). A medical certificate shall be issued on the first day of an illness or accident.

#### **Article 112 (Examiner replacement)**

**§1.** An exam is held by the lecturer responsible for a programme unit or by the person who as a replacement lecturer has taught the programme unit in question in that particular year. The examiner shall keep an attendance list of all the students who have taken an exam with him.

**§2.** In the event of circumstances beyond his control or legitimate cause for his absence, an examiner may address a request to the dean, stating full reasons, to be wholly or partially relieved of his assignment as an examiner. In the event of force majeure and if thoroughly justified, the decision to appoint a replacement examiner may be coupled to an adjustment of the examination method. The examination method adjustment must be approved by the vice-Rector for Education.

In consultation with the Chairman of the examination board the dean shall submit a proposal to the Rector nominating a replacement examiner, a senior academic staff member ("ZAP") or a doctoral assistant.

**§3.** In the event of a blood relationship or affinity to the fourth degree between a student and an examiner, the dean shall, in consultation with the Chairman of the examination board, appoint an alternative examiner. The dean must receive such a request for an alternative examiner to be appointed from the examiner concerned before the start of the exam periods.

**§4.** Every student may request the presence of an observer. Such a request shall be submitted in writing, stating full reasons, to the Chairman of the examination board, two weeks before the date of the exam at the latest (expiry date). The role of observer may not be filled by a student who is due to be examined by the examiner involved in the same academic year, nor by a relative up to the fourth degree of kin or any person with

whom the student in question has a personal relationship.

#### **Article 113 (Public character of exams)**

§1. All tests and examinations are open and accessible to the public. They are held by the lecturers responsible for the programme units examined in the lecture rooms of the university. In exceptional circumstances and upon approval by the dean a different exam location may be agreed.

§2. The public nature of written tests/exams is guaranteed by granting the student inspection of exam papers. In accordance with articles 145-147 of the present regulations, these exam papers are accessible to the public for a period of five days following the announcement of results and may be inspected in the examiner's office or at another location of which adequate notice has been given. The examiner shall retain the written copies for 1 year.

#### **Article 114 (Exam format)**

§1. Exams are either oral or written.

The examination form is mentioned in the course files.

An exemption is granted for course files for which no titular has been appointed by the IES or the University by the start of the academic year. In this case, a request for update of the course file needs to arrive at the IES Executive Board no later than one month after the appointment. Students are then informed of the form of examination through email.

§2. Students shall be given educationally adequate feedback upon their request. Students are entitled to feedback on their test and written exam results from the end of the exam period to five days after the formal announcement of results at the most (expiry date).

§3. Optional oral continuation shall only be possible for programme sections that are part of the first year full-time set programme of a bachelor course.

#### **Article 115 (Deviation from the standard exam format)**

§1. Three weeks before the start of the exam period at the latest (expiry date), a student may request of the Chairman of the examination board that he deviate from the proposed format of an examination prescribed for one or more programme units, provided there are weighty reasons for doing so.

In exceptional circumstances it may be decided to deviate from the period and/or type of grounds prescribed.

§2. The Chairman of the examination board shall inform the dean and the lecturer(s) responsible for the programme units concerned of the deviation granted.

§3. Reflex students must submit their requests for derogation from the proposed examination format to the Study Guidance Centre at least three weeks (expiry date) before the start of the examination period.

#### **Article 116 (Failure to report or termination of participation)**

If a student fails to report for an examination period or ceases participation he shall inform the Faculty Administrative Secretary in writing and without delay who shall subsequently inform the Chairman and members of the examination board.

### **Article 117 (Irregularities)**

**§1.** In the event that an examiner suspects a student of having committed an irregularity during a test, exam or other form of assessment, the academic staff member shall report this to the dean in writing and without delay. When an examiner, or other individual with supervisory authority, notes that a student is involved in irregular activities during an exam, they will inform the student accordingly and may interrupt the current examination of the student in question, where applicable following confiscation of the contested material and previously produced copy.

The tasks of the Dean described in Art. 117§1 are taken up within the IES by the programme director.

**§2.** An irregularity is defined as any behaviour by a student in an examination setting which renders partially or wholly impossible a proper assessment of their own knowledge, understanding and/or skills or those of other students (or attempts to do so). Plagiarism is also an irregularity in the context of this article. Plagiarism is understood to mean the use of other people's phrasing, adapted or otherwise, without careful acknowledgement of sources as well as any form of fraud that is a violation of scientific integrity. The VUB reserves the right to check for plagiarism using any means it deems appropriate for this purpose.

**§3.** If the suspicion is substantiated the dean shall decide, possibly after consultation with the Chairman of the examination board, on whether disciplinary action is to be imposed against the student. This decision shall be communicated to the student by registered letter. The student may continue to take exams pending the dean's decision.

At the IES, the Academic Director decides about applying eventual disciplinary measures, after consultation with the respective programme director.

**§4.** The student involved has a right to be heard prior to any decision being taken. The faculty ombudsperson shall be invited to be present. The student has inspection of the files and is allowed counsel during the interrogation.

**§5.** The following disciplinary sanctions may be taken by the dean:

- awarding zero marks for the exam or paper of the given programme unit or part thereof;
- exclusion from examination period: awarding no marks for any exams in the given examination period;
- rejection: the student can no longer participate in exams during the current academic year. He may not re-enrol until the following academic year at the earliest and loses all marks already obtained in the examination period in dispute;
- exclusion from the institute: termination of the student's enrolment for the current academic year with immediate effect and being prohibited from enrolling for the following academic year.

**§6.** In determining the gravity of the offence and the punishment imposed the following aspects, among others, are taken into account:

- nature and scale of the irregularity/plagiarism committed;
- the student's experience;

- whether or not the deceit was intentional.

**§7.** Within five calendar days (the expiry period which starts from the day following the day on which a student has received notification of the decision) students may lodge an appeal with the Chairman of the body of appeal concerned. The internal appeal procedure leads to one of the following outcomes:

- dismissal of the appeal, stating full reasons, by the Chairman of the body of appeal concerned based on its inadmissibility;
- a decision by the body of appeal reached in extraordinary session which either confirms or revises the original decision, stating full reasons.

The student has the right to be heard.

**§8.** In the event of an appeal the dean's decision as stipulated in § 5 of this article shall be deferred until the body of appeal has reached its decision regarding the established irregularity.

**§9.** The decision under §7 shall be communicated to the student involved within a period of fifteen calendar days from the day after the day on which the appeal was lodged. The decision shall be communicated to the Rector and the central Ombudsperson.

**§10.** Appeals against a decision under §7 may be lodged with the Arbitration Board regarding study progress decisions, as described in article 156.

## **Chapter V - Master's thesis**

### **Article 118 (Subject, supervisor, assessors)**

**§1.** A Master's thesis is a compulsory part of any Master's course. With regard to Master's theses individual faculties shall determine in their supplementary faculty teaching and examination regulations when students are to provide the dean with the following:

- the subject of their Master's thesis;
- the signature of their Master's thesis supervisor as approval of the subject;
- an outline of their objective and method as appropriate.

For the Master-after-Master programmes of the IES, the subject and promoter (and eventual co-promoter) need to be submitted at the programme secretariat before 15 November. The respective programme boards assess the proposals and approve the promoters in their first meeting after 15 November. If the student gives none, the programme board decides on the subject and/or the promoter.

**§2.** A full list of Master's theses stating subjects and supervisors shall be submitted for approval before the start of the winter break. In the supplementary faculty teaching and examination regulations the qualified body will be designated. Not later than by 1 May the faculty shall appoint two assessors in addition to each supervisor.

At the IES, the list of master dissertations, bearing the subjects and the promoters, is approved by the Executive Board. Before 1 May, the programme board appoints, next to the promoter, a minimum of one additional reader.

**§3.** A thesis supervisor must be a senior academic staff member ("ZAP"), postdoc research assistant or assistant professor or another member of the academic staff who is holder of a doctorate. As a general rule, assessors are members of academic staff from



within the VUB. The faculty may decide to appoint one external expert as assessor.

Each member of the ZAP, each doctoral assistant and each teaching professor linked to the IES or to the faculties RC or ES can act as promoter.

A co-promoter may be suggested. The choice of a co-promoter needs to be motivated by the student or the programme board. Co-promoters may be:

- Other ZAP members of the VUB
- A ZAP member, external to the VUB
- An emeritus of the VUB
- A non-ZAP member holding a PhD
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Readers may be ZAP, AAP or BAP members, provided they have seniority of more than one year on 1 May of the current academic year. The co-promoter is regarded as an extra reader.

The programme boards may also appoint external experts as readers.

### **Article 119 (Changes)**

§1. Subject changes, a change of supervisor at the student's initiative or dereliction of duty on the part of the supervisor shall be reported to the dean in writing stating full reasons.

Within the IES, changes of topic or supervisor by the student, or renouncement of the promotership by a promoter need to be motivated and requested in writing and submitted to the programme director, via [student.secretariat@ies.be](mailto:student.secretariat@ies.be). Each change of subject and/or promoter has to be submitted by the programme director at least 45 days prior to the delivery date of the Master thesis. This change needs to be accompanied by the agreement of the promoter. In case of the change of promoter, the previous promoter acknowledges the change in writing.

§2. In accordance with the provisions of article 118, with the exception of the deadlines specified as appropriate, a new subject shall be chosen and/or another supervisor appointed.

### **Article 120 (Supervisor)**

A supervisor undertakes to supervise the student on a regular basis, while the student undertakes to keep his supervisor informed of the research progress made. In the event of non-observance a student or a supervisor may report this circumstance to the dean in writing. The dean shall subsequently come to a decision which may lead to a change of supervisor or annulment of a supervisor's duties toward a student and shall report this circumstance to the Faculty Council.

### **Article 121 (Submission date)**

Annually by 15 August of the calendar year in which the academic year is due to commence, the faculty shall determine the dates for submission of Master's theses. A Master's thesis shall be submitted electronically and on paper in a minimum of four and a maximum of ten copies.

4 copies (5 if there is a co-promoter) of the master thesis needs to be handed in, to the IES programme secretariat before 29 April (or the first working day after 29 April) for the

first sitting, and before the last working day prior to 15 August for the second sitting. Proof of receipt is delivered to the student. Students who wish to invoke Article 130 and wish to finalise their study at the end of the first examination period, need to deliver their thesis by the latest on 15 December (or the first working day after 15 December). The Master thesis also needs to be sent electronically to [student.secretariat@ies.be](mailto:student.secretariat@ies.be).

#### **Article 122 (Submission format)**

§1. The Master's thesis must be submitted both in writing and in electronic form. In the supplementary faculty regulations, it is determined if along with their Master's thesis students shall submit a publishable summary as well as an abstract to be included in the common listings of theses as published in Belgian journals.

§2. The supplementary faculty regulations may stipulate that a master's thesis cannot be published in extraordinary circumstances.

Each copy of the master thesis needs to be accompanied by a one-page summary in the language of the master thesis. This text will not be added to the list of theses for Belgian journals.

Students also need to upload their master thesis to the anti-plagiarism server, put at their disposal by the IES/VUB. They need to deliver printed proof thereof to the IES programme secretariat.

All research material has to remain consultable until after the proclamation, and needs to be delivered to the IES programme secretariat upon the request of one of the readers. Therefore, it needs to be kept and presented in an orderly fashion.

§3. Responsibility for showing that their research materials are authentic lies with the students.

#### **Article 123 (Assessment)**

§1. Without prejudice to the provisions of §2 a supervisor and assessors shall discuss, assess and mark a Master's thesis.

§2. In the event that the regulations do not call for a public oral thesis defence, students are allowed access, if desired, to their supervisor's and assessors' full report and awarded marks. On the basis of the report students may decide to request an oral public defence of their thesis with the supervisor and assessors involved. The marks awarded shall be communicated to the student concerned.

The master thesis in the LL.M. International and European Law needs to be defended orally. Minimum three days before the oral defence, the student receives the reports of the promoter and the readers. The obtained result is made public after the deliberation of the defence.

There is no oral defence of the Master thesis for students of the MSc. European Integration and Development. The obtained result (i.e. the figure derived from the assessments of the promoter and the readers) will be made public *ad valvas*. Students who wish to defend their thesis orally may request this to the Programme Director no later than three days after the publication of the results.

§3. On the basis of a report stating full reasons a public oral thesis defence may be imposed on the student concerned.

§4. In the event that the regulations call for a public oral thesis defence, the supplementary faculty regulations shall stipulate whether the student is to receive a qualitative assessment prior to the defence.

§5. The supplementary faculty regulations can provide for a procedure to depart from the public nature of the oral defence. The decision to abolish the public nature of the defence must at all times be justified by extraordinary circumstances.

§6. The supplementary faculty regulations can provide for a procedure to replace a promoter or assessor when he cannot attend the oral defence due to circumstances beyond his control.

If the promoter or if one of the readers cannot attend the oral defence, they need to appoint another AP-member to represent them during the defence. They will present the name of their replacement to the IES programme secretariat no later than three days before the oral defence.

#### **Article 124 (Reports)**

The reports drawn up by supervisors and assessors shall be made available to the members of the examination board three calendar days before the day on which the examiners' meeting is due to take place. The reports shall be accessible during the meeting.

#### **Article 125 (Supervision by several institutions)**

In the event of a Master's thesis supervised jointly by two or more institutions the procedures governing the joint supervision shall be specified in their co-operation agreement.

### **Chapter VI - Examination boards**

#### **Article 126 (Examination board types)**

§1. For all Bachelor's and Master's courses, the specific teacher training programme and postgraduate programmes an examination board shall be set up for the programme in its entirety (examination board for the programme in its entirety).

§2. For all Bachelor's courses an examination board shall be set up for students enrolled under a diploma contract or an exam contract with a view to obtaining a degree or programme certificate for the first year of a full-time standard learning path in a Bachelor's programme (examination board for the first year of a full-time standard learning path in a Bachelor's programme).

§3. Additionally, a Progress Committee shall be set up for all Bachelor's and Master's courses.

§4. For all transition and preparation programmes an examination board shall be set up.

#### **Article 127 (Composition)**

§1. Prior to the start of the academic year, the Faculty Council shall determine the composition of the various examination boards and progress committees *ad nominatim*. It also determines the appointment of deputies.

Each year, the Executive Board of the IES decides *ad nominatim* on the composition of the Examination and Study Track Commissions.

**§2.** The composition of an examination board shall be representative and comprise at least six members who are qualified to vote, unless the total number of examiners is lower. For a valid decision to be reached over a student a minimum of half of the board members must take part in the deliberations.

**§3.** Faculty ombudspersons cannot be a member of an exam commission with entitlement to vote. Where an ombudsperson would like to participate in the exam commission as a member with entitlement to vote, they will have to be replaced by their faculty replacement during the deliberation process. To this end the faculties shall incorporate appropriate regulations in their supplementary faculty teaching and examination regulations.

#### **Article 128 (Chairman and secretary)**

**§1.** Prior to the start of the academic year, the Faculty Council shall appoint a chairman and a secretary for each examination board/progress committee as well as deputies for both positions. The dean shall announce their names to the faculty ombudsperson.

**§2.** The name of the chairman of the examination board/progress committee is posted on the official notice boards throughout the academic year.

#### **Article 129 (Participation with advisory vote)**

The following persons may participate in the meetings of an examination board with an advisory vote:

- the dean, who may attend and chair all examination board meetings in his faculty;
- a Master's thesis supervisor;
- the faculty ombudsperson;
- the faculty administrative secretary or administrative staff member(s) appointed by the dean in charge of making preparations for examiners' meetings, as well as learning path supervisors.
- [The programme secretariat or administrative coordinator;](#)
- [IES Management;](#)
- [The Deans of the faculties RC and ES;](#)

### **Chapter VII - Proceedings at examiners' meetings and study progress based on exams**

#### **Section 1: Proceedings at examiners' meetings**

##### **Article 130 (Examiners' meetings)**

Each examination board meets at least twice during the academic year. The first meeting discusses the exam results from the first and the second blocks of exams. The second meeting discusses the resit results. Only for students in their final year an examiners' meeting may be held at the end of the first block of exams in the examination period, in accordance with the procedures laid down in the supplementary faculty teaching and examination regulations.

[The deliberation at the end of the first examination period of the first session can be organised for students of the academic year who:](#)

- 1) Only have exams remaining from courses of the first semester;
- 2) Only need to finalise their master thesis

The student who wishes to seize this opportunity needs to request this in writing, submitted to the Programme Director before 1 November.

#### **Article 131 (Proceedings at examiners' meetings)**

The examination board Secretary shall record in the meeting minutes the proceedings of the examination board during the examiners' meeting. The minutes, signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the examination board, shall be available to the Rector and the faculty Ombudsperson.

#### **Article 132 (Attendance)**

Their presence at the examiners' meeting and the signing of the examination sheet is obligatory for all voting members of the examination board. Legitimate absence shall be reported in advance to the Chairman of the examination board or the dean.

In the event of exceptional circumstances an examiners' meeting may be held by electronic means.

#### **Article 133 (Voting)**

The examination board is a sovereign entity and operates as a collegial body. A decision regarding a given student is reached by majority vote. In the event of a tied vote the decision shall be to the advantage of the student. Each member has one vote only irrespective of the number of programme units examined under his responsibility. Members of the examination board abstain from participating in an examiners' meeting when relatives up to the fourth degree of kin are under discussion.

Every examination board member entitled to vote may request for a secret vote to be held.

#### **Article 134 (Confidentiality)**

The members of the examination board and all those present at an examiners' meeting by virtue of their office are bound to guarantee the confidentiality of the discussions.

### **Section 2: Study progress based on exams**

#### **Article 135 (Exam result)**

§1. For each programme unit one exam result is awarded. An exam result has the form of a whole number between 0 and 20. An exam result is calculated in accordance with the method set out in the course description.

§2 An exam result calculated according to §1 shall be rounded down for decimals < (less than) 0.5 and rounded up decimals ≥ (more than or equal to) 0.5.

#### **Article 136 (Passing a programme unit)**

§1. Students shall acquire credit certificates for each programme unit passed. The pass mark for a programme unit is 10 out of 20. A credit certificate is supplied only once at the request of a student. Students may not relinquish a credit certificate once acquired.

§2. A credit certificate has unlimited validity for the programme and within the institution where it was acquired.

§3. A refresher programme may only be imposed if a minimum of five calendar years has expired since acquiring a particular credit certificate. The five-year period is

calculated from the first day of the month of October following the month in which the credit certificate was acquired.

#### **Article 137 (Programme unit percentage)**

**§1.** In order to determine the percentage for the programme in its entirety all exam results obtained for a given programme unit under a diploma contract or exam contract shall be taken into account.

**§2.** Weighting of programme units shall be carried out with regard to the number of credits that may be obtained for a given programme unit, unless the faculty involved has specified a different weighting system prior to the start of the academic year.

**§3.** A percentage calculated according to §1 and §2 shall be rounded down for decimals < (less than) 0.5 and rounded up decimals  $\geq$  (more than or equal to) 0.5.

#### **Article 138 (Powers of examination board for programme in its entirety, Ba, Ma, teacher trainer, postgraduate courses)**

**§1.** The powers of an examination board for a programme in its entirety are the following:

1. Declaring whether or not a student has passed a programme in its entirety;
2. Determining any honours that may be awarded to a degree.
3. Imposing a study progress monitoring measure in accordance with article 84.

**§2.** A student shall be awarded a degree if he has been declared to have passed the entire programme (programme of study). A student shall have passed officially if all exams which form part of a programme have been taken and all exams have resulted in credit certificates, without prejudice to article 141.

**§3.** Individual deviations from these rules may be considered in exceptional circumstances provided that full reasons are stated.

**§4.** The examination board does not hold the power to adjust exam results at examiners' meetings, unless there has been a material mistake, a gross irregularity or an apparent injustice.

**§5.** In the event that a student is not declared to have passed he shall repeat all programme units where unsatisfactory marks were obtained.

#### **Article 139 (Honours)**

**§1.** The following honours shall be applied with regard to Bachelor's, Master's and teacher's degrees:

- a student has passed with merit if the average final result is less than 68%;
- a student has passed with distinction if the average final result is 68% or higher;
- a student has passed with great distinction if the average final result is 77% or higher;
- a student has passed with maximum distinction if the average final result is 85% or higher.

**§2.** Honours may only be awarded if a required minimum of credits has been obtained as part of the programme within the VUB. The minimum number of credits for a Bachelor's programme in this respect is 60 and for a Master's programme it is at least half of the total study load.

**§3.** Honours may only be awarded if a required minimum of credits has been obtained as part of the programme within the VUB. For the specific teacher training programme the minimum number of credits is at least half of the total study load.

#### **Article 140 (Committee powers in transition and preparation programmes)**

§1. A student shall have passed a transition or preparation programme when all exams have resulted in credit certificates.

§2. Individual deviations from these rules may be considered in exceptional circumstances provided that full reasons are stated.

§3. The examination board does not hold the power to adjust exam results at examiners' meetings, unless there has been a material mistake, a gross irregularity or an apparent injustice.

§4. The examination board is authorised to impose a study progress monitoring measure in accordance with article 84.

#### **Article 141 (Progress Committee powers)**

§1. The powers of the Progress Committee are as follows:

1. formulating a non-binding study recommendation following its assessment of a student's study progress based on the student's exam results;
2. adjusting exam results in the event of a material mistake, gross irregularity or an apparent injustice;
3. taking study progress monitoring measures as under article 84;

§2. The Progress Committee which is competent with regard to Master's courses in medicine has the additional power to decide whether a student who has completed the first year of a full-time standard learning path shall be admitted to a clinical internship.

#### **Article 142 (Powers of examination board for 1st year full-time standard learning path in Bachelor's programme)**

§1. The powers of an examination board for the first year of a full-time standard learning path in a Bachelor's programme are as follows:

1. determining which programme units must be repeated;
2. declaring whether or not a student has passed all the programme units required;
3. Imposing a study progress monitoring measure in accordance with article 84.

§2. A student shall have passed officially if all exams which form part of a programme have been taken and provided that:

1. all exams have resulted in credit certificates, or
2. an average result of 55% is obtained with a maximum of 3 points lower than 10/20 spread over a maximum of 2 programme units and no marks under 8/20. Students may only be declared to have passed or failed provided that exams have been taken in all those programme units which constitute the first year of the full-time standard learning path in a Bachelor's programme.

§3. Individual deviations from these rules may be considered in exceptional circumstances provided that full reasons are stated.

§4. The examination board does not hold the power to adjust exam results at examiners' meetings, unless there has been a material mistake, a gross irregularity or an apparent injustice.

§5. In the event that a student is not declared to have passed he shall repeat all programme units where unsatisfactory marks were obtained.

§6. Within the same academic year, a student can avail himself of a second exam opportunity if he is allowed to resit the exam. To this end, the student submits a written request to the faculty secretariat within a period of 5 calendar days from the day after

the announcement of the results. If the student registers for the second exam opportunity, the original result irrevocably becomes null and void and the new result obtained will be final. The previous deliberation result will be adjusted.

**Article 143 (Transferring several parts of the exam)**

In the event that several forms of tuition are indicated in the formal part of the course description which are to be assessed separately or in the event that the course description states that the exam comprises several parts, the description sheet shall include information as to whether it is possible to retain the results of such separate assessments/parts in a subsequent exam period and under which conditions this may be the case.

**Article 144 (Conversion of exam marks)**

In the event that a student, in accordance with articles 87-89 of these regulations, attends programme units at another institution the exams in these programme units shall be taken at the time and location specified by the hosting institution. Exam marks received from the other institution may be subject to conversion.

**Chapter VIII - Announcement of results**

**Article 145**

The exam and test results for the first block of exams of the examination period shall be announced to students at the latest during the 22nd week of the academic year.

**Article 146**

Following the examiners' meeting, the Chairman of the examination board, the dean or a member of the examination board appointed by them, shall publicly announce the examination board decision for the programme in its entirety. Announcement of exam results or decisions taken by another examination board or by the progress committee is governed by the procedures set down in the supplementary faculty regulations.

**Article 147**

Every student shall receive personally at his VUB email address his individual credits sheet stating exam scores for all programme units as discussed by the examination board, made available in the Students Self Service.



## **TITLE IV – Ombudspersons and appeal options**

### **Chapter I - Ombudspersons**

#### **Article 148 (Appointment and task description)**

**§1.** Prior to the start of the academic year and following consultation with the Education Board, the Vice-Rector for Education shall appoint a senior academic member of staff (“ZAP”) for each faculty and IDLO as ombudsperson in charge of complaints concerning examination matters. Each faculty has the option to use the same procedure to appoint a faculty replacement, who is only entitled to replace the faculty ombudsperson during deliberation sessions in which they act as a member with entitlement to vote in accordance with article 126. Simultaneously and by the same procedure a central ombudsperson shall be appointed as well as a deputy. The names of the faculty ombudspersons, the central ombudsperson and his deputy shall at least be posted on the VUB website throughout the academic year, along with their contact details and office hours.

The ombudspersons of the IES are, for the LL.M. International and European Law: the ombudsperson of the Faculty RC, and for the MSc. European Integration and Development: the ombudsperson of the Faculty ES.

**§2.** The powers of a faculty ombudsperson extend to receiving students’ complaints and comments concerning the following matters: exam schedule, exam proceedings, assessment of Master’s theses, outcome of examiners’ meetings, announcement of results, monitoring of study progress based on exams and obtaining credit certificates.

**§3.** The powers of the central ombudsperson extend to:

- taking action in the event of an appeal as under articles 153 and 154 of the present regulations;
- Receiving and dealing with students’ complaints and comments concerning: exam schedule, exam proceedings, assessment of Master’s theses, outcome of examiners’ meetings, announcement of results, monitoring of study progress based on exams and obtaining credit certificates, in the event that a faculty ombudsperson is a party involved thus compromising independence and impartiality, or in the event of absence of the faculty ombudsperson.

**§4.** The ombudsperson concerned (centrally or faculty appointed) shall at a student’s request mediate between the student and the dean, the Chairman of the examination board, members of academic staff and faculty secretaries with a view to achieving an amicable settlement of the complaint. Within three working days of receiving the complaint he shall propose an amicable settlement to the dean. The ombudsperson shall be informed of the definitive decision without delay.

#### **Article 149 (Reporting)**

Annually, before 15 November of the subsequent academic year, both the central and faculty ombudspersons shall report to the Vice-Rector for Education with details of their activities.

## **Chapter II - Appeal options**

### **Article 150 (Material mistakes)**

In the event that a material mistake is established following a study progress control measure, this circumstance shall be reported formally to the dean, within ten calendar days.

A mistake not resulting in a decision which is disadvantageous to the student shall be rectified by the dean. The correction shall be communicated to the student involved and adequately documented within the faculty.

In the event that the decision taken is disadvantageous to the student the mistake must be rectified by the body that took the original decision. If necessary, the latter will be convened by the dean as soon as possible. The correction shall be communicated to the student and should be appropriately documented in the faculty.

### **Article 151 (Decisions that can be appealed)**

Internal and external appeals can be made against the following study progress decisions pursuant to articles 153-154:

- a) examination decision, i.e. any decision, whether or not resulting from an examiners' meeting, entailing a final qualifying assessment for a programme unit, several programme units or a course/programme of study as a whole, in accordance with articles 138-142 of these regulations;
- b) disciplinary exam-related decision, i.e. a sanction imposed following an exam incident, as provided for in article 117 of these regulations;
- c) granting of an exemption, i.e. relieving a student of the obligation to take an exam in a particular programme unit or part thereof, in accordance with article 82 of these regulations;
- d) decision imposing a bridging and/or preparatory programme and at the same time laying down the study load of such a programme, in accordance with article 82 of these regulations;
- e) imposing a study progress monitoring measure, in accordance with article 84 of these regulations;
- f) refusing to include in the diploma contract a particular programme unit for which the student in an individual learning path has not previously enrolled, in accordance with articles 73-75 of these regulations;
- g) decision made by the board of an institution with regard to the equivalence of a foreign diploma, in accordance with article 60 of these regulations;
- h) decision whereby, for organisational reasons, no suitably adapted exam regulations are possible in the event of force majeure, in accordance with article 109 of these regulations. Students with disabilities may lodge an appeal against the refusal of the requested deviations, pursuant to article 155.

### **Article 152 (Composition internal appeal committee)**

Per faculty or per course, an appeal body is established which is authorised to take cognisance of all internal appeals lodged against the study progress decisions set forth in article 151 within the relevant faculty or course. The appeal body is, however, not authorised to take cognisance of appeals against a decision as set forth in article 151, h). The appeal body includes at least 3 senior academic staff (ZAP) members. A chairman is appointed from among the members of the appeal body. It also includes the administrative secretary who acts as the committee's secretary and has an advisory vote.

The following persons, with advisory vote, are also invited: the ombudsperson of the faculty, the learning path counsellor, and a representative of the Rector who has expert knowledge of teaching regulations.

In case of an internal appeal pursuant to article 151, paragraph 2, the members of the appeal body that were directly involved in the decision to refuse the requested deviations are replaced by their alternates.

The composition of the appeal body will be specified in the supplementary faculty regulations.

The appeals commission for the IES Master-after-Master LL.M International and European Law is the appeals commission of the Faculty RC; the appeals commission for the IES Master-after-Master MSc. European Integration and Development is the appeals commission of the Faculty ES.

### **Article 153 (Internal appeal procedure with the exception of the decision on the new examination regulations)**

**§1.** In the event that a student or the person to whom the decision pertains is of the opinion that his rights have been infringed by a particular decision he may lodge an appeal with the Chairman of the body of appeal concerned. The appeal must be submitted within a period of five calendar days starting from the day following the official announcement of results, or in the absence of an official announcement of results, following the day of perusal of the results. The appeal shall be submitted to the faculty administrative secretariat.

**§2.** The appeal shall result in:

- a rejection of the appeal, stating full reasons, by the Chairman of the examination board on the basis of its inadmissibility;
- a decision by the body of appeal which either confirms or revises the original decision, stating full reasons.

The student or the person to whom the decision pertains has a right to be heard by the body of appeal.

**§3.** An appeal against the decision taken in accordance with §2 can be lodged with the Council for disputes pertaining to study progress decisions as described in article 156.

### **Article 154 (Internal appeal procedure new exam regulations)**

**§1.** The student is entitled to lodge an internal appeal with the dean against a decision pertaining to a new exam regulation as a result of Force Majeure taken in accordance with article 110, which the student considers a breach of rights. The appeal must be submitted within 5 calendar days of the day following the date on which the student was informed of the decision. Both the ombudsperson of the faculty and the administrative secretary can be present.

**§2.** The internal appeal procedure will result in:

- a substantiated rejection of the appeal on the basis of its inadmissibility;
- a decision made by the dean, which confirms or reviews the original decision with substantiation. The student has the right to be heard.

**§3.** The student will be informed of the decision in accordance with §2 within 15 (fifteen) calendar days of the day following the date on which the appeal was lodged. The decision will be reported to the central ombudsperson.

**§4.** An appeal against the decision taken in accordance with §2 can be lodged with the

Council for disputes pertaining to study progress decisions as described in article 156.

**Article 155 (Internal appeal procedure reasonably flexible deviation)**

§1. The student is entitled to lodge an internal appeal with the dean against a decision pertaining to the refusal of reasonably flexible deviation, which the student considers a breach of rights. The appeal must be submitted within 5 calendar days of the day following the date on which the student was informed of the decision. Both the ombudsperson of the faculty and the administrative secretary can be present.

§2. The internal appeal procedure will result in a motivated decision that is binding for everyone within the institution. The student has the right to be heard.

§3. The student will be informed of the decision in accordance with §2 within 15 (fifteen) calendar days of the day following the date on which the appeal was lodged. The decision will be reported to the central ombudsperson.

**Article 156 (External appeal procedure)**

§1. Within five calendar days of being informed of the decision under articles 117, 153 and 154, a student may lodge an appeal with the Council for disputes pertaining to study progress decisions (Address: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Departement Onderwijs, Raad voor Betwistingen van Studievoortgangsbeslissingen, Hendrik Consciencegebouw, Koning Albert II-laan 15, 1210 Brussels), established by the ministry of the Flemish Community. In the event that the fifth day is a Saturday, Sunday or national holiday the period shall be extended to the first working day on which postal services are resumed.

Appeals against decisions pertaining to the partial equivalence of foreign diplomas shall be submitted to the Council within a period of 30 days commencing on the day following perusal of the appeal body's final decision and at the latest on the thirty first day following the notification of the decision in question.

In the absence of a timely decision within the period defined in articles 117, 153 and 154, the appeal must be lodged with the Council within five calendar days of the expiry of this period, unless the internal appeal body notifies the student of a later date on which it will make a decision, before expiry of the period in which the appeal body must decide. Persons not yet registered can lodge an appeal against a decision pertaining to the partial equivalence of diplomas or a request to obtain an exemption on the basis of EVKs or a certificate of aptitude to the Council only once, if they have submitted a request of a similar nature to several institutions with a 4 year period. A second appeal of this nature shall be inadmissible.

§2. Appeals shall be lodged in the form of a petition presenting at least a factual description of the objections invoked.

The request shall be dated and, on pain of being declared inadmissible, it shall be signed by the petitioner or his advisor.

§3. A formal request shall include:

1° the petitioner's name and address. In the event that the address given is that of the petitioner's advisor this fact shall be stated in the petition;

2° the name and seat of the governing body;

3° the subject of the appeal.

§4. The petition shall be sent by registered post to the Council for decisions regarding study progress. At the same time, a copy of the petition shall be sent by registered post to the governing body (the Rector or his representative). The postmark date shall count as the date of appeal.

**§5.** The petitioner may include in his petition any pieces of evidence he considers necessary. Subsequently, the petitioner may only add supplementary pieces of evidence to the dossier insofar as these were unknown to the petitioner at the time of drafting the petition. In such a case the petitioner shall provide the governing body with the supplementary pieces of evidence without delay. The pieces of evidence shall be bundled together by the petitioner and inventoried.

**§6.** A petition which has been declared inadmissible may be replaced by a new petition during the term of appeal provided that this states explicitly that the previous petition has been withdrawn.

**§7.** The decision taken by the Council for decisions regarding study progress shall be announced within 15 calendar days following the day on which the appeal was entered in the register of incoming appeals. For appeals against a decision pertaining to the equivalence of diplomas, the decision shall be rendered within a directory time limit of thirty calendar days.

## **TITLE V – Transitional and concluding provisions**

### **Article 157 (Additions to central regulations)**

Each faculty council may supplement the present teaching and examination regulations with the special stipulations and conditions determined in the present regulations. Faculty supplementary regulations are subject to approval by the Education Board.

### **Article 158 (Deviations from central regulations)**

**§1.** Following consultation with the Education Board, each faculty – at the proposal of its faculty council – may request the Board of Governors for permission to apply deviations from the rules in articles 5 and 118 §2 and §3 of the general regulations. Following consultation with the Education Board, the Board of Governors shall determine the duration of any deviations admitted. For postgraduate programmes it may be decided to deviate from the provisions of the present regulations, in view of their inherent specific character,

**§2.** The IR faculty can request a deviation from articles 127, 138§2 and 139§1 of the central teaching and examination regulations for the BRUFACE masters via the procedure described in §1.

### **Article 159 (Changes)**

Any alterations to the present regulations shall be made solely by decision of the Board of Governors following consultation with the faculty councils, the Student Council and the Education Board.

### **Article 160 (IDLO powers)**

With respect to the teacher training course, the powers which under the present regulations are assigned to the dean fall to the Chairman of the IDLO Departmental Council. With respect to the teacher training course, the powers which under the present regulations are assigned to the Faculty Council shall fall to the Departmental Council. Faculty, as far as the teacher training programme is concerned, shall be replaced by IDLO. The powers assigned to the faculty ombudsperson in these regulations shall, as far as the teacher training programme is concerned, be exercised by the IDLO ombudsperson.

### **Article 161 (integration of academic higher-education courses)**

These regulations apply in full to academic higher-education programme students who transfer to the university in the 2013-2014 academic year.

**Article 162 (Transitional provisions)**

**§1.** European Economic Area (EEA) students who sign up during the 2013-2014 academic year with a view to enrolling in the 2014-2015 academic year must also satisfy the language skills criteria set out in Article 42.

**§2.** Students granted permission to enrol in the 2012-2013 academic year pursuant to Article 85 §2 of the 2012-2013 Teaching and Examinations Regulations, may reapply for the 2013-2014 academic year.

**Article 163 (Transitional measure)**

These regulations shall come into force as from the 2013-2014 academic year.