

DIR Directive on Distance Learning and Online Exams

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1. Objective

In cases where classroom teaching and on-campus exams are not possible, this directive is intended to provide instructions for holding distance learning courses and distance-mode exams if this is necessary due to COVID-19.

2. Scope

This text is aimed at faculty and students.

2.1. Material and temporal scope

The regulations specified in the Examination Regulations of WU (Vienna University of Economics and Business) remain unaffected. This directive applies to distance learning courses and distance-mode exams during the period from October 1, 2021, until September 30, 2022, in addition to the Examination Regulations.

2.2. General premises

This directive is adopted based on the Regulations on the Conduct of Courses and Exams During the COVID-19 Period issued by the Rector's Council, pursuant to § 76a of the Universities Act 2002 (*Universitätsgesetz*). In classroom teaching, the requirements communicated by the Vice-Rector for Infrastructure and Digitalization and/or the Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs must be observed, e.g. distancing, safety, and room occupancy regulations. Depending on epidemiological developments, changes to these regulations may be announced by posting a notice.

3. Regulations

3.1. Courses

In addition to classroom teaching mode, courses may also be held in (partial) distance learning mode. For (full or partial) distance learning, it is recommended to conduct courses via tools provided by WU, e.g. MyLEARN, Zoom, Moodle, and Microsoft Teams.

The following options for distance-learning teaching designs can be used:

1. Distance mode (synchronous or asynchronous): Courses with more than 65 participants must always be conducted in distance mode. Any exceptions from this rule require the approval of the Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs.
2. Synchronous hybrid mode: The course is held in the classroom for a part of the students. At the same time, the course is also streamed online for all students who cannot be present on campus.

3. Rotation mode: Periods of classroom teaching are divided between two or more groups of students. In this mode, the instructor holds all the classes of the course on campus, but with alternating student groups. Content that cannot be taught in on-campus classes must be studied by the students independently.
4. Combinations of the modes described in items 1 through 3, under the condition that no more than 65 participants must be physically present in the classroom. Any exceptions from this rule require the approval of the Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs.

The following **minimum requirements** apply for courses taught in distance-learning formats:

- The character of the course in question, as specified in the Examination Regulations of WU, must remain unchanged.
- In principle, the applicable attendance requirements remain in effect, but they can be modified to accommodate the respective course design.
- In the case of student absences due to important reasons (e.g. a quarantine order, illness confirmed by a physician, membership in a COVID-19 high-risk group confirmed by a physician pursuant to the Government Ordinance on COVID-19 High-Risk Groups [*COVID-19-Risikogruppe-Verordnung*], Federal Law Gazette II no. 203/2020), it must still be possible for the student to complete the course successfully despite the absences.

3.2. Examinations

If examinations are held in distance mode, it must be ensured that the examination in question is conducted properly. The following **requirements** must be adhered to:

1. The examiner and the student must have access to appropriate technical infrastructure. All parties involved in the examination are responsible for making sure that they have access to the required technical infrastructure.
2. The identity of the student must be verified.
3. WU is also obligated to implement appropriate technical and organizational measures for ensuring that the students work on the exam independently and without outside help.
4. The exam must be documented in an examination report. Upon request, the student must be given electronic access to the examination report. This does not apply to multiple choice questions and the corresponding answer options.

Examinations with more than 400 participants must always be held in distance mode. Any ex-

ceptions from this rule require the approval of the Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs. The following **exam types** are available for holding examinations in distance mode:

1. Written online exams
2. Oral online exams
3. Remote take-home exams

3.2.1. Written online exams

Written online exams are held on MyLEARN. Written online exams held by the WU Executive Academy take place on Moodle. A laptop computer or PC is required for taking a written online exam. A microphone and an integrated camera or webcam must be available on the examinee's computer if the exam is subject to online exam supervision. Further information on written online exams shall be provided on the web page "[Written online exams on MyLEARN](#)" and on Moodle.

The exam will be **graded** if following requirements are met:

1. The student has uploaded a photo for identification before the start of the exam (if required)
2. The student has confirmed the examination statement
3. Automated online exam supervision is functional throughout the exam (if required)

By confirming the examination statement, the student also confirms receipt of the examination, which means that the **exam attempt will be counted**.

3.2.2. Oral online exams

Oral online exams are held using software for synchronous live communication (e.g. Microsoft Teams). Further information on oral online exams shall be provided on the web page "[Oral Examinations](#)."

The **student's identity is confirmed** via webcam based on their student ID card or an official photo ID.

The student shall be informed of the **result** of an oral examination immediately after the examination. If the student has failed the examination, reasons for the failure shall be stated.

The requirement that oral examinations must be **public** is met if the examinee is entitled to have at least one other person attend the exam, if necessary via electronic means.

3.2.3. Remote take-home exams

Remote take-home exams are written online examinations where students can freely structure the allotted exam time within a predefined time frame. Further information on remote take-home exams must be provided on the web page "[Remote Take-Home Exams.](#)"

The predefined time frame must be longer than the allotted exam time. It is recommended to set a time frame ranging between 6 and 48 hours. If an examination statement is required, the statement must be confirmed when the exam is submitted in order for the exam to be graded and counted as an examination attempt.

3.3. Premature termination and cheating

3.3.1. Premature termination of exams

If a student terminates the exam prematurely, the exam attempt shall not be counted if the student was unable to continue the exam due to **technical malfunctions** (e.g. loss of internet connection). This provision only applies if it is plausible and credible that the student was forced to terminate the exam for such reasons and if he or she reported the difficulties to the person responsible for the exam without delay.

Exams may be graded even if technical problems occurred, as long as there are no doubts that the exam in question reflects the student's independent work. In such cases, the student must contact the person responsible for the exam within 24 hours after the end of the exam and explicitly request that the exam be graded. The allotted exam time shall not be extended if technical difficulties occur.

3.3.2. Cheating

The persons responsible for the exam must **inform the students about the permissible or unauthorized aids** for the exam (e.g. cell phones, unauthorized study materials, presence of other people during the exam, spoken consultations with other people, headphones, copying) by the start of the exam at the latest.

If an examinee uses unauthorized aids or attempts to cheat, the exam must be marked correspondingly and **counted as a lost examination attempt**. All students involved in the cheating attempt shall be **excluded** from re-registering for and attempting to take all exams in the subject concerned for a period of four months.

3.4. Jurisdiction

The conduct of courses in remote and distance-learning formats requires the approval of the Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs (§ 28a [1] of the By-Laws of WU). The

Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs can give orders and instructions to course instructors and the persons responsible for conducting the exams to ensure the proper conduct of academic activities.

4. Legal basis

§ 22 (1) of the By-Laws of WU:

(1) The Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs is responsible for deciding on all matters of organizing and evaluating courses and exams unless a law or these By-Laws expressly state(s) that another body or officer of the university is competent in that respect. The Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs has the following tasks, in particular:

1. Coordinating the activities of the academic directors and the unit area coordinators
2. Giving assignments to department chairs and institute heads, if applicable, to have teaching obligations fulfilled by the teaching staff of the department in accordance with the target agreements
3. If required, giving instructions to individual members of the teaching staff to ensure that their teaching obligations are fulfilled in the case of deficiencies or emergency situations
4. Giving teaching assignments at the proposal of, or after a hearing with, the relevant academic directors, unit area coordinators, and departments
5. Filing applications to reform curricula to the Senate

Implementing study regulations and academic legislation as a first instance pursuant to § 23

§ 28a (1) of the By-Laws of WU:

(1) Teaching courses in the form of distance learning courses requires the approval of the Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs.

§ 5 (6) of the Examination Regulations of WU:

(6) The Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs shall be entitled to specify details regarding the administration of examinations in a directive.

§ 9 (1) of the Examination Regulations of WU:

(1) Before the start of each semester, course instructors shall indicate in the course syllabi the prerequisites for each course, the types of performance components required, and how these performance components are weighted in the calculation of the final grade (in percent), and the assessment criteria, including any authorized aids. [...]

§ 73 (1) and (2) of the Universities Act 2002 (*Universitätsgesetz 2002*):

(1) The assessment shall be annulled by an official notification of the officer responsible for study matters if

1. in the case of an examination, the latter was registered for under false pretences;
2. in the case of an examination, academic thesis and artistic submission, the assessment was obtained by fraudulent means, in particular by the use of unauthorized aids.

(2) An examination, the result of which is annulled, shall count towards the number of repetitions.

§ 76a of the Universities Act 2002:

In the case of examinations held using electronic means of communication, the correct conduct of the examinations must be ensured. In addition to the general regulations for examinations, the following minimum requirements also apply in such cases:

1. The standards that the students' electronic devices must meet in order to participate in the examinations in question must be announced before the start of the semester.
2. Appropriate technical and organizational measures must be implemented for ensuring that the students work on the examination independently and without outside help.
3. In the event of technical problems that are not the student's fault, the examination must be aborted, and the examination attempt shall not be counted towards the permissible number of attempts.

§ 79 of the Universities Act 2002:

(1) Appeals against the academic judgment of examiners shall be impermissible. If the manner in which an examination resulting in a negative assessment is conducted exhibits severe defects, the officer responsible for study matters shall, by official notification, annul the examination on application of the student. The student must make the application within two weeks of announcement of the assessment and substantiate the alleged severe defects. Examinations which are annulled shall not be counted towards the permissible number of resits.

[...]

(3) If the assessment documents (in particular, examiners' reports, and corrected written examinations and assessment papers) are not surrendered to the student, steps shall be taken to ensure that they are held in safekeeping for at least six months after announcement of the result.

(4) The examiners or the chairpersons of examination boards shall ensure that examinations are conducted in an orderly manner, and shall make records of examinations. Such records shall include the subject of the examination, the place and time thereof, the name of the examiner or examination board members, the name of the student, the questions asked, the assessment grades awarded, the reasons for a negative assessment and any unusual occurrences. The reasons for a negative assessment shall be communicated to the student in writing on application of the same. The examination record shall be held in safekeeping for at least one year.

(5) Students shall be permitted to have inspection of the assessment documents and the examination records, provided that they make such requests within six months of the announcement of examination results. The assessment documents shall also include the examination questions asked at the respective examination. Students shall be entitled to make photocopies of these documents. Multiple-choice questions including their answers shall be excluded from the right to make photocopies.

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