Rules for Conducting Exams in the Spring Semester 2021

OBJECTIVE AND DEFINITION

The rules have been drawn up as a result of students and staff without critical functions being sent home from Aalborg University (hereafter AAU) on Friday, 11th December 2020. On Monday, 22nd March 2021, a majority in the Danish Parliament adopted a plan to reopen the Danish society. The plan also includes a partial reopening of universities to students after Easter, according to certain guidelines. Against this background, the Executive Management has decided on the physical organisation of teaching and examination activities after the 12th April 2021. The decisions of the Executive Management are described in "Notat vedrørende udmøntning af direktionens beslutninger vedrørende genåbning for aktiviteter for studerende efter 12. april 2021" (only available in Danish).

As a result of the partial reopening, the Dean may allow examinations to be conducted with physical attendance. The exams in the spring semester 2021 can thus be conducted both physically and digitally.

As a result of the partial reopening of the campus, the Strategic Council for Education has also decided that students may be allowed to sit in the same room during digital oral group examinations. This means that from 12th April 2021, the examiner can allow students to sit together during digital oral group exams.

The rules apply to all programmes at AAU and aim to ensure that the examinations in the spring semester 2021 are conducted online in a responsible manner that complies with applicable rules.

The rules apply to digital exams that are conducted until and including 31st August 2021.

The rules are intended to support the solutions to be found in a situation which must be considered as force majeure. There is ongoing collaborations among the universities on the handling of exams in the spring semester, which may give rise to continuous updating of the rules when deemed necessary. The rules are a supplement to the Examination Order.
1.0 Conducting oral exams digitally

As a result of students and staff without critical functions being sent home from AAU on 11th December 2020, the majority of the ordinary exams in the spring semester 2021 will be conducted digitally.

AAU provides some programs to run the digital exams. The Study Board may decide 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(s) during the examination. Therefore, the exam must be conducted with camera. It is the examiner’s responsibility to ensure that the conditions for the examination are met. If the examiner assesses that the conditions for the exam are not met, the examiner must discontinue the examination and the student will use an examination attempt. The student is awarded the lowest possible rating (-3 or not passed).

Oral exams can be conducted both individually and in groups. At group exams, students must sit in each of their own room. However, the examiner may allow several students to sit in the same room during oral group exams.

The Study Board decides what safety measures the student must meet during the oral examination. For example, the student may be required to present the room in which the student sits before the examination begins. As a minimum measure, students who participate in an oral examination must complete and submit a solemn declaration prior to the exam. The Study Board decides the deadline for completing the solemn declaration. This applies regardless of whether the solemn declaration is to be submitted by e-mail or in the Digital Exam System.

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 participate in the exam. In this case, the student uses an examination attempt and receives the grade "not assessed". The Study Board may grant an exemption from the stipulated deadline if there are special circumstances.

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 impact of the interruptions on the examination and, on
that basis, decide how much extra time the student or students should be allocated. If the assessors assess that the examination cannot be carried out due to technical issues, the exam may be held at different time.

Audio and/or photo or video recordings are not permitted during digital examinations, unless these are part of the examination itself. The recording is then done by AAU.

The assessors must (in the same way as physical exams) take notes on the examination process (including any technical issues), the performance and the grading process for the handling of any complaint. The notes must be kept for at least one year, and in addition to this, until any complaint is closed.

The Study Board must inform students about how the digital oral examination is conducted as soon as possible and no later than 14 days before the exam is held. However, the Study Board may override that time limit if there are special circumstances, such as new announcements of closure of the university. In these cases, the time limit can be overridden, but students must be informed of how the exam is conducted as soon as possible.

2.0 Conducting written exams digitally

The Study Board must decide whether scheduled on-site exams can be conducted as digital exams at the student's home, whether the form of examination should be changed or whether the exam, upon application to the Dean, can be conducted physically. If the examination is conducted as a digital exam at the student's home, the students must access the assignment from home and the student must submit in the Digital Exam System at the end of the exam.

The Study Board is responsible for ensuring that there are adequate safety measures if the exam is conducted digitally. The Study Boards should be aware that it is not possible to invigilate whether students use aids that are not permitted if the exam is conducted as an exam in the student's home.

The department may have examinations which they consider to be conducted most appropriately by physical attendance. These exams may be conducted physically on campus after the dean's approval.

Students who participate in a written on-site exam digitally must as a minimum measure complete and submit a solemn declaration prior to the exam. The Study Board decides when to submit the solemn declaration.

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 exam at home. If the student does not submit the solemn declaration on time, the student will not be able to participate in the exam. In this case, the student uses an examination attempt and receives the grade "not assessed".

The Study Boards must conduct digital exams at home 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. An exemption from the current curriculum must be applied for if the Study Board wants to conduct an exam in a different way than described in the curriculum. It is Educational Law that process 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 consultation 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 is assigned to them on the spot.

In these cases, the Study Boards have two options: They can apply the Dean to conduct the exam physically, or they may apply for an exemption to change the form of examination. The students continue to 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 on-site 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 may decide for itself 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 students for the examination. It is also possible to exempt, so that a written examination is instead be carried out as an oral examination if it is deemed academically meaningful.

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

Finally, the Study Board may apply for exemption from the exam format if the exam form 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 converted from physical to digital lectures.

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

#### 3.1.1 Special exam conditions

The approval of a change of exam format may have an impact on students with physical or mental impairments. These students may need to apply for new or other special exam conditions in order 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 in progress 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 participate in the oral examination. Firstly, 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 individual students on the basis of the written assignment alone. Secondly, 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 individual conduct of oral examinations on the basis of a joint project report. The Pro-dean has the possibility to approve an application for exemption 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 based on e.g. technical issues cannot be accepted, as the systems provided by the University support the conduct of oral group exams digitally.

3.2 Exemption from prerequisites for participating in exams

Some Study Boards have set prerequisites for students to participate in the exams. For example, students must participate actively in the lectures, or students must submit physical assignments or models on an ongoing basis in order to attend the exam.

Initially, 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, it may be by applying the Dean to conduct certain lectures physically, 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 meet the prerequisites during the home period.

4.0 Postponement of exams

Students are expected to be active during their home period. It also means that they are expected to participate in the exams that are being conducted digitally. The students may therefore not necessarily deregister from exams or have the submission postponed in their project exams.

If the student wishes to be deregistered from an exam or wishes a postponement, 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.

5.0 Digital alternative to conducting physical teaching and exams as a result of the reopening

As a result of the partial reopening, the departments may allow physical conduct of teaching and the deans may allow physical conduct of exams after 12th April 2021. In this context, the Strategic Council for Education has decided that the departments must provide a digital alternative for students who cannot or may not attend in person. This may be in cases where a student is infected with corona, for example, or is in the risk group.

For those elements where physical presence is required (e.g. laboratory experiments), this group of students will need to have their physical participation postpone until they are allowed or able to physically return to campus.
Similarly, there must be a digital alternative to the physical exams. The offer must apply to students who cannot or may not physically attend campus. If it is not possible to make a digital alternative to the physical exam, the exam must be postponed in accordance with the provisions of section 4 Postponement of exams.

6.0 Conducting combined physical and digital exams
The Study Board may, in consultation with the head of the studies, approve that oral exams are conducted as a combination of a physical and digital exam. The combined physical and digital examination form may be approved in cases where the Dean has authorised the conduct of physical examinations. This may be relevant, for example, if an external examiner or student is unable to appear physically (e.g. if the student is at risk or is an international student who is no longer in Denmark).

In assessing whether a combined physical and digital examination can be conducted, the study board and the head of studies must emphasise that students are treated equally and that the examination can be conducted in an academically sound manner.

It is not possible to conduct an on-site exam as a combined digital and physical exam, as this does not allow for equal treatment of the students. Physical on-site exams have security measures in the form of invigilators and the monitoring system ITX FLEX which cannot be used if the exam is conducted digitally.

CONTACT/RESPONSIBILITY
The rules have been prepared by Study Service and approved by the Strategic Council for Education. If there are questions regarding the rules, they can be sent to:
Jesper Bjørn Gorm Poulsen, jp@adm.aau.dk, or
Christina Buhl, cbu@adm.aau.dk