

Messages from the Examinations Committee of the Psychology department about pass/fail exams (Note: this only applies to Psychology courses!)

→ Monday 21 September 2020

“The corona pandemic has forced the University to take several measures regarding the use of the buildings, and as a result the capacity of the exam hall is severely restricted. All exams are therefore administered online, and many exams are only administered online. Online examination, however, poses several problems, one of them being the risk of fraud. Online multiple choice exams in particular are very sensitive to fraud. The Examinations Committee has decided that online multiple choice exams are only allowed if they are graded pass/fail, and if they are combined with assignments. As a result, there are several exams, particularly in the first and second year, that are pass/fail, and not graded.

We understand that students are disappointed about this. You all want to get good grades. It doesn't make sense however to grade an exam that is so sensitive to fraud as an online mc exam. Fortunately, many courses have exams that are graded, such as exams with open questions. This takes a lot more effort of the examiners than an mc exam, and this is only feasible if there aren't too many students in the course.

We are currently looking into the possibility of grading exams 'fail', 'pass', and 'good'. This may go some way towards satisfying the wish of many students to be able to distinguish themselves with their results. At this moment (21 September 2020) it is not clear yet whether we can adapt Progress, the software we use to register and archive grades, to allow this kind of grading that includes a 'good' pass. If and when it becomes technically possible, and we very much hope it will, the Examinations Committee will make rules for how such a 'good' pass can be taken into account when determining whether a student is eligible for cum laude or summa cum laude. Ordinary passes are not taken into account when calculating the average grade.

With kind regards,

The Examinations Committee”

→ Thursday 19 November

“As you will have noticed, many exams are currently not graded numerically (1 to 10) but pass/fail. Many students are unhappy about this and that's understandable. Examiners would prefer to grade numerically as well, but in many cases that is not possible at the moment. The reasons are the following. First of all, multiple choice exams are now administered online, but unfortunately this is very sensitive to fraud. In those circumstance the Examinations Committee does not consider it sensible to grade numerically. Instead, online multiple choice exams are combined with assignments. If you have made the assignments and you have a pass for the exam, you pass the course. Secondly, although there are also exams with open questions, when there are many students in a course it would take an examiner very long to grade all the exams. In those cases students assistants often help with the grading. Because student assistants cannot be expected to grade such exams very precisely, these exams are also graded pass/fail, with the examiner grading the exams that fall around the pass/fail cut-off. Work is underway to have more numerically graded exams in the second

semester. We are also trying to create the option of a 'good pass', so that exams can be graded fail/pass/good. In this way we try, within the limited possibilities that there are at the moment, to keep the assessment and grading at a good level. And, like everyone else, we hope the situation improves soon, so that we can administer exams in the Aletta Jacobs exam hall.

With kind regards,

The Examinations Committee"