Explanatory notes for the Remote Assessment Decision Tree

Introduction

Due to the restricted opening of Avans's buildings in the 2020-2021 academic year, some tests cannot be conducted in the same way as they have been in previous years. The examination programmes in the Education and Examination Rules (EER) 2020-2021 include a form of testing for at least period 1 and period 2 for as many tests as possible that can be taken online or otherwise remotely. Only where there is no other option, can a test be taken on location.

As circumstances may change during the academic year in relation to the situation as expected during the writing of the examination programme in the EER, the **decision tree has been updated** to a version for the 2020-2021 academic year. The starting point of the decision tree is that there is an examination programme that is feasible given the current circumstances (September 2020).

Adapting tests and assessments may improve the feasibility and teachability of our study programmes in both the short and the long term. The 'Remote Assessment Decision Tree' is designed to help you make informed decisions when making adjustments to tests and assessments. **With this explanation we help you to arrange the chosen test type as efficiently as possible.** A few general recommendations:

- Do not take unnecessary risks. Making changes to tests can have a significant impact; the consequences of errors made during the test can be even greater. Make sure that tests do not have to be declared invalid.
- Collaborate with the committees within your department as well as other experts (educationalists, technical (ICTO) and legal specialists).
- Maintain high standards (validity, reliability and transparency). Always use the current learning objectives as a starting point and minimise the risk of fraud.

Explanation of the recommendations in the decision tree

The decision tree is organised from relatively minor to more far-reaching changes. Run through the questions in the first column. The responses will lead you to a recommendation in the 'Assessment recommendation' column. The numbers listed below refer to the numbers in the decision tree in that column. Background information is given for each recommendation and we indicate what you should pay attention to.

1. **A physical product needs to be assessed.**
   This might be an installation (Bachelor of Architecture and Construction Engineering, Bachelor of Communication & Multimedia Design or Bachelor of Mechatronic Engineering) or a piece of art (School of Fine Art and Design | St. Joost).

Recommendation
In accordance with the applicable guidelines, it may be possible to set up a regulated system for submitting work, whereby students must hand in their product at the agreed Avans location at a specific time (taking into account the RIVM guidelines; for example, this is not an option for students who have a cold). The assessing lecturers will then assess the physical products at Avans at agreed times (with due observance of RIVM guidelines).

Another option is to send the products by post. If you choose this option, you must make clear agreements with the students in advance about the location to which they should send their products, how they can claim back costs and what steps will be taken in the event that test products go missing or are damaged, for example.

2. **Students can present their test product via LMS and MyMedia.**
   This includes, for example, assignments for which students have to give an oral pitch or presentation. This option can also be used to test speaking skills for language modules as long as no interaction is required. Depending on the test type selected from the examination programme in the EER, this may or may not result in a change to the EER. Test types such as 'presentation', 'pitch', 'assignment' and 'oral' will suffice (these are examples and do not form an exhaustive list).

Recommendation
   Students submit the product digitally via the LMS (Blackboard or Brightspace). The LMS upload capacity is limited. <u>Films are too large to upload directly to LMS.</u> Use MyMedia for films, so that the link can be submitted in the LMS.

If you use this option, you must make sure that the product was actually made by the student who is or students who are being assessed. The student or students must be visible on the screen, in such a way that they can be clearly identified. Inform students on time about the way in which the test will be administered.

3. **The assessment requires you to communicate remotely and in real-time with the student or students.**

This includes assessments, the presentation and defence of dissertations, discussions, role-plays or skills for language modules that require interaction. Depending on the test type selected from the examination programme in the EER, this may or may not result in an EER change. (Often indicated in the EER as: 'assessment', 'presentation' or 'oral'. This is not an exhaustive list)

Recommendation

Administer the test remotely, e.g. via Microsoft Teams or Skype for Business. A few practical things to consider:

- *Provide the students with technical instructions as to what you expect them to do (medium, time, alternative if it is not possible to establish a connection).*
- *Students should make sure they organise a suitable place in which to take the test.*
- *Consult the examination board to determine which rules apply if it is not possible to establish a connection or if the connection fails in the middle of the test.*
- *If necessary, the conversation can be recorded so that a second assessment is possible. Inform the students that the test will be recorded and that the recording will be kept until after the objection period. Delete the recorded tests after the objection period.*
- *Record the assessment with due care, especially if no visual recording is made of the conversation, as you would if the test were administered at a physical location.*

4. **Change the test type**

You have to revise your test type during the academic year to take account of changing circumstances, for example, organise an oral exam instead of a written or digital knowledge test or convert a knowledge test into an assignment that students can do at home.

Please note: recommendations for converting a physical written knowledge test into a digital knowledge test taken at home can be found under heading 8 (tests without proctoring).

[You can also use the test recommendations below if you have chosen a different test type compared with the test type in the examination programme of the previous academic year.]

Recommendation

- *Oral examination instead of a written or digital test*

You individually question the students via Microsoft Teams or Skype for Business. In order for such a test to be valid, it must be underpinned by the learning objectives and the corresponding test matrix.

- *Each student is asked questions about all elements of the test matrix, which are also weighed as per the test matrix. Time management is especially important here; do not dwell on one subject for too long.*

- *In order for such a test to be reliable, there must be a sufficient number of questions available; this will prevent the last students to be assessed from having an advantage if the first students to be assessed share the questions with them.*

- *If you use this option, be particularly mindful of the lecturer's workload. Calculate in advance how much time will be needed per student and how much time it will cost in total.*

- *If necessary, the conversation can be recorded so that a second assessment is possible. Inform the students that the test will be recorded and that the recording will be kept until after the objection period. Delete the recorded tests after the objection period.*

- *Convert a knowledge test into an assignment*
  In order for such an assignment to be valid, it must be underpinned by the learning objectives. If necessary, learning objectives can be tested at a slightly higher level (apply instead of reproduce). An assignment may also involve the student demonstrating that they possess the required knowledge by presenting this, for example, in a self-recorded knowledge clip or vlog.

  - *Devise an assignment that covers the learning objectives and create an assessment form for the assignment. Students must be familiar with this assessment form at the start of the unit of study, as is usually the case with assignments.*

5. Combine tests

You will have to combine tests during the academic year as circumstances change. This might include, for example, a combined knowledge test, merging several smaller assignments into one large assignment or a combination of knowledge tests and assignments.

[You can also use the test recommendations below if your tests, which were referred to as separate tests in the previous academic year, are combined into one test.]

Recommendation
In order for this type of assessment to be valid, the new combined test must cover all the learning objectives that are also covered in the individual tests. Together, these combined tests form an integrated assignment (plus assessment form) that maintains the relationships between the learning objectives, as specified in the test matrices. In order for an integrated knowledge test to be reliable,

sufficient information must be collected from the students for each learning objective (in other words, there must be sufficient questions relating to each of the objectives). If you choose this option, you must bear in mind the feasibility for the students.

Combining tests may mean that students from previous years have to re-sit part of the combined test. Where possible, students will only be offered the part to be re-sat. Where this is not possible, re-sits will have to take the new test as a whole.

6. Accumulate tests

This option is particularly relevant if there is considerable overlap between the learning objectives of the current test and another (preferably the next) test. The current test will then not go ahead; it will be 'postponed' until the moment at which the related test is administered. The other test that is yet to be taken (for example in the next academic year) will be expanded slightly, ensuring that all the learning objectives to be tested are covered.

Recommendation

Only use this option if the group of students in question has not yet had to deal with stacking in the 2019-2020 academic year. This means that it is not possible to continue stacking tests, which would result in students having 2 or more tests that will be merged with a future test at a later date. You can, however, start a new 'stack'.

Communicate to the students which test will be postponed and indicate in which test the relevant learning objectives will be tested. In order to ensure that the test is valid, make sure that all learning objectives are covered. The results obtained by the students for this test are also entered under the OSIRIS code for the test that should have taken place now but was 'postponed'. We recommend that the 'postponed' test is still offered but as a formative test, so that students know how they are doing now and what they still need to work on.

Please note that this option allows you to pass on student workload, teaching workload and possibly also the demand on the use of the buildings. This option can therefore be used for a limited number of tests and not year on year, because otherwise there will be a peak load.

7. Postpone test (but still administered within the current Education and Examination Rules [EER])

If it appears that physical locations temporarily cannot be used or can be used even less than expected at the moment of composing the examination programme, this option can be used. Only use this option in highly exceptional situations (e.g. national tests of the School of Education or Accountancy), because it is likely that physical possibilities are still limited after such a temporary situation. If everyone uses this option, it will result in a backlog of tests.

Recommendation

Consult with the Unit Facility Management & ICT (DIF) about the possibilities. Communicate the new dates for the test and the re-sit. The current test can be used as a formative opportunity so that the students know how they are progressing.

8. **Administering tests without online proctoring**

   Online tests without online proctoring put the onus on the student's responsibility not to cheat, but can be a last option for knowledge tests, the content of which will be tested again (after being integrated) in the curriculum at a later stage. It is not an option for final-level test.

Recommendation

The network of chairpersons of examination boards (NVE) adopted a position on tests without proctoring in September 2020. First of all, they advocate alternatives before proceeding with tests without proctoring:

It is preferable to replace written tests with an alternative type of test. If an alternative type of test is not possible, and a written test remains the only option, this written test should be taken physically, on location and with proctoring. If a physical test is also not possible, the NVE recommends alternative means of administering tests with digital proctoring.[1]

The NVE then indicates the conditions they set for tests without proctoring:

Tests without proctoring are not desirable at all times and are only to be applied under very strict conditions. These conditions are:

i. there are no alternatives, i.e. it is the last option

ii. it must not be for a core subject of the programme

iii. it must not be a final-level test.

iv. measures are taken to prevent fraud as much as possible, taking into account the guidelines of the examination board.

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[1] *Although the NVE indicates that they prefer digital proctoring to tests without proctoring, this form of proctoring is currently (September 2020) still in the pilot phase. For the latest update, see https://www.bijavans.nl/paginas/toetsen-op-afstand-en-online-proctoring.*

A literature study (Avans University of Applied Sciences, 2020) has also been conducted into the prevention of fraud. The measures below are the result of this research. Measures to prevent fraud can be divided into 4 phases:

- *In advance by creating a culture where integrity is paramount and where there is a sense of responsibility among students and positive social pressure. This requires institution-wide attention. It can be supported by incorporating integrity into education and giving examples of what is and what is not allowed and including anonymous examples of the exact sanctions in the event of violation. In addition, sanctions must be serious enough for the student.*

- *In the test design by:*
  - *Adding one or a number of open questions, of which it is easier to read whether the answer is authentic.*
  - *Formulating questions at a higher application level (Bloom's pyramid), or on the basis of creative or personal input. These questions are more difficult to look up or discuss.*
  - *Adding a signed statement to the test setting about what is meant by integrity and what sanctions apply in the event of fraud. This statement serves as a reminder and a warning.*
  - *Composing the test on the basis of a large question bank and test matrix, in which each student receives different, randomly selected questions for each learning objective.*
  - *Using a random order of questions*
  - *Limiting the possibility of going back to the previous question*
  - *Limiting the time available for the test. In addition, a bonus question can be used for students who work fast, to make consultation in between less attractive.*

- *While taking the test. Little can be done to prevent fraud in this scenario. Identity verification cannot be used. Both verification at a single moment (which does not guarantee that the student takes the entire test themselves) and continuous verification are not possible.*

- *After taking the test. Open questions can be checked for plagiarism.*

9. **Postpone test until the next academic year (outside the current EER)**

We want to avoid postponing tests until the next academic year to the greatest extent possible because this would increase the work and study load and will probably cause unwanted delays. On top of that, we want the hard work of our students as well as our lecturers to be rewarded with the successful completion of the academic year. That is why the focus is now on options 1 to 7 and possibly 8 from the decision tree. Of course, quality is our highest priority in this.

This option may only be used if the situation changes during the academic year. If none of the options in the decision tree are sufficient, the assessment of the test can be postponed until next academic year. The test itself doesn't change, but it will no longer be administered in the current academic year.

Recommendation

Inform the students that the test will be postponed until the next academic year, in which they will have two opportunities to take the test. Determine in advance what to do with students who fail the test on both those occasions and, as a result, encounter problems with their study advice with a binding rejection (BSR) or thresholds. It goes without saying that the examination board will be sympathetic to students who request an additional opportunity for this reason. Consider including this point in the examination board's policy (Internal Regulations). The current test can be used as a formative opportunity so that the students know how they are progressing.

Current situation regarding online proctoring

Online proctoring could not be used in periods 3 and 4 of the previous academic year. At Avans we had no experience with this at that time and there were still many questions about privacy and technical feasibility. However, a start was made with gaining experience by means of 3 pilots during formative tests. The pilots will be extended into summative tests in P1. For the latest updates on online proctoring see https://www.bijavans.nl/paginas/toetsen-op-afstand-en-online-proctoring.

Decisions and communication

The Education and Examination Rules for 2020-2021 include a form of testing for at least period 1 and period 2 for as many tests as possible that can be taken online or otherwise remotely. Only where there is no other option, can a test be taken on location. If the coronavirus-related measures remain unchanged during these periods, an adjustment of the examination programme will not be necessary.

However, it is possible that the coronavirus-related measures will become more stringent during the current academic year. In the worst-case scenario, a second lockdown may mean that we cannot even use our location at all. It is also possible that the measures will remain the same but will remain in force in periods 3 and 4, while the examination programme for those periods provides more room for tests on location. If such developments mean that the examination programme and therefore the EER have to be changed, the normal decision-making and approval procedure applies (see EER section 12.3), on the understanding that the examination board has the right to consent to the changes in the examination programme. The reason for this is that changes are being made to the examination programme during the current academic year. Changes to the examination programme are therefore made in consultation between the department and the examination board.

If this situation occurs and the EER has been adjusted, communication about this will take place via publication of the adjusted EER. All students will receive a personal message about this from the School Board.

Contact details
Toetsen_op_afstand@avans.onmicrosoft.com (Ideas, decision tree and explanatory notes)
Taskforcedigitaaltoetsen.LIC@avans.nl (Online proctoring, Remindo and other forms of digital assessment)

References

1. Avans University of Applied Sciences (2020). Literature study: Fraud bij toetsen op afstand (fraud in remote assessments).