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Comment, Complaint, Right of Inspection and Appeal procedure against evaluation of examinations (including Master's thesis)

Due to legal requirements, the original copies of the examinations with the comments by the examiner (Course Instructor) are archived and not returned to students. However, in line with Chapter 5 of the Education and Examination Regulations (EER), students do have the right *to comment* on the examination(s), *to inspect* their evaluated examination(s), *to file a complaint to the course instructor/ examiner*, and to *appeal* the formal aspects of the evaluation with the UM Board of Appeal for Examinations (CBE).

Comments

(Article 5.1 of the EER)

Within five (5) days after the examination date students can submit (general) comments (e.g. *unclear questioning, ambiguous multiple choice answers, remarks on given assignment*) regarding written examinations with open and/or closed questions (*Multiple Choice*) or parts thereof or the answer key to the Course Coordinator according to the rules as published in the syllabus and/or by the MSM Education office. The comments procedure allows students to submit comments regarding written examinations and/or the answer key with the aim of filtering out inaccuracies regarding the written examination prior to the publication of the grades.

Decisions taken following these comments hold for all students participating in the exam, and will in general be communicated via the MSM Education office, but not necessarily by individual responses.

Right of Inspection

(Article 5.2 of the EER)

Within ten (10) working days after the publication date of the grade in FullFabric (Campus), the student may inspect his/her examination. At the inspection, the student can consult the evaluated written examination or written part of an examination, the examination itself and the norms applicable to the evaluation, for example using an answer key.

Students will timely receive the opportunity and information regarding to the inspection date, time and location announced by the MSM Education office.

Course Instructors/ Examiners can also choose to organise an open office hour for inspection, or to make individual arrangements with students who ask for an inspection of their examination.

The primary focus of the inspection is to compare the answer key and norms with the own answers given, thereby receiving feedback to assist in learning.

Complaints

(Article 5.2 of the EER)

If, during the inspection, students disagree with the grading, they can lodge a motivated complaint regarding the evaluation.

- In case Course Instructors/ Examiners/ Thesis evaluators are not available for the inspection, the student may fill out the "MSM Inspection Complaint form" (*which will replace the inspection with the Course Instructor/ Examiner/ Thesis evaluator*).

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- When Course Instructors/ Examiners/ Thesis evaluators have chosen to organize an open office hour or (online) meeting for the inspection, this complaint procedure can be oral.

Within a reasonable time (*typically five (5) working days*) the Course Instructor/ Examiner/ Thesis evaluator will respond with a motivated individual decision on each submitted objection to the student. The Course Instructor/ Examiner/ Thesis evaluator will respond to objections with a justification for the decision to change or not change the grade.

Appeal

If after having inspected the examination a student is not satisfied with the feedback and decisions taken by the Course Instructor/ Examiner/ Thesis evaluator and thinks the evaluation is not justified, (s)he may appeal the evaluation with the UM Board of Appeal for Examinations (CBE). However, it should be noted that the UM Board of Appeal for Examinations cannot (re)assess the contents of an examination as such, but will only look into formal aspects of the evaluation.

The Board of Examiners (BoE) receives the appeal from the UM Board of Appeal for Examinations and investigates the case first. In doing so, the Board of Examiners investigates if there are reasons to doubt the given evaluation, e.g. by checking if the procedures and course regulations were correctly followed. By law the Board of Examiners must hold back in discussing content matters. **The only possibility to discuss the content of an examination is with the Course Instructor/ Examiner of a course or the Thesis evaluation panel, following the above described comment, inspection and complaint procedures.** It is therefore in both the student's, the School's, the MSM's and the UM's interest that students first follow these specific procedures before they consider to appeal the evaluation.

Appeal procedure

A student may appeal the formal aspects of the evaluation (or other decisions of examiners or the Board of Examiners) within six (6) weeks after its announcement. Appealing an evaluation is an elaborate, formal procedure, which is not dealt with on the Faculty's level, but by the UM's Board of Appeal for Examinations (CBE), following legal procedures.

The appeal should include the grounds on which the appeal is based and, if possible, a copy of the decision being appealed.

- The Board of Examiners, after having received notice of the appeal, invites the student for a (*online*) meeting to establish if the case can be settled without the UM Board of Appeal for Examinations handling the appeal. If the Board of Examiners finds reasons to doubt the given evaluation, they may offer a settlement to amicably settle the appeal.
 - *If a settlement is reached, the appeal is considered to have been dealt with and the applicant will be asked to withdraw the appeal.*
 - *If the Board finds no reason to doubt the original evaluation, they will not offer a settlement.*
- The student can then decide to withdraw or continue the appeal. If the student decides to continue the appeal, the Board of Examiners will submit a written defence to the CBE and the case will be dealt with in a public session. The CBE's decision (*in Dutch because of legal requirements*) will be communicated in writing.

The above explanation shows that lodging an appeal is a formal procedure, which is maybe best compared to taking a case to court. **Although many students expect otherwise, neither the UM Board of Appeal for Examinations nor the Board of Examiners re-assesses examinations content wise, nor can they raise the grade of a examination.** The Board of Examiners is also not acting as a

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mediator between student and Course Instructor/ Examiner/ Thesis evaluators but acts as an independent board. The Board of Examiners will check whether the evaluation and inspection procedures were followed correctly, whether the given evaluation was reflected in the given grade, whether there was a qualified examiner etc. In doing so, the Board of Examiners evaluated whether there are any reasons to doubt the evaluation (procedure) made by the Course Instructor/ Examiner/ Thesis evaluators.

The Board of Examiners only offers a settlement (*e.g. re-evaluation of an examination*) if they have reason to doubt the evaluation. The grade is valid if the examination was evaluated under the right conditions (*e.g., but not limited to: the examiner is qualified; evaluation procedures were followed properly*).

In accordance with Art. 7.61 of the WHW an appeal can be send to Complaint Service Point, P.O. Box 616, 6200 MD Maastricht or to complaintsservice@maastrichtuniversity.nl. For more information regarding the appeal procedure, please refer to the website of Maastricht University via the following link, <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/support/during-your-studies/complaints-service-point/filing-appeal>.