

## Principles for variation of exam questions

### General conditions

The validity of exams depends on whether the individual exam to a sufficient degree reflects the learning objectives of the course as described in the academic regulations and as implemented in the teaching. The exam should be comprehensive and cover the course in the widest possible sense in relation to the content of the course. At the same time, the exam should reflect the objectives concerning the knowledge, skills and competences acquired on the course. The validity of the exam and thus the quality of the exam practise on a degree programme also depend on the variation of the exam questions from one exam to another on a specific course and from one course to another. The programme board of studies on the degree programme is responsible for ensuring that these conditions are met.

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### Variation of exam questions

Variation of exam questions can be achieved by even slight changes in an assignment, which in practice means that the examinees must relate to a new situation compared to a previous version of the assignment. Slight changes may entail that the examinees must apply other/perhaps new knowledge or methods compared to previously, or other variations of skills or competences. They may also entail that the contemplations of the examinees will be different, or that the most correct response will be different compared to that of previous versions of the assignment. In these cases, it is important that the person responsible for formulating the exam questions/assignment considers the academic arguments for why the examinees are presented with a sufficiently new exam situation compared to the previous versions of the exam.

The above considerations are relevant in a series of different written exams that typically test the students' knowledge, theoretical, methodological and practical skills and/or written communication skills. In some cases, topics, questions/angles or content (e.g. cases or articles, etc.) will have to be changed from one exam to another. This may also be the case in oral exams.

However, in special cases, the course content is rather limited and cannot be changed endlessly. Such cases may entail testing each examinee for specific and standardised knowledge or skills to ensure that each examinee possesses these skills. Here, reusing small parts of the exam questions may make good sense. There may also be times when the material used as a starting point for the exam is limited. There may also be times

when the examinees know the topics or questions beforehand. In such cases, the examinees' access to aids during the exam should be considered.

In case of exam types that draw on questions with either pre-formulated answers or with short open answers, it is possible to ensure sufficient variation by developing an assignment bank and by drawing new samples from the bank in each exam. The academic environment would have to discuss to what extent questions can be reused from one exam to another, and how long it should be before a question can be reused. It should also be considered whether the questions should be publicly available, and whether the students should be allowed to use aids in the exam.

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Overall, the form and execution of the exam must not put some students in a better position than others. All students must participate in the exam on equal terms.

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