UT framework for Remote Assessment during the Covid-19 crisis

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A   Introduction

As a consequence of the Covid-19 virus, we miss the possibility of supervised examination. In this document we outline what measures we will take to deal with this problem.

It is clear that online testing will not give us a way to collect information that we can fully trust. Some test results may even be rejected if the results are not trusted for some reason. Despite all these drawbacks we need to offer our teachers and students possibilities for remote testing that are approved by exam committees.

In this document we will outline the direction that we want to follow at present. It is an ongoing process and we are fully aware that insights can change depending on how the world around us changes. We address in this document solely written/digital exams.

B   Strategy

There are various ICT solutions for supervised remote examination. We are convinced that our students are smart enough to bypass these systems. Rather than trying to optimize in this direction, we are presently convinced that it is better to develop a way of working where we check the originality of the work afterwards. Based on the knowledge we have now, using an online proctoring system may lead to more problems than that it solves. Nevertheless, LISA will start a pilot with two proctoring systems.

Agreements

1. We develop an *integrity statement* that students have to agree upon with every test/exam they make. See section 3 below.

2. We inform the students that it will be decided afterwards how the result will be used. Depending on the situation we will develop ways to check the integrity: short interviews of a random selection directly after the test; interviews of the whole population after a quartile.

3. Once the situation normalizes, it may be decided that certain test results are not sufficiently reliable and will be replaced by regular exams, such at the discretion of the exam committee.

4. CES will be asked to come with suggestions to optimize this way of working.

5. We need an addendum of the EERs (MSc and BSc) to inform students about their rights and duties under the given abnormal circumstances.

6. Students and teachers must be informed as soon as possible. Good communication is absolutely crucial.

7. A backup by the Examination Boards is necessary.

Guidelines for remote testing

We use the term *remote testing* for any test activity in which the students are not physically present and supervised. In contrast, the "normal" test circumstances are called *controlled testing*. This document sets out the guidelines for summative remote testing to be used at the University of Twente.

1 Change in test schedule

In most cases, remote testing involves a change in the way a module or course is assessed. Switching to remote testing therefore involves a change in test schedule. This has a number of consequences:

- The nature of tests has to be changed so that they are suitable for taking remotely.

- A controlled test will always be necessary to accommodate students who are for technical reasons prevented from taking the remote test.

- If under the new test schedule, some learning goals are insufficiently covered, this should be explicitly made clear.

- The Examination Board has to approve the changed test schedule.

2 Preliminary nature of remote test grades

Grades obtained from remote tests are never automatically final grades: the teacher will have to judge which of the results, in his or her opinion, are reliable enough to be raised to the level of a final (Osiris-registered) grade. Thus, a remote test grade is initially a *preliminary grade*.

This may range from:

- (Only) those results that raise no suspicion of fraud.
- (Only) those results that are in line with the general level of performance of the student.
- None of the results, in case there are too many doubts about the reliability of the entire test.

If a preliminary grade is *not* promoted to a final grade, essentially the test has retroactively been turned into a formative test.

Students must be made aware of this situation. See also 3.1, which points out the need for a web site on which the remote test policy is explained.

At all times, it may occur that a student is prevented from taking part in a remote test because of obstacles of a technical nature: the system they are using fails, the network fails, the support software for the test fails. In fact, we can't even begin to check a student's claim that one of these things has happened. We can't do much else than conclude that such students have been unable to take part because of reasons outside their control, meaning they have to be allowed another opportunity.

It follows that *a remote test can never serve as the only test opportunity*: we will always have to organise a resit under controlled circumstances. Given, however, that we may not be able to offer such circumstances in the foreseeable future, we serve the interests of the student by enabling them to make progress.

3   Integrity statement

As part of the measures to increase the reliability of remote testing (while acknowledging that this will never get close to 100%), we will request students to confirm that they are aware of our expectancy regarding their ethical behaviour when taking a remote test. This request will take the form of an *integrity statement* that will be part of every remote test. This involves the following steps:

3.1   On the web: global explanation

There has to be a public web page where the policy of remote testing and the expected students' behaviour is explained in some detail (but not legalese, we want a readable text). Students should be pointed to this before they partake in a test, at every possible occasion, and also from every test (see below).

The global document should also clearly state that anyone *helping another* is culpable.

3.2   In every test: allowed sources

A *source*, in this paragraph and the next, is the analogon of "material" but extended to humans: it refers to where information comes from that a student uses to make a test. Some sources are allowed (a cheat sheet, a book in case it's an open-book test, a calculator, possible more) and some are not. Typically, the test schedule of a course already lists the allowed sources for each test.

For the purpose of remote testing, the allowed sources should be *explicitly mentioned on the test itself* — the reason being that the "additional question" discussed in subsection 3.3 below can then with confidence refer to it. The list of allowed sources should be comprehensive, so it is clear that anything *not* on it is *not* allowed. We do not want to try and compose the complementary list of disallowed sources.

What should allowed sources be?   Closed-book remote tests are very strongly discouraged. No matter how dire the warnings, the ease of looking up an answer in the book and the unlikelihood of detection (in the students' perception) make it clear that no closed-book remote test can ever be reliable enough to yield final grades.

3.3   In every test: additional question

Every (digital and written) test should contain the following as a first question. The answer cannot be wrong, but the absence of an answer invalidates the test for summative use.

- *In case the test has an answer form:*

  Please read the following paragraph carefully, and tick the box to acknowledge that you have done so. To find more information, please consult [URL of statement, see subsection 3.1 above]

  By testing you remotely in this fashion, we express our trust that you will adhere to the ethical standard of behaviour expected of you. This means that we trust you to answer the questions and perform the assignments in this test to the best of your own ability, without seeking or accepting the help of any source that is not explicitly allowed by the conditions of this test.

Please tick: [checkbox]

- *In case the student submits his answer in his own sheet or format:*

  Please read the following paragraph carefully, and copy the text below it verbatim to your answer sheet. To find more information, please consult [URL of statement, see subsection 3.1 above]

  By testing you remotely in this fashion, we express our trust that you will adhere to the ethical standard of behaviour expected of you. This means that we trust you to answer the questions and perform the assignments in this test to the best of your own ability, without seeking or accepting the help of any source that is not explicitly allowed by the conditions of this test.

  Text to be copied:

  I will make this test to the best of my own ability, without seeking or accepting the help of any source not explicitly allowed by the conditions of the test.

4 Complementary orals

Every remote test should be accompanied by an additional time slot in which complementary orals can be planned. The purpose of a complementary oral is twofold:

1. The teacher can check whether the understanding of the student is in line with the quality of the submitted test, and use this as a basis for deciding on the reliability of the test (in other words, whether the preliminary grade can be promoted to a final one).
2. The students will realise that they can possibly be asked to elaborate on their answers, which should serve as another incentive against cheating.

In most cases, only a selection of students can be tested in this way. There are two distinct strategies to come to a selection:

1. A random selection is made from all students who submitted as solution, and the oral is held very quickly after the test;
2. The selection is based on the results of the test, out of the students whose grades are not deemed reliable enough to be turned into final grades. In this case, the oral can only be held after the assessment has been finished.

It is recommended that in the second case it also includes randomly selected students. This avoids that students immediately perceive their selection as a suspicion and it gives the teacher a way of comparing how the average student responds in these oral exams compared to the students for whom a flag was raised.