Information on Conducting Online Exams during the Coronavirus Pandemic for Students

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I.   Change of form and type of the exam: Announcement

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic it may become necessary to change the classroom exams to online exams.

The following distinctions are important: For exams, a distinction is made between types of exam (written exam [German: Klausuren], take home exam [German: Hausarbeit], oral exam [German: mündliche Prüfung], ...) and forms (classroom exam or online exam). Only written exams, take home exams and oral exams can be conducted as online exams according to the Corona Statutes of TU Braunschweig. According to the definition in the APO, exams are only called "written exams" if they are carried out with invigilation. For online exams, this is possible with video supervision (see below). Take home exams are written independently (i.e. without help from others) and without invigilation. A take home exam can be written within a short period of time (i.e. hours) and may thus be similar to a classical written exam, or it can be written within a longer period of time (i.e. days and weeks) and may thus be similar to a term paper. For take home exams, typically all resources (aids) except help from others are allowed (so-called open-book format). You will be informed before the exam how exactly your examiners will design the online exams and which resources (aids) are permitted.

It is also possible to conduct oral exams by video conference as an online exam. This form of exam is already allowed in the APO for oral exams in exceptional cases. The coronavirus pandemic represents an exceptional situation. In an oral exam, the video data and audio data must be transmitted for the assessment of the exam (video conference). They are an essential part of the exam. An oral exam with audio only or by telephone conference is not permitted. The video data and audio data of the oral exam may not be stored. This is not permitted. If you do not agree to the transmission of video and audio data, then you cannot take part in oral exams by video conference. In this case please use your right of withdrawal from the exam. If you do not agree to the transmission of video and audio data from your own home, please contact your examiners as soon as possible after the date of the exam has been announced so that a suitable room at the university can be made available to you for the transmission (see also support options).

You must be notified in advance of the change in the form and type of the exam. The announcement of the change must be made as soon as possible, but no later than 14 days before the exam date.

If you do not agree with the change in the type and form of an exam, please use the right of withdrawal. Cancellation (withdrawal) is possible up to two working days (Mon-Fri) before the exam. If you take part in the exam, the usual exam regulations apply.

II.   Form and type of exam for resit exams

In the case of resit exams, the form and type of exam may be chosen differently from the original exam, provided that the same regulations apply to all students currently registered for the exam.

III.   Support options, compensation for disadvantages

If you lack suitable communication devices (i.e. technical equipment) for conducting an online exam or if other circumstances (childcare/unsuitable apartment) make it impossible for you to conduct an online exam appropriately, then the university will make communication devices or exam rooms accessible upon request.

Please contact your examiners as soon as possible, **but no later than 7 working days** before the exam date to arrange support.

Irrespective of an agreement on support options, the possibility to apply for a disadvantage compensation according to the PO regulations remains.

IV.   Declaration of academic integrity for online exams

For all written online exams, students must submit a declaration of academic integrity, i.e. that the exam is their own work. You will receive the declaration in the appendix (in German) as well as with the information on the exam procedure from your examiners (e.g. in Stud.IP). You must sign it by hand immediately after the exam and submit it as a digital copy to your examiners. The examiners can choose one of the following options to let you submit the declaration: Upload to a folder in Stud.IP or Powerfolder (for take home exams together with the exam results), submission by email, or by mail.

Missing declaration of academic integrity

For written exams without invigilation, the declaration of academic integrity is an essential part of the exam papers. If you do not submit the declaration of academic integrity, the exam will be graded as "nicht bestanden" ("failed") or "nicht ausreichend" ("insufficient").

What to do if you cannot print the declaration of academic integrity?

In this case, please write down the following information by hand, sign it by hand and upload the document.

Text and information for the handwritten declaration (the legally binding text must be in German)

Erklärung

Name: …

Matriculation number: …

Name of the exam: ...

Date of exam: ...

Time of the exam: ...

Diese Prüfung habe ich selbstständig, ohne fremde Hilfe und ohne unerlaubte Hilfsmittel abgelegt. Der mit dieser Erklärung verbundenen Folgen bin ich mir bewusst.

[Legally not binding translation: I have taken this examination independently, without outside help and without unauthorized aids. I am aware of the consequences associated with this declaration.]

Date (exam date): ...

Time (after the exam): ...

Handwritten signature

V. Video supervision for online written exams („Online-Klausuren")

According to a key paper of the data protection commissioner of the state of Lower Saxony (as of November 2021), video supervision is possible during online written exams. The Corona Statutes of TU Braunschweig (§3 Online Examinations) provide the necessary legal basis for this.

A. Mandatory regulations for online written exams with video supervision

The following points are important and obligatory for the proper conduct of an online written exam („Online-Klausur") with video supervision:

Participation in online exams with video supervision in private rooms is on a voluntary basis. The voluntary nature of participation shall also be ensured by offering an in-person written exam („Klausur" on campus with invigilators instead of video supervision) within the same exam period[1] as an alternative, if this is permissible and organisationally possible and manageable for the university[2].

- If students opt for the in-person written exam, they must inform the examiners of the choice at least 7 working days before the exam date.

- Whether the in-person written exam can take place on campus (i.e. whether it is organisationally possible and manageable) will be announced to the students concerned 4 working days before the exam.

- If the in-person written exam cannot take place on campus for organisational reasons, the students concerned can still participate in the online written exam with video supervision. If they do not wish to do so, they must deregister from this particular exam! This means that the deregistration from the examination must always be done actively by the registered students.

- If the in-person written exam cannot take place on campus for organisational reasons, the examiner shall document these reasons.

2. With video supervision for online written exams, personal data may be processed according to the Corona Statutes of the TU Braunschweig, if this is necessary for the proper conduct of the examination. In particular, this applies to the identification and supervision of the examinees. The University ensures that the personal data generated in the course of conducting an online written exam is in compliance with data protection laws.

3. Students must be informed in advance,

- that the processing of their personal data is permissible (cf. 2.),

- which technical requirements are necessary for the proper conduct of the online written exam (suitable communication devices, suitable image and sound transmission for video supervision or video conferencing, qualitatively sufficient internet connection) and

- which organisational conditions have to be fulfilled for a proper conduct of the exam.

Students should be given the opportunity to get familiar with the online written exam in terms of software, equipment and the setting at home prior to the exam (test exam [without relevant content]).

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[1] Alternative in-person written exams take place within the same exam period in strict compliance with the principles of equal opportunities. If possible, they take place simultaneously to the online exam with the same exam questions and, if applicable, on the same examination platform as the online written exam but on campus with invigilators instead of video supervision. This means that only the location of the exam (university vs. private rooms) and the type of supervision (video supervision vs. in-person invigilators) differ.

[2] An exam might not be allowed due to a lockdown. Apart from that, too many students could register for the alternative exam on campus, making it impossible under pandemic safety measures. In these cases, the university can refer to the expected next in-person exam on campus. The students affected will then be given the opportunity to switch back to the online written exam. The right to choose (online written exam with video supervision vs. on-campus exam) can be exercised for each exam attempt.

4. For online written exams with video supervision, mainly learning management systems (Stud.IP), examination platforms (EvaExam, Integral Learning) and video conferencing tools (BigBlueButton) are used. Specific software may also be necessary. The employed software will not impair the students' communication devices outside the exam. It will not endanger information security and confidentiality of the data on the communication devices and can be completely uninstalled after the exam.

5. The examinees are identified via webcam by presenting their student ID or an official photo ID. Technically required temporary storage is permitted for the purpose of identification but the stored data must be deleted immediately. Permanent storage of data processed during identification is not permitted.

6. In order to avoid and detect attempts to breach exam regulations (colloquial: cheating) during an online written exam, students may be required to activate the camera and the microphone of their communication devices used for the exam (video supervision).

- Video supervision must be limited to the indispensable for the legitimate interest of guaranteeing exam integrity, so that personality rights and privacy of the students are preserved as far as possible.

- As with on-campus exams, video supervision is always carried out supervising an entire group of students.

- Surveillance of personal rooms (e.g. 360° camera panning) without suspecting an attempt to breach exam regulations is not permitted.

- Individual checks are permissible if an attempt to breach exam regulations is suspected. They must be logged.

- Video supervision is carried out live by TU Braunschweig staff.

- An automated evaluation of the image or sound data (i.e. by artificial intelligence) from video supervision is not permitted.

- Recording the exam or otherwise storing the image or sound data is not permitted under any circumstances.

- Further surveillance software that go beyond mere video supervision is not permitted.

7. The process and potential incidents of the online written exam with video supervision are to be logged by the examiner or staff.

B.   Implementation instructions for video supervision

Technical

- Supervision during the exam is via video conferencing in BigBlueButton (BBB; see below Instructions for configuration of BBB).

- The group for one remote invigilator should not exceed 20 examinees. Supervision should not be done incidental to other activities.

- The video transmission during the examination may only be visible to the remote invigilator; for this purpose, appropriate settings must be made directly in BBB.

- Usually, there is no permanent audio transmission. Students switch on their microphone when asked to do so by the remote invigilator.

- At the beginning of the examination, students may be asked to point the camera at the writing desk in order to exclude unauthorised aids.

- Students can be asked by the remote invigilator to share their screen at short notice if an attempt to breach exam regulations is suspected, provided screen sharing is not visible to other examinees (e.g. in a "breakout room").

- Toilet breaks are permitted and will be logged. Leaving/returning to the writing desk must be indicated via private chat with the remote invigilator or another suitable agreed upon form of communication.

C.   *Suspicion of attempts to breach exam regulations with video supervision*

- If an attempt to breach exam regulations is suspected, the respective examinee should first be approached and asked to explain the behaviour. To do this, the examinee is asked via private chat to open the audio channel. If BBB is configured correctly only the person concerned and the invigilating person can follow the conversation.

- Students must ensure that they can be reached via private chat during the exam (there will be an audio and visual signal if BBB is correctly configured). Failure to respond to continued apparent exam offences may be considered prima facie evidence of breaching exam regulations. Therefore, responding to the private chat is essential!

- After one or more apparent attempts to breach exam regulations, which must be logged, a 360°-camera pan can be ordered for the respective examinee. If the attempt is not confirmed, but the intervention was time-consuming (> 5 minutes), this should be compensated for by an appropriate extension of the exam time.

D.   *Equipment needed by students for video supervision*

- In order to take part in an exam with video supervision, students need a stable internet connection and a communication device suitable for video conferencing, which enables image and sound transmission and is equipped with a current version of an internet browser compatible with the video conferencing system or a current version of the corresponding video conferencing software. If the examination is to be written on the same communication device that is also used for video supervision, then a current version of an internet browser compatible with the examination platform or a current version of the examination software must also be installed there.

  o The online written exam with video supervision can be conducted with one or two communication devices. If one communication device is used, then the private chat could fade into the background and may be overlooked if the screen is small (see above). In these cases, the use of two devices (e.g. mobile phone for video supervision, laptop computer for examination system) could be advantageous.

- The basic suitability of the communication devices used and the stability of the internet connection is part of the (technical) examination capability and should be checked by the students in advance. If the minimum requirements are not met, appropriate support options can be requested. Please contact your examiner at least 7 working days prior to the exam in these cases.

- A test exam (without relevant content) is to be carried out in advance to check the technical examination capability.

You can also find detailed information on conducting video-supervised examinations on the "Digital Examinations" web pages of the Project House for Teaching and Media Education (in German): https://www.tu-braunschweig.de/lehreundmedienbildung/digitales-pruefen

VI.   Fitness to sit and technical problems

Fitness to sit for online exams also includes technical fitness! By downloading the exam questionnaire for online exams, you confirm that you are fit to sit. For oral exams, your confirmation of fitness to sit is a prerequisite for the start of the exam. Before the exam, please make sure to check whether your communication infrastructure and your communication devices are suitable for the exam. If not, please make use of support (see above). If technical or other difficulties occur during the exam so that you cannot continue with the exam (e.g. uploading does not work, internet connection interrupted), you (i.e. the student) are responsible for informing the examiners **immediately** (e.g. in a video conference or by telephone) and

documenting the technical malfunction appropriately (e.g. by means of a screenshot or photo showing the date and time). The examiners will inform you which communication channel to use to report technical problems. **It is important that you react immediately.** Otherwise, you will not be entitled to continue or repeat that exam. Late notification of technical problems is not sufficient. In the case of a technical problems, you will not suffer any disadvantage (e.g. through a suitable extension of the examination time), except in the case of attempted cheating.

If technical faults occur on the part of the TU Braunschweig, students shall be enabled to complete the exam by continuing or repeating it at a later date in the same exam period.

VII. Examination script inspection

The exact implementation of the exam script inspection depends on the colours of the teaching and examination traffic lights. If the teaching or examination traffic light is yellow, the exam script inspection can take place in-person. If the examination traffic light is orange, this is also possible adhering to the minimum distance (1.5 m) and the minimum space per person (10 m^2/person). If the examination traffic light is set to red, exam script inspections are to be conducted via video conference. It is then recommended to view and discuss the individual exam as a digital scan in a video conference on the screen. Due to the pandemic situation, the exam script inspection may initially be limited to persons whose exam performance was assessed as "nicht bestanden" ("failed") or "nicht ausreichend" ("insufficient") and who wish to take part in a resit. According to the APO, students have one year to submit an application for exam script inspection.

VIII. Documentation

- Declaration of academic integrity (in German)
- Instructions for configuration of BigBlueButton (in German): Anleitungsvideo „Klausur mit Videoaufsicht für Studierende" und PDF-Anleitung

The attachments to this document can be found under the following link:

https://cloudstorage.tu-braunschweig.de/getlink/fiGQpMcd5hXZCbKcBpTuJsUb/Anlagen