



Amsterdam University College
Liberal Arts & Sciences in a Global City

AUC Board of Examiners
Annual Report 2022-2023



Table of Contents

1. Foreword.....	3
2. Composition, scope and functioning of the Board of Examiners.....	4
3. Meetings and main agenda items of the plenary meetings.....	4
Table 1. Agenda items and decisions.....	4
4. Overview requests/appeals/cases of plagiarism/cases of fraud.....	7
Table 1. Overview of requests handled by the Board of Examiners in academic year 2022-23.....	7
Table 2. Overview of plagiarism/fraud cases handled by the Board of Examiners in academic year 2022-23	8
Table 3. Overview of transfer of credit/waiver requests received for starters 2022-23	8
Table 4. Overview of students requesting Study Abroad course approval	8
Table 5. Overview of Admissions requests	9
Table 6. Overview of BSA cases in the academic year 2022-23 (before appeals to VU COBEX).....	9
Table 7. Overview of appeals to VU COBEX in the academic year 2022-23	9
5. Reflection on identified areas of concern	10
6. Quality assurance of test and exams	10
7. Assigning and instructions of examiners.....	10
8. Fraud and plagiarism.....	10
9. Other decisions/findings of the Board of Examiners	11
10. Recommendations on Academic Standards and Procedures.....	11
11. Areas of concern for the new (2023-24) academic year.....	11

1. **Foreword**

The academic year 2022/2023 was characterized by the start of three new members in the Board of Examiners, the introduction of new support staff, the implementation of the curriculum revision AUC Next as well as the BOE policy plan (BOE Next) to address workload and agency in the institute.

The main areas of attention of the Board have been separated into four different portfolio's for each member, specifically:

- internal policy plan and advising on AS&P;
- quality control and quality awareness;
- procedures and standards for graduation, and lastly
- internal and external connections, and organisation of BOE.

Significant progress was made implementing a more structured approach to BOE's tasks and responsibilities, mandating decisions to examiners and coordinators where possible, as well as reducing unnecessary procedures in the AS&P. For example deadline extensions for both CPI and Capstone are mandated to coordinators, and course load reduction requests have become redundant. An efficient procedure to decide on off campus courses and minors has been implemented.

Implementation of AUC Next and the transition to numerical grades, in combination with changes in the support staff, required a thorough check on the graduation process and in particular the diploma supplement.

The transition to a new plagiarism software in fall 2022, lead to a sharp increase in the amount of suspected plagiarism cases. Further litigation of education, and complexity of rules additionally increased both the number and the complexity of appeals.

Quality control has been restructured involving a critical assessment of the peer review, and utilizes data available in Canvas. In concert with the registrar a project was started to develop a new system to archive courses materials and assessments in a more effective way.

Connections were strengthened with both VU and UVA communities involved in examinations and legal issues both on secretarial and on chair level. The external member brought in connections to expertise in the VU medical faculty, additionally one member doubles as external member of the PPLE Examinations Board at UVA Law faculty. Regular exchange of ideas in the meetings of chairs of examination committees both at VU and UVA brought in valuable expertise.

At the close of 2022, the emergence of large language models like Chat GPT imposed a threat to validity of certain types of assessments. The BOE proactively participated in a series of workshops and fora to gain expertise on these threats as well as find ways to mitigate its impact. In consultation with the management team, a series of measures were executed, including a vulnerability analyses, establishment of a dedicated task force, a redefinition of fraud in the AS&P, and an AI week to share expertise and adapt or redesign assessment. The quick and timely implementation of these measures provided the necessary foundation for validity of assessments. The Board will continue to monitor these developments and intervene whenever necessary to safeguard the quality of our diploma.

2. Composition, scope and functioning of the Board of Examiners

Composition:

The Board of Examiners for the academic year 2022-23 was composed of the following members:

Dr. A.C. Lankreijer, AUC, Chair (full period)

Ms. D. Achourioti, MA, AUC, Vice-Chair (full period)

Dr. O.J. Tans, AUC, Vice-Chair (full period)

Dr. F.J. Krijnen, AUC, Vice-Chair (full-period)

Dr. T. Pattij, VU, external member (full period)

Secretary (not a member)

Ms. D. Dimitrova (full period)

Ms. H. Beks (until 1 July 2023)

Scope and Functioning:

The Board of Examiners (BoE) guards the quality of assessment within the bachelor programme of the Amsterdam University College (AUC). The Board members are appointed by the Science Deans. The affiliation of the BoE members, activities, responsibilities and duties of the BoE are defined by Dutch legislation. Four of the five members of the BoE teach at AUC; the fifth member is an external member. The BoE meets at least four times annually and convenes for internal meetings weekly during the academic year. The meetings are planned, prepared, and convened by the Secretary. The agenda of the meetings includes: welcome (and apologies of absentees), minutes of the last meeting, a list of subjects that need discussion or aruling, and finally 'any other business'. The Secretary handles all correspondence to and from the Board of Examiners including appeals, and requests from AUC students and reports of fraud/plagiarism.

Procedure appeals/requests to the Board of Examiners:

- All requests and appeals to the Board of Examiners must be submitted by the student after consultation with their tutor
- All formal requests are to be sent to the Secretary of the Board of Examiners
- The Board has internal meetings weekly to discuss appeals and requests
- After the Board has decided, the Secretary communicates the decision to the student

3. Meetings and main agenda items of the plenary meetings

Table 1. Agenda items and decisions

27-09-2022 (Plenary 57)	
Topics	Decisions
AUC Midterm Review Report	The AUC Mid-Term Review Report was discussed, with the Board's key reflection points and recommendations to be summarized and presented in a memo for (E)MT.
BSA guidelines	The BoE has endorsed the BSA guidelines for the 2022-23 academic year
Evaluation of graduation process	The BoE discussed the graduation checks and overall diploma process for the 2021-22 academic year. Taking in consideration the reflection provided by former BoE vice-chair Dr. Brown, the BoE's evaluation and recommendations will be summarized in a memo to be sent to MT.

Digitalisation of BoE internal processes	TopDesk internal procedure to be developed and piloted
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29-11-2022 (Plenary 58)	
Topics	Decisions
Annual report 2021-22	The BoE annual report for the 2021-22 academic year has been finalised and approved for publishing
AUC Next	Several areas of concern with regards to the implementation of 'AUC Next' were discussed, in addition to the implications of the potential structural changes for the internal procedures of the BoE. It has been agreed to communicate the BoE's input and recommendations via a memo to the Management Team, also in line with the proposals outlined in BoE Next
BoE Next	An evaluation of the various functions and responsibilities of the BoE has been incorporated in the memo 'BoE Next', further discussions with the Dean and other relevant parties to be planned in the upcoming months. This memo will also be communicated to the AS&P committee for consideration during the AS&P revision cycle.

08-02-2023 (Plenary 59)	
Topics	Decisions
ChatGPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on ChatGPT workshop: despite the lower than anticipated attendance, the discussion following the presentation on ChatGPT has led to valuable insights, which the BoE deems an important foundation for further steps in policy development and addressing concerns regarding ChatGPT. • Evaluation and BoE involvement: the BoE has noted that it is necessary to mobilise expertise and make information available across the institute, e.g. via the introduction of a taskforce. The BoE will continue liaising with MT and monitor the implementation of concerted and timely actions for safeguarding the quality of assessments.
Evaluation BoE Next	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BoE has discussed the evaluation of the Board's functioning and tasks (in connection to BoE Next). The BoE will plan a meeting with the Dean, also including the new DoE in the discussion. • With regards to workload, it has been noted that there is an apparent division between 'formal' and 'informal' time that is internally designated with the various duties of the Board members. • In this context, it has also been noted that there is a noteworthy increase in plagiarism cases reported to the Board since the beginning of the 2022-23 academic year; this is in addition to an increase in incoming off-campus course requests, which would necessitates revisiting the internal procedure for handling such requests.

12-04-2023 (Plenary 60)	
Topics	Decisions
BoE Rules and Guidelines revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed revision of the BoE Rules and Guidelines includes updates to align with the 2022-23 AS&P, and the addition of art. 7.2, based on UvA guidance regarding assessment and AI. • The proposed revisions will be sent to the Board of Studies and the Student council for recommendation • Following advice from the relevant parties, the guidelines will be formally adopted during the next Plenary session of the Board.

ChatGPT	Turnitin AI-detection has been introduced and the Board is following closely the UvA guidance regarding the use of this AI-detection tool.
AS&P revision cycle	Updates following the 4th consultation meeting of the AS&P committee, where the Board holds an advisory role, were discussed and the Board's recommendations will be forwarded to the committee before the next session in April.
BoE mandate: Capstone and CP/I extensions	Following consultation with the relevant parties, the Board has formally granted mandates to the Capstone and CP/I coordinators regarding extension requests.
Accommodations policy	The Board has discussed the internal policy regarding academic accommodations, more specifically regarding the approach to granting use of separate rooms during exams, and extra time during exams.
Plagiarism procedure and reporting form revision	The plagiarism form for reporting fraud/plagiarism has been updated to include the Turnitin Similarity report when submitting cases.

05-07-2023 (Plenary 61)	
Topics	Decisions
BoE Rules and Guidelines revision	Following feedback from the Board of Studies and the Student Council, the revised BoE Rules and Guidelines have been approved and published
Assessment Committee Report 2021-22	The Assessment Committee report for the 2021-22 academic year has been formally approved and published
AI Taskforce report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BoE has discussed the impact of the introduced temporary measure setting a 55% minimum of assessments to be conducted in class. • The BoE has also discussed the upcoming AI Week, which is to take place at the beginning of the Autumn 2023 semester. • The BoE has noted that AUC is at the forefront of addressing AI in academia and its impact on assessments, commending the initiative and transparent communication within the institute. • The BoE will continue monitoring the development of policies and approaches to AI and assessments within AUC, as well as on the broader institutional level.
Overview BoE requests 2022-23	An overview of the requests submitted to the BoE has been presented. The BoE has noted an overall decline in the number of requests; this will be further outlined and reflected upon in the next annual report.
Streamlining TopDesk procedure for handling student requests	An adjustment of the internal procedures for handling student requests via TopDesk has been agreed upon, with the purpose to further streamline the processing of off-campus course requests.
BoE annual report timeline	The BoE has decided on an adjustment of the timeline for completing the annual report, with the aim to align this with the timeline of the annual report produced by the MT at the end of the calendar year. Therefore, the second plenary session of the BoE will now take place in November, instead of December.

4. Overview requests/appeals/cases of plagiarism/cases of fraud

A variety of requests were brought forward to the Board of Examiners during the 2022-23 academic year. In comparison with the number of requests received during the 2021-22 academic year (1534), there has been a decrease in the total number of requests submitted to the Board of Examiners.

During the 2022-23 academic year there were a total of 1313 requests.

The number of off-campus course requests has been on the increase for several years. This trend has continued during the 2022-23 academic year.

Total number of cases handled	1313
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Table 1. Overview of requests handled by the Board of Examiners in academic year 2022-23.

Request type	total	approved	denied
Off-campus course recognition (within 180 ecs)	486	454	32
• Of which language off campus requests	15	8	7
• No decision made ¹	80		
Off-campus course recognition (outside 180ec)	26	23	3
Exemptions	94	61	18
• Graduation requirements	36	25	11
• Attendance policy	36	33	3
• Other	7	3	4
• No decision made	15		
Accommodation requests	48	18	12
• No decision made	18		
Switch major	22	15	1
• No decision made	6		
Minor requests	51	47	1
• No decision made	3		
Extension requests	66	41	6
• No decision made	19		

¹ This category includes requests that were submitted via an incorrect form, and incomplete requests.

Capstone extensions:	74	66	8
Additional semesters			
7 th semester	35	26	1
• No decision made	8		
8 th or more semester	24	23	1
• No decision made	0		
Course load reductions	148	93	22
• No decisions made	33		
AS&P requests	0		
Other requests	101	30	12
• No decisions made	59		
Capstone discrepancies			
• Grade revision/appeal	0		
• Thesis grade discrepancy	3		

Table 2. Overview of plagiarism/fraud cases handled by the Board of Examiners in academic year 2022-23

Total reports: 49	No sanction	Allowed to resubmit assignment	Strong warning	0.0 for assignment	1.0 for course	Suspension	Assessment declared invalid
1 st Offence	3	1	19	20	0	0	0
2 nd Offence	0	0	2	3	0	0	1
3 rd Offence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3. Overview of transfer of credit/waiver requests received for starters 2022-23

	Delegated to	Total	Approved	Denied	No decision made
Credit transfer/waiver requests	DoE	17	10	7	0

Table 4. Overview of students requesting Study Abroad course approval

Students requesting Study Abroad course approval (Delegated to HoS)	Total 50
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Autumn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total applications Total rejected students Total selected students Students who went on exchange 	53 ² 2 ³ 51 ⁴ 42 ⁵
Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total applications Total rejected students Total selected students Students who went on exchange 	11 ⁶ 1 ⁷ 10 ⁸ 8 ⁹
Note: VU destinations are not available for AUC students in Spring		

Table 5. Overview of Admissions requests

	Submitted	Admitted
Total number of admissions requests	1497	669, of which 316 students commenced their studies as per 1 September 2023

Table 6. Overview of BSA cases in the academic year 2022-23 (before appeals to VU COBEX)

	Total BSA cases	Dispensation	Postponement letters	Negative BSA
First year students	272	2	0	19

Table 7. Overview of appeals to VU COBEX in the academic year 2022-23

Total appeals		22
	Amicable settlement reached	17
	No amicable settlement reached	1
Total hearings with VU COBEX		2 ¹⁰
	Appeal declared founded	0
	Appeal declared unfounded	1
Number of appeals withdrawn by student		3
Number of still ongoing cases		0

² AUC destinations: 13, UvA destinations: 35, VU destinations: 6

³ Both for UvA destinations

⁴ AUC destinations: 13, UvA destinations: 32, VU destinations: 6

⁵ AUC destinations: 12, UvA destinations: 26, VU destinations: 4

⁶ AUC destinations: 5, UvA destinations: 6

⁷ for UvA destination

⁸ AUC destinations: 5, UvA destinations: 5

⁹ AUC destinations: 3, UvA destinations: 5)

¹⁰ One of the appeals was settled amicably after hearing at the VU COBEX.

5. Reflection on identified areas of concern

The Board raised concerns regarding its workload in 2022 and implemented a number of measures to reduce its workload. In concert with the MT a number of measures were implemented, including mandating decisions where possible to examiners, Capstone and CPI coordinators and the DOE. Additionally a number of changes were implemented in the AS&P to clarify responsibility and reduce unnecessary steps. This appears to have effected in a somewhat reduced workload. On the other hand increasing litigation resulted in an increase in COBEX appeals. Additionally new developments in plagiarism and fraud detection lead to an increase in cases. Further, the emergence of AI and its effect on reliability of certain types of assessment has resulted in a series of recommendations by the BOE. For part of the academic year the BOE has been assisted by a legal secretary.
ACTION Dean, BOE and DOE; discuss workload, support and allocation.

The graduation process was again closely monitored by the BOE, as a result of changes in staff and has resulted in recommendations for next year. Adaptation to the new grading system has been effectively implemented by the graduation team.

ACTION: Registrar, DOE, implement recommendations

The emergence of AI has concerned the BOE. In cooperation with Dean and DOE, a vulnerability assessment and a student query have been performed, leading to the identification of risks and vulnerabilities. The BOE actively participated in a taskforce on AI, resulting among others in a training week and instructions on assessments. The BOE recognizes the progress made and recommends further actions, among others the revision of the Assessment Framework.

ACTION DOE, BOE BOS. Revise Assessment Framework, and DOE and BOE discuss further steps to safeguard assessment.

6. Quality assurance of test and exams

Quality assessment of courses is performed by the Quality Assessment committee, here we summarize the main points of the assessment in 2023.

Peer review is the main quality assurance cycle on the level of individual courses. Completion rate as well as continuity of the quality control process need attention, in particular involving partner faculty. ACTION HOS

Archiving course materials, including actual assessments and quality control documents is clearly insufficient. A project to develop a digital archive is currently running and needs be implemented before the next quality cycle. ACTION DOE & registrar

Awareness of and general adherence to grading and assessment policy appears to be declining. A revitalization of the assessment framework in combination with discussion in the teams specifically including external faculty. ACTION DOE

The quality of the capstone was assessed by the independent capstone quality committee and their overall assessment continues to be positive both on quality as well as on quality control mechanisms. This year a transparent plagiarism procedure was introduced. Further formalizing and recording the appointment of assessors are included in the BOE's action to streamline the appointment of examiners.

Quality control of community projects and internships is hampered by development of the CPI to a new format. The Board notes that an independent assessment of the CPI and its quality control mechanisms is duly needed.

The BOE made recommendations for the external assessment of testing, as outlined in the Assessment Framework, including making the outcomes, useable in a larger context than the courses involved, and reflecting on the Quality Assurance cycle. ACTION DOE

7. Assigning and instructions of examiners

The BOE has drafted an updated protocol on appointment of examiners, including capstone supervisors and readers, that is currently being discussed. ACTION DOE, HOS and Registrar.

8. Fraud and plagiarism

- The number of reported plagiarism cases has increased since the implementation of Turnitin in Fall 2022. The Board suspects that an unknown number of cases remain unreported. ACTIONS:
 - For regular courses the HoS check that lecturers comply with measures taken to prevent plagiarism and fraud.
 - The Assessment Committee monitors this as part of the internal quality assessment cycle of regular courses.
 - For Capstone theses a plagiarism check is now integrated in the Capstone procedure.

9. Other decisions/findings of the Board of Examiners

We noticed again a (small) number of students not meeting graduation criteria in the last moment, and recommend an early provisional graduation check before the final semester. ACTION: MT ST

10. Recommendations on Academic Standards and Procedures

The Board of Examiners advises a careful monitoring of the effects of the changes in the AS&P on study delay, BSA and course enrollment and course capacity.

The Board further recommends developing a policy on external (online) courses. ACTION AS&P discussion

11. Areas of concern for the new (2023-24) academic year

The BOE will continue to monitor and remains proactive in adapting to the emergence of AI. Workload remains an important concern as well as further litigation.