

Call for papers –Special issue

Examination in the context of competence-oriented higher education

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To the main topic

Exams are a central part of the everyday life of teachers and students at colleges and universities. Consequently, examinations must also be considered when discussing the quality of teaching and learning. Competency-oriented assessment at universities means addressing the question of whether students have developed competencies in a way that enables them to solve relevant problems (Schindler, 2015; Fröhlich-Steffen, Den Ouden & Gießmann, 2019). We are referring to an established concept of competence. Weinert (2014, p. 27) defines competence as the cognitive abilities and skills that individuals have or can learn through them in order to solve certain problems, as well as the associated motivational, volitional and social readiness and abilities to solve problems in variable situations to be able to use it successfully and responsibly. Competence-oriented education does not mean, however, that every certificate of achievement of a course or every examination has to be competence-oriented. This definition shows that knowledge and ability alone are not enough, but that motivation and inner personal attitudes are inherent in the concept of competence. In order to acquire those cognitive abilities and skills during or after completing a course, it is essential to consider the type of competencies to be tested, to adapt the type of examination accordingly and to make the examination requirements transparent. In addition, fair performance reviews are an important prerequisite for student-centered teaching (Noller, Beitz-Radzio, Kugelmann, Sontheimer & Westerholz, 2021).

At the same time, specific, sometimes little reflected or even problematic assessment cultures have developed in different institutions of formal education and in different subjects, which have a strong impact on teaching and learning within the organizations (Döbler, 2019).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many teachers were forced to restructure their teaching and also use online formats for assessments. As a result, virulent scientific discourses on online teaching and online exams have been gaining new momentum and explosiveness for some time (see, for example, Halbherr, Dittmann-Domenichini, Piendl & Schlienger, ZFHE 11/2016; Wolf, 2007; Lin & Dwyer, 2006). The current situation makes it clear that competence-oriented teaching, learning and testing, both online and in person, are becoming increasingly important for the numerous actors at all levels in universities.

Against this background, the following subject areas, which can be the basis for contributions, are relevant for university managers, for higher education third space professionals, for university policy actors, for those responsible for degree programs as well as for teachers and students:

Relationship between exams, teaching objectives and teaching:

- Constructive alignment between course content / objectives, exams and learning outcomes;
- Review of the achievement of the teaching / learning objectives of a course or module; Questions about the conception of such teaching / learning goals;
- Competency-based perspectives on performance reviews in specific content areas;

Development and realization of exams:

- Construction of examination tasks as well as their evaluation and assessment;
- Didactic questions about the use of written or oral exams;
- Use of student-centered, action-oriented and / or simulation-based performance reviews;

Organizational and legal questions about exams:

- Approaches and perspectives for the implementation of competence-oriented examination formats in the curricula of various university disciplines;
- University policy and organizational questions about online exams;
- Legal challenges and problems, such as copyright issues when using multimedia in teaching and examination systems (Burgstaller, 2017; Fischer & Dieterich, 2020);
- Reform of study modules or entire study programs in the direction of competence-oriented examination formats;
- Questions about the security, data protection and reliability of online examination systems;

References

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Guidelines regarding the journal

The ZFHE is a peer-reviewed online journal that publishes scientific contributions of practical relevance concerning current higher education development issues. The focus is on didactical, structural, and cultural developments in teaching and learning. Topics that are innovative and still regarded as open in respect of their design options are preferred.

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Submission information

German or English contributions may be submitted in two possible formats:

Scientific contributions within the main theme should comply with the following criteria: The contribution...

- presents innovative perspectives, arguments, problem analyses etc. on the key topic;
- focuses on essential aspects of the key topic;
- is theoretically supported (i.e. it offers a clear connection to the scientific discourse of the topic under discussion);
- provides scientific insights with added value at least in some parts;

- clearly elucidates the methodology used to acquire knowledge;
- follows the relevant citation rules consistently (APA style, 6th edition);
- comprises up to 33,600 characters (incl. spaces, as well as cover page, bibliography and author information)

Workshop reports comprise the instructional presentation of practical experience, good practice examples, design concepts, pilot projects, etc. Workshop reports should comply with the following criteria:

- demonstrates potential for knowledge transfer;
- describes illustrative aspects and factors for the purpose of theory formation;
- systematically and transparently presented (e.g., no incomprehensible clues to details in an area of practice);
- follows the relevant citation rules consistently (APA style, 6th edition);
- up to 21,600 characters (incl. spaces, as well as cover page, bibliography and author information).

Submission and review schedule

October 31, 2021 – Submission deadline for complete articles: Please upload your contribution(s) to the ZFHE journal system (<https://www.zfhe.at>) in the corresponding section (scientific contribution, workshop report) of ZFHE 16/3 issue in anonymous format. To do so, you must first register as an author in the system.

January 14, 2022 – Feedback/Reviews: Scientific contributions and workshop reports are evaluated in a double-blind process (see below).

February 10, 2022 – Revision deadline: Where necessary, contributions may be revised according to feedback and recommendations from the reviews.

March 2022 – Online publication: In March 2022, the finalized contributions are published under <https://www.zfhe.at> and also made available in print.

Review Process

All submitted contributions will be examined in a double-blind peer review process to guarantee scientific quality. The editors of the current issue propose the reviewers for the respective theme and allocate individual contributions to the reviewers; they also determine which contributions will be accepted. The selection of reviewers and the review process for each thematic issue are always supervised by a member of the editorial board.

Formatting and submission

In order to save valuable time with the formatting of the contributions, we kindly ask that all authors work with the template from the beginning. The template can be downloaded from the ZFHE website under the following links:

https://www.zfhe.at/userupload/ZFHE_17-1_TEMPLATE.docx

https://www.zfhe.at/userupload/ZFHE_17-1_TEMPLATE_en.docx

Since we must be able to edit the texts, they must be submitted unlocked/unprotected in in Microsoft Word (.doc), Office Open XML (.docx), Open Document Text (.odt) or Plain Text (.txt) format. Please do not submit any PDF files! Submissions in the “Scientific Contribution” and “Workshop Report” categories must first be made in anonymous format in order to guarantee the double-blind review process. Please remove all references to the author(s) of the document (including in the document properties!). Upon a positive review result, this information will be re-inserted.

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding the content of the issue, please contact Karin Sonnleitner (karin.sonnleitner@uni-graz.at) oder Martin Gartmeier (martin.gartmeier@tum.de). For technical and organizational questions, please contact Elisabeth Stadler (office@zfhe.at).

We look forward to your submissions!
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