

## Comment, Complaint, Right of Inspection and Appeal procedure against assessment (evaluation) of the exam

Due to legal requirements, the original copies of the exams with the comments by the examiner (Course Instructor) are archived and not returned to students. However, in line with the Education and Examination Regulations (EER), students do have the right *to comment* on the exam, *to inspect* the assessed exams, *to file a complaint*, and to *appeal* the assessment with the UM Board of Appeal for the Examinations (CBE).

### **Comments**

*(Article 5.1 of the EER)*

Within five (5) days after the examination date students can submit (general) comments (e.g. *unclear questioning, ambiguous multiple choice answers, remarks on given assignment*) regarding written examinations with open and/or closed questions (*Multiple Choice*) or parts thereof or the answer key to the Course Coordinator according to the rules as published in the syllabus and/or by the MSM education office. The comments procedure allows students to submit comments regarding written examinations and/or the answer key with the aim of filtering out inaccuracies regarding the written examination prior to the publication of the grades.

Decisions taken following these comments hold for all students participating in the exam, and will in general be communicated via the MSM education office, but not necessarily by individual responses.

### **Right of Inspection**

*(Article 5.2 of the EER)*

Within ten (10) working days from the publication date of the official exam result in FullFabric, the student may inspect his/her exam. At the inspection, the student can consult the assessed written exam or written part of an examination, the examination itself and the norms applicable to the assessment, for example using an answer key.

Students will timely receive the opportunity and information regarding to the inspection date, time and location announced by the MSM education office.

Course Instructors can also choose to organise an open office hour for inspection, or to make individual arrangements with students who ask for an inspection of their exam.

The primary focus of the inspection is to compare the answer key and norms with the own answers given, thereby receiving feedback to assist in learning.

### **Complaints**

*(Article 5.2 of the EER)*

If, during the inspection, students disagree with the grading, they can lodge a motivated complaint regarding the assessment.

- In case the Course Instructor is not available for the inspection, the student may fill out the "Complaint Form" (*which will replace the inspection with the Course Instructor*).
- When Course Instructors have chosen to organize an open office hour or meeting for the inspection, this complaint procedure can be oral.

Within a reasonable time (*typically five (5) working days*) the Course Instructor will respond with a motivated individual decision to the student.

### Appeal

If after having inspected the exam a student is not satisfied with the feedback and decisions taken by the Course Instructor and thinks the assessment is not justified, (s)he may appeal the assessment with the UM Board of Appeal for the Examinations (CBE). However, it should be noted that the Board of Appeal cannot (re)assess the contents of an exam as such, but will only look into formal aspects of the assessment.

The Board of Examiners (BoE) receives the appeal from the Board of Appeal and investigates the case first. In doing so, the BoE investigates if there are reasons to doubt the given assessment, e.g. by checking if the School procedures and course regulations were correctly followed. By law the BoE must hold back in discussing content matters. The only possibility to discuss the content of an exam is with the Course Instructor of a course, following the above described comment, inspection and complaint procedures. It is therefore in both the student's, the School's, the MSM's and the UM's interest that students first follow these specific procedures before they consider to appeal the assessment.

### Appeal procedure

A student may appeal a grade (or other decisions of examiners or the BoE) within six (6) weeks after its announcement. Appealing an assessment is an elaborate, formal procedure, which is not dealt with on the Faculty's level, but by the UM's Board of Appeal for Examinations (CBE), following legal procedures.

The appeal should include the grounds on which the appeal is based and, if possible, a copy of the decision being appealed.

- The Board of Examiners, after having received notice of the appeal, invites the student for a (*online*) meeting to establish if the case can be settled without the Board of Appeal for Examinations handling of the appeal. If the Board of Examiners finds reasons to doubt the given assessment, they may offer a settlement to amicably settle the appeal.
  - *If a settlement is reached, the appeal is considered to have been dealt with and the applicant will be asked to withdraw the appeal.*
  - *If the Board finds no reason to doubt the original assessment, they will not offer a settlement.*
- The student can then still decide to withdraw or continue the appeal. If the student decides to continue the appeal, the Board of Examiners will submit a written defence to the CBE and the case will be dealt with in a public session. The CBE's decision (*in Dutch because of legal requirements*) will be communicated in writing.

The above explanation shows that lodging an appeal is a formal procedure, which is maybe best compared to taking a case to court. Although many students expect otherwise, neither the Board of Appeal nor the Board of Examiners re-assesses exam papers content wise, nor can they raise the grade of a paper. The BoE is also not acting as a mediator between student and Course Instructor but acts as an independent board. The BoE will check if the assessment and inspection procedures were followed correctly, if the given assessment was reflected in the given grade, if there was a qualified examiner etc. In doing so, the BoE tries to find out if there are any reasons to doubt the assessment (procedure) made by the examiner.

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The Board of Examiners only offers a settlement (*e.g. re-assessment of an exam*) if they have reason to doubt the assessment. It is considered correct if the exam work was assessed under the right conditions (*e.g., not limited: the examiner is qualified; assessment procedures were followed properly*).

In accordance with Art. 7.61 of the WHW an appeal can be send to Complaint Service Point, P.O. Box 616, 6200 MD Maastricht, [complaintsservice@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:complaintsservice@maastrichtuniversity.nl). For more information regarding the appeal procedure, please be referred to the website of the University Maastricht via the following link, <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/support/during-your-studies/complaints-service-point/filing-appeal>