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GUIDELINES FRAMEWORK

FOR ALTERNATIVE COURSE EVALUATION METHODS

Emergency procedure due to COVID-19 pandemic

INTRODUCTION

The severe restrictions imposed because of the pandemic COVID -19, have forced the University since October 27th, 2020 (8th week of Fall Semester 2020-21) to continue offering all courses through distance education methods.

In this operating framework, it is necessary to design and implement alternative methods/forms of evaluation of the courses offered. The achievement of students' learning outcomes, including official interim and/or final exams, must be evaluated by the academic staff with proven and fair alternative remote ways.

This guideline framework provides a summary for:

A. Examples of alternative remote methods/forms of evaluation, to be used depending on the specific features of each Faculty, Department and/or individual courses of a study program.

B. Basic principles which will need to be taken into consideration from each Faculty, Department when selecting a method of examination and how it will be done remotely for the final exam (A.1) or for the midterm exams (A.2).

C. Details about additional information and guidance.

A. EXAMPLES OF ALTERNATIVE DISTANCE EVALUATION METHODS / FORMS

A.1 ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR FINAL EXAMS

These three methods, separately or in combination, generally reflect the approach of the official final examination:

A.1.1 Assignment of individual work :

This can take the form of a project or other type of individual work. The assignment and submission can be done through Moodle ("Assignment" tool) or by e-mail or otherwise within a specified period. The task can be controlled using the Turnitin plagiarism checker tool (which is integrated into Moodle). Alternatively, professors who do not use Moodle, can access Turnitin online with the assistance of the University Library staff, and request for paper submissions through Turnitin for plagiarism control.

A.1.2 Examination with open questions (Take-home exams):

Students can receive the instructions/text of the exam through Moodle (or other online tool) and submit their answers within a specified period of time (eg. the same day / next day or until some final day and time) via Moodle (or other tool). Students will work remotely, without supervision, and will have online access to resources/books for the specified period. Make sure there is proper communication with the students about the instructions on how to complete and submit their answers. These tests involve exercises that require critical thinking, are complex, do not involve encyclopedic knowledge, and require the use of multiple sources to answer.

A.1.3 Online quiz evaluation (online quiz):

There is a number of online quiz options that can be implemented through Moodle, such as a mix of multiple choice questions and short answers, with a timed duration.

In this method:

- The test begins and ends for all registered users at the same time.
- There is a timer (minimizing opportunities for student interaction).
- Questions appear randomly for users (so copying becomes more difficult).
- Questions can be chosen randomly based on a database of questions, so each student may see a different question from the other. E.g. for a test of 10 questions, each question is randomly selected from a questions database comprising three similar type questions (ie. 30 questions in the base).
- In case of formulas and equations, there are suitable additional tools in Moodle. The most practical option is for the student to prepare the solution on his own computer, e.g. using the equation editor in Word or any other preferable tool in order to upload the final file. However, a pencil and paper can also be used and an image of the solution can be attached for evaluation (with the student's responsibility to make the image clear and legible).

Notes:
- The duration of the test is recommended to be shorter than the traditional test. It must be adapted to the way of evaluation that will be chosen and to the peculiarities that it has. Exceptions and time extensions should be applied for student categories who had special testing circumstances as before.
- It is useful for instructors to prepare a trial examination process with their students to familiarize themselves with the examination method and to identify any problems with the specific audience early enough. This will reduce students' anxiety about using the tools and the instructor will have a better idea of how to examine.
- Negative scores (deduction of points) should be avoided for any incorrect answers to the quiz questions.
- It is emphasized that in any case the severity of the final examination cannot exceed 60%.

A.2 ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR PENDING CONTINUOUS EVALUATION ISSUES

These methods could be considered as an online alternative solution to classroom assessments (in a classroom/laboratory) and/or through face-to-face interaction. They could also be used as complementary to final exams, provided that they can effectively contribute to the evaluation of learning outcomes of the course.

A.2.1 Alternative proposal for the submission of a paper or exam paper in printed format

The assignment tool in Moodle (or other tool) can be set up for individual or group work or examination essay submission, hosting a variety of file formats and allowing the setting of start and end dates. Students will be able to either write on the file with the topics and submit it online, or write the solutions on their own paper, photograph it with their mobile phone and post the photos at the submission point.

A.2.2 Alternative proposal for the oral examination

Oral exams should be used with caution and always as an additional form of evaluation method. Students and instructors can use Moodle tools or other tools (eg MS Teams, Google Hangouts/Meet, Skype , Big Blue Button / etc.) by using structured questions. It is recommended that the oral test be stored at Moodle or elsewhere for quality assurance purposes.

Individual or group oral examination through a modern communication tool can be used in a random or deliberately selected sample of students for the purpose of confirming/controlling other evaluation methods.

A.2.3 Alternative proposal for the mid-term examination in the classroom

Online quiz (see paragraph A.1.1 above).

A.2.4 Alternative proposal for presentation in the class

Small video segments may be submitted by a student or groups of students through the Assignment tool of Moodle. Other tools for creation (eg. Snagit) and video submission (eg. Youtube) can also be used. The same applies to an audio presentation (without image), which the student can record on a mobile phone or computer and submit it. Alternatively, students can give their presentations in real-time with screen sharing and they can also share their presentations online with the professor and their classmates in advance.

A.2.5 Alternative proposal for group work/project

• Online group discussions, using various tools of real-time communication.

• Electronic submission of group work (assignment) via Moodle.

Note: Where required, a longer deadline can be given for submission

A.2.6 Alternative proposal in the evaluation of active participation in the course

• To take into account the participation in courses that have been done beforehand in the classroom by physical presence.

• Online contributions during online discussions so that the active participation of each student can be evaluated.

B. BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION FORMS

VALIDITY AND TRANSPARENCY

• The learning objectives of the course and the teaching and learning methods should be in line with the proposed alternative assessment. For example, if the questions in a final exam control critical thinking, then alternative assessment should also test the same skill.

• To ensure that students have sufficient skills to demonstrate their distance learning, they should have the opportunity, where possible, to try in advance the new alternative methods, without being scored. If the proposed solution does not introduce new methods, this is not considered necessary.

• Students should receive clear detailed instructions on all aspects of the tasks and the completion of the remote evaluation, including information such as the required file formats, any time restrictions, if they can make corrections/appeal, how many times they are allowed for electronic submission of answers/assignments, etc.

• Students should be informed of any changes to the assessment methods in relation to the course outline distributed at the beginning of the semester.

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

• The alternative evaluation should require an equivalent effort by the students, eg. estimated hours of student effort in assessment or word counting, time required to complete an online test, etc., such as if the test was performed using a conventional method.

• The instructors of each course should be aware that some students, for various reasons, may have difficulties in accessing distance learning and assessment. These students should be encouraged to inform in advance so that individual arrangements can be made where needed.

• For students who are eligible for additional exam time or other facilities, such as these are defined by the Student Development Center, appropriate and equivalent arrangements should be made on remote assessment issues.

• Each student, due to exceptional circumstances, has the right to apply and to receive an "incomplete degree" for one or more courses, as defined in Article 2.7 of the General Study Rules.

CREDIBILITY AND VALIDITY

• Students should be evaluated taking into consideration their unfamiliarity with the distance learning and learning context they have experienced.

• The evaluation criteria/weights initially assigned to each course may need to be adjusted to align with the alternative evaluation. It is important that any revised weighted criteria are communicated to students, their opinion is taken into account, and that in any case do not put them at a disadvantage.

• If it is decided to use Moodle for evaluation purposes, the academic staff and students should check their access to each specific course in advance.

• Alternative evaluation should be of equal importance to the one it replaces.

• The value and the calculation of the assessment that have already been completed (before the beginning of distance learning) should not be adapted in a way that is unfavorable to the students.

• To ensure the recording and storage of remote assessments of enrolled students in each course, a Moodle or other similar tool (eg. Google Classroom) that provides similar recording and storage capabilities is recommended. This does not preclude professors and students from using a range of online tools to support communication, collaboration and participation.

• If during an online examination professors are faced with connection problems, the examination will be scheduled again, with the responsibility of the instructor in consultation with students. In case of connection problems or other problems during the examination, students should immediately notify their professor (by phone) and/or keep evidence (eg. screen shots). It is understood that in this case a similar arrangement will be made.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

• In order to minimize concerns about academic integrity (inviolable), appropriate care should be taken when designing and implementing any alternative remote assessment. Here are some **general tips** for teachers:

   o Adjust the assessment by asking students to relate the topic/data to their experience or a specific context where possible.
   o Make the assessment in such a way that students are required to justify their argument, including documenting their choice with evidence.
   o A final written exam essay with complex problems, particularly in natural sciences, can be broken into smaller quizzes with multiple choice answer to Moodle.

 • Some **more specific** application **techniques** for remote examination include:

   o Use of a test with a reasonable time frame.
   o Randomization of multiple choice questions / short answers.
   o Use plagiarism control software for text-based tasks, not photos (Moodle has this tool).

- In case the final examination where the method needs to be shown and the work done, students can use a pencil and paper and send with a picture the work done.
- Use online proctoring (surveillance using camera of the computer) for final examination, whether it is few or randomly selected students.

PRIVACY

(Following instructions of the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection and the CUT Data Protection Officer)

The use of any evaluation tools should take into serious consideration the protection of participants' personal data. Special attention should be paid to file cases that include videos and images.

In particular, in the case of an oral examination:

- Audio and/or image recording requires explicit consent from all participants (teachers and students)
- The safe keeping of all records is under the responsibility of the evaluator and should be destroyed after a period of two (2) months.
- It is at the discretion of the instructor to decide whether the continued use of a computer camera during the exam will be required. In case the instructor requires the use of a camera then the following applies:
  - The consent of the student is required. The Instructor asks the student in advance (well before the examination) to complete and sign the "Consent Form for the Supervision of the Distance Online Course Examination".
  - In case the student does not consent to the camera use, then the Instructor should offer the written examination with physical presence as an alternative method (if the epidemiological situation allow this).
  - In case the epidemiological situation does not allow the conduct of a written examination with physical presence then the student will get an "incomplete grade" in the specific course. It is understood that the examination will be carried out in physical presence, as soon as conditions allow and in consultation with the instructor for the exact date/time.

C. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

- All University instructors and students have access to the Moodle distance learning platform at https://elearning.cut.ac.cy/
- The academics and students should confirm their access and if they have a problem or need assistance, please contact directly the IST Services at helpdesk@cut.ac.cy or by phone to 25002700.
- If there are students who do not have access to a computer and/or the internet, please also contact the IST Services at helpdesk@cut.ac.cy or phone to 25002700.

- The academics who need help in selecting and designing alternative forms of distance assessment can contact:
  - IST Services helpdesk@cut.ac.cy or phone: 25002700
  - Christos Rodosthenous at c.rodosthenous@cut.ac.cy
  - Learning Development Network (Antigoni Parmaxi) learning.network@cut.ac.cy or phone: 25002462

- The final exam schedule is prepared by the Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Services, in collaboration with each Department and based on the choices and needs of each program/courses. The exam period starts on the 5th of December 2020 and is extended until the 30th of December 2020.
- Educational material regarding the use of the Moodle platform tools https://elearning.cut.ac.cy has been uploaded to the platform online and all instructors can study it to properly plan the distance examination.

The Guidelines Framework was approved by the Committee of Academic Affairs, Library and Student Life at its 9th Meeting, dated 20/11/2020, and the Internal Quality Committee at its 41th Meeting, dated 23/11/2020 and ratified by the Rector's Council on the 25th of November 2020.