



**EXTERNAL EXAMINER  
TERMS OF REFERENCE  
(Spring 2015)**

Dear External Examiner,

thank you for agreeing to act as an independent, external examiner at Vesalius College, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). External Examiners (EE) are an important and integral part of the College's quality control and an important aspect of the College's aims to ensure that the Department's Learning Objectives, Teaching and Assignment methods as well as the desired learning outcomes are at an adequate, international standard.

Two closely interrelated aspects are of particular importance for the College's quality management process and we would there like you to focus on them as external examiner:

1. Feedback on the standards, quality, rigour and appropriateness of each individual course; the teaching testing methods and level of quality of students' answers
2. The coherence, quality and rigour of the general curriculum overall

**1. For the first aspect, please review –folder by folder- each course and assess:**

- the way each course addresses specific aspects of the Programme's Learning Objectives (The learning objectives of each Major are available on the Vesalius College Website and will be handed to you by the Heads of Department)
- The academic standards and rigour of the course material (including progression): is the course at the right level of academic demands? Are the learning objectives clearly stated and appropriate in terms of academic demands?
- The variety, appropriateness and rigour of assignments (Are the assignments appropriate for testing the right kind of knowledge/skill/attitudes? Are they rigorous enough?)
- Related to testing and assignments, please comment specifically on the **transparency, reliability, validity and objectivity of testing.**

**Transparency:** There are clear and detailed criteria against which students' performance is being judged and students are informed about them at the beginning of the course (included clearly in the syllabus) – does the instructor use clear and rigorous grading rubrics for each assignment?

**Reliability:** the assignment results in an accurate testing of the students' performance/knowledge (i.e. if the same knowledge domain was to be tested with a different assignment, the same outcome should occur)

**Validity:** the assignment is designed in a way that it actually tests the desired and appropriate learning objectives

**Objectivity:** two independent graders should –ideally- come to the same result / mark

- Outcome of testing / level of quality of student responses: are the student responses of the appropriate level of quality?
- **Appropriateness and Consistency of Grading:** Are the marks awarded at an appropriate level? Are they too high, too low? Are the grades/rubrics applied **consistently across the Programme by different instructors** (i.e. is there the same standard and rigour applied across courses and instructors, or do you detect significant variations?)

## **2. Coherence, quality and rigour of the general curriculum overall**

Secondly, please provide an assessment of the coherence, quality and rigour of the curriculum overall.

- Is the curriculum appropriately structured with the appropriate course content, serving the learning objectives?
- Are there any essential courses that you feel are missing in the curriculum?
- Is there a clear progression between courses (100, 200, 300 level?)
- Are the courses mutually reinforcing?

## **3. Best Practices?**

Please provide us with an indication of “Best practice” examples – i.e. courses that could be identified as models, performing well on all aspects and indicators.

In addition, we welcome any further comments you have about the quality of courses, teaching, assignments and the curriculum.

Please provide us with your written feed-back (in the form of a report) on the above-mentioned aspects. We are grateful for your independent external reviews and your important role in the College's quality assurance process.

With best wishes,

Joachim Koops  
Dean, Vesalius College