



Dhr. Prof. dr. F.P. Weerman
Kloveniersburgwal 48
1012 CX Amsterdam

Spuistraat 134
1012 VB Amsterdam
(020) 525 3278
fsr-fgw@uva.nl
studentenraad.nl/fgw

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Contactpersoon Angelina Senchi
Betreft **Suggestions regarding education during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Memo

Dear Dean, dear Fred,

As was discussed during the last *Overlegvergadering* (February 4th 2021) the FSR FGw would like to share the following list of suggestions for the board to consider when shaping, improving and reviewing education policy as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the council would like to stress that they bring forward these suggestions within the context of UvA students not having chosen to attend the university digitally.

- **Concerning Corona education in general, the FSR FGw suggests:**
 - i. Limiting the amount of work pressure on students (and teachers) and refraining from adding to the 'normal' workload.
 - E.g. no additional deadlines or extra (AVV) assignments.
 - ii. Guaranteeing that (international) students can finish their Bachelor, even when they are unable to attend physical classes in Amsterdam.
 - iii. Communicating clearly to the students if or how vaccination will influence their education.
 - E.g. how will it influence their ability to physically attend lectures.
 - iv. Reconsidering the schedule of (online) classes by taking into account the strenuousness of online education.
 - E.g. incorporating smaller online working groups to increase student engagement. This could mean: splitting up one large 3 hour working group into two smaller 1,5 hour working groups.
 - E.g. limiting the number of lectures (from the same program) being scheduled consecutively.
 - E.g. implementing more frequent breaks between and during courses.
 - v. Ensuring students can make a well-informed decision by sharing and setting up a multiple-situation plan (like the government 'road map') regarding physical, hybrid and

digital education for the upcoming academic year (2021-2022), which should be shared before the end of course/program registration. The multiple-situation plan should entail:

- An online education plan which overcomes the difficulties faced in the past year.
 - A hybrid education plan that ensures a limited number of students can attend physical class, without disadvantaging students that participate digitally (and vice versa).
 - A physical education plan for students present in Amsterdam or other parts of the Netherlands who can physically attend class, whilst considering those outside the country that are unable to join physically.
- vi. Ensuring students that need to acquire practical skills in a physical setting, get the opportunity to do so.
- E.g. students and programs dependent on archival work and/or excursions.
- vii. Prioritizing which students are in dire need of physical education.
- Whilst weighing in the 2nd and 3rd year students that haven't been a priority group for physical education in the past period.
- viii. Considering online education not as a reflection of physical education, but as a different kind of education.
- I.e. taking a closer look at the possibilities online education offers, opposed to imitating physical education in an online environment.

- ***Concerning reviewing, evaluating and learning from past experiences to improve future education, the FSR FGw suggests:***

- i. Improving course evaluation in a way that generates better and more feedback and/or information to help plan out the following academic year(s).
 - E.g. recognizing UvAQ's flaws and correcting them.
- ii. Setting up a survey for first year students where they can share how they've experienced digital education, in order to improve education experiences for future first year students.
- iii. Setting up a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of online activities or meet ups, to establish what endeavors could be improved, scrapped or continued as a practice.
 - E.g. extracurricular activities organized by the faculty.
- iv. Gaining insight into how many students at the faculty are prolonging their studies or dropping out due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to understand the obstacles they face and to prevent or aid them and future students in their (continued) academic endeavors at the faculty.

- ***Concerning the improvement of social cohesion at the faculty, the FSR FGw suggests:***

- i. Setting up more one-on-one or small-scale (physical) activities (similar to UvA walks) in lieu of larger-scale online get-togethers.
- ii. Supporting Study Associations by granting them more resources to give them the possibility to organize more attractive and/or unique events in lieu of the traditional 'borrel' or excursions that function poorly in a digital environment.
 - E.g. providing more financial aid, work space, access to certain utilities or programs.
 - E.g. establishing which Study Associations are inactive and, possibly, help recruit volunteers.
- iii. Organizing faculty-wide or program-centered activities, especially for programs that don't have active Study Associations.



- iv. Creating small scale (physical) spaces/settings for students to meet up in, so they can prepare for group assignments, discuss course material, study together, practice presentations. Especially when it concerns students who are unfamiliar with each other.
 - E.g. first-year students, students attending elective or interdisciplinary courses.
 - E.g. access to online Brainstorm applications.
 - E.g. on-site discussion 'nooks'.
- v. Implementing frequent (guided) faculty counseling sessions where students from different disciplines can meet up and express the difficulties they face.
- vi. Guaranteeing small scale or one-on-one (physical) contact moments between students and their lecturers, where students can discuss research papers, proposals, their thesis and other academic questions. Especially when it concerns larger programs.
 - E.g. advising teachers to plan (online) walk-in hours or Q&A sessions.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to hearing about any of the developments regarding this theme.

Yours sincerely,
On behalf of the FSR FGw,

Zazie van Dorp
Chair FSR FGw