

Online oral examination

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! Below, you will find some general guidelines for Artevelde UAS. Check out the exact instructions from your department and the lecturer of the course.

What is it?

An oral exam is an assessment method. The lecturer checks to what extent the student has mastered the predetermined objectives by means of a digital conversation. Usually, Microsoft Teams is used to conduct oral examinations.

In higher education, oral assessment is mostly used in two situations:

- An oral exam is especially used to assess insights, skills, attitudes, and/or competences that are difficult to assess in writing (for instance defending a viewpoint, critical thinking, argumentation).
- In specific circumstances, an oral examination is also used as an alternative for written exams. That is why, in corona times, it is likely you have more oral exams than you are used to.

Oral exams usually have a limited number of open response questions. An open response question is a question where a long(er) explanation is expected as an answer. So these are usually not multiple-choice questions or yes/no questions.

How can I prepare for an oral exam?

- You can see an oral exam as a demonstration where you think out loud about the content. You can practice this with others. Discuss the learning content. Study aloud, or let someone question you. This way, you can train in explaining what you know.
- Make sure that you understand the learning content well. An oral exam is the perfect method to test your understanding. If you learn contents by hard, it is likely that you will fail.
- Try to collect as much information as you can about the specific practical arrangements. For instance: does the lecturer ask a lot of questions, or is it more like a conversation? Does the lecturer have any pet subjects? Things you know she or he finds very important? Is the lecturer interested in the broad lines, or does (s)he want details too? How much time is provided per student?
- Do some example questions, so you are familiar with the type of questions.
- Check the schedule of the oral exam, so you are online in time.
- Put on neat and comfortable clothes.

What practical arrangements should I make before the start of the oral exam?

To make sure an oral examination goes well, you must arrange some things in advance:

- Make sure you have a pc or laptop with webcam and stable Wi-Fi / internet connection.
- Check if everything is fully charged before the start and / or the charging cable is connected to the power supply.
- If your exam proceeds via Microsoft Teams:
 - Install Microsoft Teams on your pc or laptop.
 - There also is an online version, but it is better to use the desktop app.
 - Test this app in advance together with a fellow student.
 - Install the app on your mobile phone as well, so you can switch to your phone if you have problems on your laptop.
- Put your pc / laptop on a stable surface. Do not sit on the sofa or in bed.
- Avoid distractions on your walls and on your desk. But be ensured: what the room you are sitting in looks like will not affect your grading.
- Put a post it on your door during the exam, so you don't get interrupted.
- You can only have approved items within reach.
- Make sure you have a separate and quiet room where you can be alone to take the exam. Close the door and windows, so you will not get disturbed by environment noise.
- Do not sit outside, so you do not get disturbed by too much light.
- Make sure you have your student card with you at the moment of the exam.
- Except for the computer or laptop you will use for your oral exam, other digital information carriers (smartwatches, other smartphones, etc.) and watches are not allowed.

How does an oral exam begin?

- 15 minutes before the exam starts, you should be ready and have your webcam activated, as well as the program that will be used for your exam (e.g. Teams). E.g. If your exam is scheduled at 9, you should be ready at 8:45. Bear in mind that the online oral exam may be delayed (for instance because of technological issues). The lecturer will inform you via digital channels.
- Make sure to check out the practical guidelines from your department. The approach may be different for every course. E.g. will the lecturer video call you, or do you have to sign into an online waiting area with a supervisor? Which programs must / can you have open? Are you allowed to use a second computer screen or not? Etc.

Can the lecturer make a recording?

The lecturer can make a recording of the oral exam. Article 121 of the study contract describes that Artevelde UAS is allowed to capture students for administrative or didactic purposes. The digital exams also fall under this principle. When you take the online exam, you automatically consent to this recording. In Teams, you will see a notification at the top of your screen.

How is an online oral exam organised?

- When the oral exam has started, you pick a question series (blindly). In a remote oral exam, you obviously cannot actually draw a card. But there are other ways to do this: e.g. The lecturer makes a Powerpoint with a question per slide. You say a number, the lecturer shares her/his screen with you and shows the respective page with your question. Or this can also be an Excel file.
- It depends on the specific course whether you get time to prepare. Online, you will not always get ten minutes of individual preparation time after you have read the question and before you talk with the lecturer. But you will get some time to focus on the question and to organise your thoughts. Next, you give the lecturer your answer. Sometimes (depending on the lecturer), you are allowed to keep a blank page with you to write down a key word for every question.
- During the oral exam, the lecturer may ask some additional questions. Additional questions may have various purposes: to explain your answer, to go more into detail on the same subject, or to check if you have interpreted the question correctly, etc. Do not worry: how much additional questions you get does not say anything about your grading.

How can I answer questions orally?

- Try to adopt a peaceful, friendly, and self-assured attitude. Sit up straight and make eye contact.
- Listen carefully to the question.
- Start by saying what you will explain in your answer, and then start your explanations. For instance: 'I will first run through the characteristics of this Gothic style, and next I will give some examples of Gothic buildings in Ghent.'
- Give a concise and logically structured answer. Avoid jumping from one subject to another.
- Try to make your answer dynamic and interesting. Avoid monotony and literal repetition of your course book.
- Pay attention to your language.
- Say what you know. Take your time to show you possess the competences aimed at. If you know the learning contents well, some elements might seem so obvious that you forget to mention them. A lecturer cannot read minds and will assess only what you actually say. If needed, then illustrate what you say with fitting examples.
- Is your answer quite long, then always end with a conclusion in which you summarise your answer.

How can I deal with stress?

- Try not to be nervous: the lecturer will understand unexpected events might disturb the silence in your room. Don't stress if your webcam or sound falters. The content is what matters.
- Do not worry about the nonverbal attitude of the lecturer. A stern look or frown, looking away, ... are usually not an indication of your grading. Conducting oral exams the entire day is a heavy job.

What if my oral exam does not go well?

- Don't get confused. If you don't understand the question at once, then ask the lecturer to explain it, or repeat the question in your own words. For instance: 'If I understand correctly, then you are asking about ...'. Pay attention to the response of the lecturer.
- Just like in a written exam, you may have a moment when things don't go very smoothly. That may feel awkward as someone is watching you. You should realise you are not expected to know everything, only to know enough. Take a deep breath, sometimes the answer might pop in your mind.
- You can admit that you don't know certain things very well. Sometimes an additional question from the lecturer may get you going again.

Based on an Info sheet from the expertise network Business and Management