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Distance Education for Future: best EU practices in response to the requests of
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STANDARD REGULATION ON CARRYING OUT EXAMINATIONS AND CREDITS (in the distance form of higher education)



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PREAMBLE

- The Standard Regulation is not an original text and the compilers do not claim authorship and original source.
- The Standard Regulation was developed within the framework of the Erasmus+KA2 DEFEP project "Distance Education for Future: best EU practices in response to the requests of modern higher education seekers and labor market".
- The Standard Regulation was created on the basis of existing European and domestic practices, regulatory documents, methodological developments of individual institutions of higher education, as well as materials and cases of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance, etc.
- The Standard Regulation takes into account the experience of partner universities in the DEFEP project from Ukraine, Moldova, Germany, Spain, Italy, the results of a sociological survey, an analytical report and a monograph carried out within the framework of the project.

- The Standard Regulation is applicable to the distance form of higher education.
- The Regulation takes into account the peculiarities associated with digital technologies and the remote format of the educational process in the distance learning form. At the same time, the basic principles and technology of control measures described in the Standard Regulation is universal for all forms of higher education.
- On the basis of the Standard Regulation, a higher education institution develops its own Regulation on Carrying out Examinations and Credits (hereinafter referred to as the Regulation) or implements the norms of the Standard Regulation relating to distance higher education into the relevant regulations of the higher education institution.

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1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1. The Regulation was developed in accordance with the following regulatory documents:

- Laws of Ukraine "On Education" and "On Higher Education";
- approved institutional norms for conducting educational activities, including distance form of higher education.

1.2. Assessment of the learning outcomes of higher education students (hereinafter referred to as students) involves regular and final control measures.

Regular control is a systematic check and assessment of students' academic achievements during the academic semester as part of the educational component. It includes the types of work defined by the curriculum of the discipline (syllabus) (online tests, homework, reports, essays, analytical and laboratory work, online answers to questions, interactive tasks, projects, etc.) The purpose of the regular control is to assess the level of mastering of the material by higher education students during their studies, to identify possible problems in time, and to adjust their individual learning trajectory.

Final control provides for the assessment of the knowledge and skills of higher education students, which is carried out at the end of the academic semester or as a result of mastering the discipline.

Certification is intended to assess the overall level of learning and determine the academic achievements of students at the final stage of study. Certification of students is carried out in the form of a qualification / certification examination, defense of qualification paper, etc.

1.3. The control is carried out in the forms determined by the working programme of the discipline (syllabus), the programme of internship, the relevant approved institutional norms on the procedure for defending course papers, certification, etc. within the time limits established by the curriculum and schedule of the educational process.

1.4. The final control includes the following forms: examination, differentiated credit, and credit.

Examination is a form of control over the academic achievements of students, which involves a deep, thorough and comprehensive examination and assessment of knowledge, skills and level of competencies based on the results of mastering a particular educational component. It is held as a separate event during the examination session. The grade in the discipline, the form of final control of which is an examination, is equal to the sum of the points for the regular control and the points obtained for the examination paper (maximum 100 points), which, in accordance with the approved institutional norms, are converted into a national 4-point scale ("excellent", "good", "satisfactory", "unsatisfactory").

Differentiated credit is a form of control over the academic achievements of students in a particular educational component. In this case, the educational component can be assessed on the basis of a separate final paper in the discipline, which provides for the possibility of different levels of complexity of tasks or assessment criteria depending on the individual capabilities of the student (in this case, the grade for the

discipline is equal to the sum of the points for the regular control and the points received for the final paper; requires a separate event during the credit and examination session), on the basis of completing all types of tasks in the discipline during the semester. Subsequently, the grade on a 100-point scale is converted to a national 4-point scale ("excellent", "good", "satisfactory", "unsatisfactory") in accordance with approved institutional norms.

Credit is a form of control over the academic achievements of students, based on the results of which a student receives a positive ("passed") or negative ("failed") confirmation of successful mastery of the educational material in a particular educational component. It can be assessed both on the basis of a separate final paper (in this case, the grade for the discipline is equal to the sum of the points for the regular control and the points received for the final paper, requires a separate event during the credit and examination session) and on the basis of completing all types of tasks during the semester (in this case, the grade for the discipline is equal to the sum of the points for the regular control, does not require a separate event).

1.5. The final control in the form of an examination is usually provided for educational components that form special competences within the educational programme and educational components and are interdisciplinary in nature.

The final control in the form of a credit is usually provided for educational components that form general competences within the educational programme and selective educational components.

As a rule, a differentiated credit is used to evaluate the results of defending course papers (projects) and internships (practice, training, etc.).

A differentiated credit in the internship is given on the basis of the results of the student's defense of the report in front of the appointed committee with the participation of the internship supervisors. The procedure for defense is determined by the approved institutional regulations on the procedure for conducting the internship.

A differentiated credit for a course paper (project) is given on the basis of its defense in front of the supervisor or a committee approved by the director of the educational and research institute / dean of the faculty in the case of interdisciplinary course papers.

1.6. Differentiated credits and credits in academic disciplines are usually scheduled during the last week of theoretical training after completion of the discipline or during the credit week (if there is a credit week in the schedule of the educational process) according to the schedule.

The defense of course papers and course projects is usually scheduled for the last week of the theoretical training in the semester (before the start of the examination session).

1.7. Final control measures are carried out in accordance with the schedule approved under the established procedure.

1.8. The schedule of the examination session is communicated to academic staff and students one month before the start of the session.

1.9. Examinations (including examination consultations) are scheduled every three days, except for Sundays and public holidays.

1.10. In the presence of valid reasons, with the consent of the head of the structural unit responsible for the educational programme and/or the dean of the faculty / director of the educational and research institute, a student may be granted permission to take credits and examinations ahead of schedule in accordance with the established procedure.

1.11. Examinations, differentiated credits, credits (together with the points of regular control during the semester) are assessed on an institutional 100-point rating scale in accordance with the approved institutional norms on the rating system for distance form of higher education, which are converted to the national scale and the ECTS scale.

In case of absence of credits and examinations in the discipline in the semester, semester control is carried out according to the institutional 100-point rating scale, and a statement is filled in.

1.12. The principles of assessment during credits and examinations in the distance form of higher education:

- **objectivity**: the assessment should be based on specific criteria and objective parameters that minimize the degree of subjectivity;
- **fairness**: all students have equal access to information about the requirements for the form of control and assessment criteria. Assessment is fair and equal for all;
- **transparency**: all participants in the process have a clear understanding of how their knowledge and skills, acquired competences and programme learning outcomes will be assessed. Assessment criteria are open and clear, published on the distance learning platform in due time;
- **adaptability**: assessment methods are adapted to the mechanisms and forms of distance form of higher education and the possibilities of using information technology. The use of various digital tools to test students' knowledge and skills contributes to effective assessment;
- **reliability**: the assessment process is reliable and credible (assessment results reflect the actual level of knowledge and skills of students);
- **balance**: assessment covers various aspects of learning, including theoretical knowledge, practical skills, creativity and analytical abilities;
- **compliance with the principles of academic integrity**: all necessary measures are taken to prevent plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty during the control.

2. ADMISSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS TO TAKE CREDITS AND EXAMINATIONS

2.1. At the beginning of teaching an academic discipline on a distance learning platform, criteria for assessing the level of knowledge, skills, competencies and learning outcomes of this educational component should be published. Such criteria are developed in accordance with the requirements of the educational programme and are reflected in the working programme of the discipline (syllabus).

2.2. In the last week of theoretical training, no later than the day after the last deadline for the type of work of the regular control, the lecturer is obliged to publish the final results of the assessment of the regular control on the institutional 100-point rating scale through the electronic gradebook on the distance learning platform.

A student is admitted to the final control of a particular educational component in the form of a credit or examination if the minimum number of points determined by the norms and rules approved by the University has been obtained for the assessed works of the regular control.

2.3. For applicants who did not receive the minimum number of points in a particular educational component during the regular control, the lecturer determines the amount of additional work to master it. After completing a sufficient number of tasks in the educational component and obtaining the minimum number of points, students undergo the final control within the terms specified in Section 5 of the Regulation.

3. ORGANIZATION OF CARRYING OUT A CREDIT, DIFFERENTIATED CREDIT, EXAMINATION

3.1. The credit and examination session is held according to the schedule.

3.2. The final control can be carried out in:

- synchronous online mode: using cloud services for organizing synchronous video communication (Moodle BigBlueButton, Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, etc.), which are selected at the discretion of the academic staff member conducting the final control;
- asynchronous mode: using the learning management system adopted by the University (hereinafter referred to as the distance learning platform), which creates distance learning courses of academic disciplines, used to post educational material and videos of online lectures and other types of training, collect completed tasks, conduct control activities, etc.

The procedure for conducting the final control is determined by the working programme of the discipline (syllabus). Recommendations on the procedure are given in **Appendix 1** of the Regulation.

3.3. If the examiner is unable to carry out the final control in synchronous online mode for valid reasons, the head of the department must replace him/her and notify the directorate of the educational and research institute / dean of the faculty, the department responsible for academic support and control (educational and methodological department), and the department responsible for organizing distance education, or postpone such control within the approved period of the credit and examination session.

3.4. In case of absence of a student (in synchronous mode), untimely completion of work (in asynchronous mode) or in case of failure to receive points at the final control event, even if the number of points of the regular assessment exceeds the minimum threshold of a satisfactory grade, such a credit / examination is considered not passed.

3.5. For the purpose of monitoring the quality of higher education, during the final control in synchronous online mode, in addition to the examiner, the following may join:

- Rector, First Vice-Rector;
- Director of the educational and research institute, Dean of the faculty within which the educational programme is carried out;
- Head of the department;
- Head of the structural unit responsible for the training of students in the distance form of education;
- Head of the department responsible for academic support and control (educational and methodological department);
- members of committees that may be established by order in accordance with the established procedure.

Representatives of the authorized department have the right to check compliance with the schedule and procedures for organizing credits, differentiated credits or examinations.

Unauthorized persons are not allowed to attend the final control events held in synchronous online mode.

3.6. The results of the final control and the total number of points obtained for mastering the educational component in the current semester are entered into the electronic gradebook of the distance learning platform and the academic record (in paper form).

4. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES DURING THE FINAL CONTROL

4.1. The results of the final control are assessed by:

- a four-point scale ("excellent", "good", "satisfactory", "unsatisfactory") for exams, differentiated credits, defense of course projects (papers) and internships, a two-point scale ("passed", "failed") for credits;
- an institutional 100-point rating scale;
- ECTS scale (A, B, C, D, E, FX, F).

4.2. When forming tasks for the final control papers, research and teaching staff must take into account the criteria for assessing the knowledge of students specified in **Appendix 2** of the Regulation.

4.3. The student's refusal to answer in the case of the final control in the synchronous online mode is counted as an unsatisfactory answer.

4.4. Students who receive three unsatisfactory grades during the session may be expelled from the university.

4.5. In case of reasonable suspicion of violation of the principles of academic integrity during the final examination, the examiner may take the following measures:

- verify the circumstances of the incident and collect additional information;
- review the audio or video recording to verify the actions of the student during the examination session;

- apply to the University administration with a request for additional checks or investigation of the incident;
- request additional evidence or materials from the student regarding actions during the final examination;
- to apply additional testing methods or tasks during subsequent tests or examinations to check the level of knowledge of the student.

5. ELIMINATION OF ACADEMIC DEBTS

5.1. If a student did not participate in the activities of the final control of the educational component, the note "did not appear" is entered in the academic record.

If, after the final control, the student has received a total number of points below the threshold of "unsatisfactory" on the institutional 100-point rating scale, the grade "unsatisfactory" and the grade FX (F) on the ECTS scale are entered in the academic record.

5.2. As a rule, academic debts are liquidated within two weeks after the beginning of the next semester or within the terms established by the decision of the university administration.

The elimination of academic debts is carried out in accordance with the schedule, which is compiled by the authorized structural units before the end of the examination session. The schedule is communicated to students by publishing it on the distance learning platform.

5.3. A student has the right to retake the final control after receiving an unsatisfactory grade in the educational component no more than twice (the first time the work is checked by the examiner, the second time by the committee appointed by the head of the structural unit responsible for the training of students in this educational programme or the director of the educational and research institute / dean of the faculty. The result of the final examination of the committee is final.

6. INDIVIDUAL CASES OF TAKING EXAMINATIONS AND CREDITS

6.1. In cases of a conflict situation that occurred before or during the examination (credit), upon a motivated application of a student or member of the academic staff, the director of the educational and research institute / dean of the faculty establishes a committee to administer the examination (credit), which may include Vice-rector, Director of the Educational and Research Institute / Dean of the Faculty, Head of the Department and academic staff of the relevant Department, representatives of the Directorate of the Educational and Research Institute / Dean of the Faculty, Student Council and Trade Union Committee of the Educational and Research Institute / Faculty.

6.2. A student who disagrees with the grade of the final control has the right to contact the examiner no later than the next working day after the results are published in the electronic gradebook on the distance learning platform and receive a reasoned

written explanation. The examiner is obliged to post the explanation on the distance learning platform within two working days after the request.

If the student disagrees with the examiner's justification, he / she may file a written appeal with the Head of the Department no later than the next working day after the publication of such justification. The examiner and the head of the department are obliged to consider the appeal within two working days and make a final decision on the assessment of the examination paper. As a result of consideration of the appeal, the grade of the student's examination paper cannot be reduced, but only left unchanged or increased. The result of the appeal is recorded on the distance learning platform from the account of the head of the department.

If the student has not appealed within the prescribed time limit, the grade of the examination paper given by the examiner is final.

In case of a conflict situation during the consideration of the appeal, the procedure specified in clause 6.1 of the Regulation may be applied.

6.3. Students who have not passed credits, differentiated credits or examinations within the established time limits due to illness or other valid reasons (documented), taking into account the ability of the student to complete the curriculum, may be provided with an individual schedule for up to 2 weeks in accordance with the established procedure. In case of illness, upon submission of applications and relevant documents, the session may be extended for a period not less than the duration of the illness. In cases where the illness has lasted for a long time, students are granted an academic leave.

6.4. In case of force majeure circumstances during the final control, a student must immediately notify an examiner or other responsible person of these circumstances through a designated communication channel (phone, messenger, electronic platform communication tool, etc.) with mandatory photo or video recording of the state of completion of tasks and objective factors that impede its completion. In these circumstances, the possibility and time of retaking the exam is determined by the examiner and the head of the structural unit responsible for training under the educational programme.

6.5. Retaking exams, credits and differentiated credits in order to increase a positive grade may be allowed in accordance with the established procedure upon written application of a student upon completion of the relevant educational programme of study under the following conditions:

- if the reason is the possibility of obtaining a diploma with honors in recognition of outstanding learning outcomes;
- if the number of retakes of the final control in order to increase the positive grade does not exceed two for the entire period of study for the bachelor's degree; no more than one for the master's degree;
- if the student's request is supported by the head of the structural unit responsible for training students in this educational programme and the head of the department to which the educational component is assigned;
- no later than 2 months before graduation from the relevant educational programme of study (except for the educational components of the last semester of study).

7. ANTI-CORRUPTION WARNINGS

7.1. Participants of the educational process fully adhere to the fundamental principles of corruption prevention, ensure regular assessment of corruption risks in their activities, take appropriate measures to prevent and resolve conflicts of interest and corrupt actions that may arise in the performance of their duties.

7.2. Participants of the educational process are obliged to comply with the requirements of the Law of Ukraine "On Prevention of Corruption".

7.3. Participants of the educational process are strictly prohibited from directly or indirectly using their official powers or opportunities related to them to receive an unlawful benefit or accepting such a benefit or accepting a promise/offer of such a benefit for themselves or other persons or make promises/offers or an unlawful benefit to a person, specified in the first part of Article 3 of the Law of Ukraine "On Prevention of Corruption", or at their request to other individuals or legal entities with the aim of inducing this person to unlawfully use the official powers granted to them or related opportunities.

7.4. For the commission of corruption or corruption-related offenses, participants of the educational process are subject to criminal, administrative, civil and disciplinary liability in accordance with the procedure established by law.

8. FINAL PROVISIONS

8.1. The Regulation on carrying out examinations and credits is approved by the University Academic Council and enters into force by the order of the rector of the University or a person authorized to perform his/her duties.

8.2. Changes and / or additions to the Regulation are considered and approved by the University Academic Council and enter into force by the order of the rector of the University or a person authorized to perform his/her duties.

Recommendations on the procedure for carrying out credits and examinations in the distance form of higher education

1. The final control for distance learning students is organized remotely using a distance learning platform (e.g. Moodle) and cloud services for organizing synchronous video communication (e.g. Zoom).

2. Carrying out the final control regardless of the mode (synchronous / asynchronous) should be ensured by reliable authentication of students and the implementation of norms and policies on academic integrity. The use of a personal account on distance learning platforms does not ensure the reliability of the identification of a higher education student, therefore, when planning control, it is advisable to combine different methods adapted to synchronous and asynchronous modes.

3. An exam paper or credit task may include open-ended questions (theoretical questions, cases, exercises) and closed-ended questions (tests).

4. To create an exam paper or a credit task with closed and open questions, it is recommended to use the "Test" element (if you use the Moodle platform, or a similar element if you use another platform), which allows you to randomly create unique sets of test questions by generating them from a structured bank of questions.

5. It is advisable to combine the written component of the exam (answers to open-ended questions) with a student's oral response.

6. If there is a written part of the final control, answers to theoretical questions, solutions to problems, etc. must be written by a student himself/herself ("by hand") and uploaded to the distance learning platform within the established time limits. The answer with the obligatory indication of the student's surname, name and patronymic, group number and variant, must be signed by the student. An examiner must timely create the activity "Tasks" (if the Moodle platform is used, or a similar element if another platform is used), provide students with access to the texts of tasks no earlier than the start date of the credit / examination and set technical deadlines for uploading a photocopy of the answer, taking into account the time required to write the answer and upload the file. The written component should include tasks and theoretical questions that show the level of mastery of the discipline, analytical and other skills and do not involve a simple reproduction of theoretical provisions of certain topics.

The written component should take place in a controlled environment where it is not possible to involve third parties or use unauthorized sources of information (monitor webcam images; set restrictions on switching applications on the device).

7. An oral response in a synchronous online mode makes it possible to unambiguously authenticate a student, and the control measure can be conducted through any online platform that does not infringe on the copyright of the developers. In the case of a predominantly written form of the control measure, the oral part should include questions, explanations of the student, etc. that will make sure that the written part is completed independently.

It is *recommended* to allocate at least 25% of the number of points that students can receive during the final control event to the oral component of the answer.

The oral control measure for large groups should be held in subgroups according to the schedule.

In the case of an oral examination or credit, a student is recommended to upload to the distance learning platform the materials for preparing the answer, indicating the name, surname and patronymic of the student, group number and variant, signed by a personal signature.

8. It is recommended that an examiner record the control event in a synchronous online mode (keep the recording within the appeal period).

The examiner should provide access to viewing the recording upon request only to persons who have the right to attend the final control events in accordance with Section 3 of the Regulation.

The distribution and publication of files with records of control measures (both by academic staff and students) is strictly prohibited in accordance with the legislation on personal data protection.

9. Testing using the distance learning platform in asynchronous mode must meet the requirements:

- access to the test is limited to a certain period of time in order to avoid the possibility of a pre-prepared answer;
- limiting the maximum time for taking the test;
- a ban on switching application windows (to avoid using unauthorized sources);
- use of test questions with the function of generating random questions and answers for each applicant to make it difficult to copy answers.

An "excellent" (A) grade is awarded to a student who:

- has a comprehensive, systematic and deep knowledge of the material, has achieved and acquired all competencies and program learning outcomes;
- is able to independently perform the tasks provided for by the working program of the discipline (syllabus), uses the acquired knowledge and skills in non-standard situations;
- has mastered the interrelation of the basic concepts of the discipline and is aware of their importance for the profession he/she is acquiring;
- freely expresses his/her own thoughts, independently evaluates various phenomena and facts, showing a personal position;
- has formed his/her own educational trajectory, has shown a tendency to analytical and scientific work — for students of Master's and Doctoral programs.

A "very good" (B) grade is awarded to a student who:

- has fully mastered and is fluent in the material, including applying it in practice, using it reasonably in different situations;
- has the ability to independently search for information, as well as to analyze, formulate and solve professional problems;
- selects convincing arguments to support the material studied, but admits minor inaccuracies.

A "good" (C) grade is awarded to a student who:

- makes a certain number of mistakes;
- is able to compare, summarize, systematize information under the guidance of a scientific and pedagogical staff member, in general, independently apply the acquired knowledge in practice, control their own activities;
- has mastered the material, successfully completed the tasks provided by the program.

A "satisfactory" (D) grade is awarded to a student who:

- knows the basic material to the extent necessary for further study and use in the future profession;
- performs the task well, but with a significant number of errors;
- makes significant mistakes during the performance of work, but is able to correct them after corrective actions.

A "sufficient" (E) grade is awarded to a student who:

- knows the basic material in the amount necessary for further study and use in the future profession, and the performance of tasks meets the minimum requirements. The knowledge is of a reproductive nature.

An "unsatisfactory" (FX) grade is awarded to a student who:

- revealed significant gaps in knowledge of the basic material, made fundamental mistakes in the performance of tasks.

An "unsatisfactory" (F) grade is awarded to a student who:

- has knowledge of the educational material only at the level of elementary recognition and reproduction of individual facts or does not have it at all;
- makes gross mistakes when performing tasks;
- cannot continue their studies and is not ready for professional activity without re-studying this discipline.