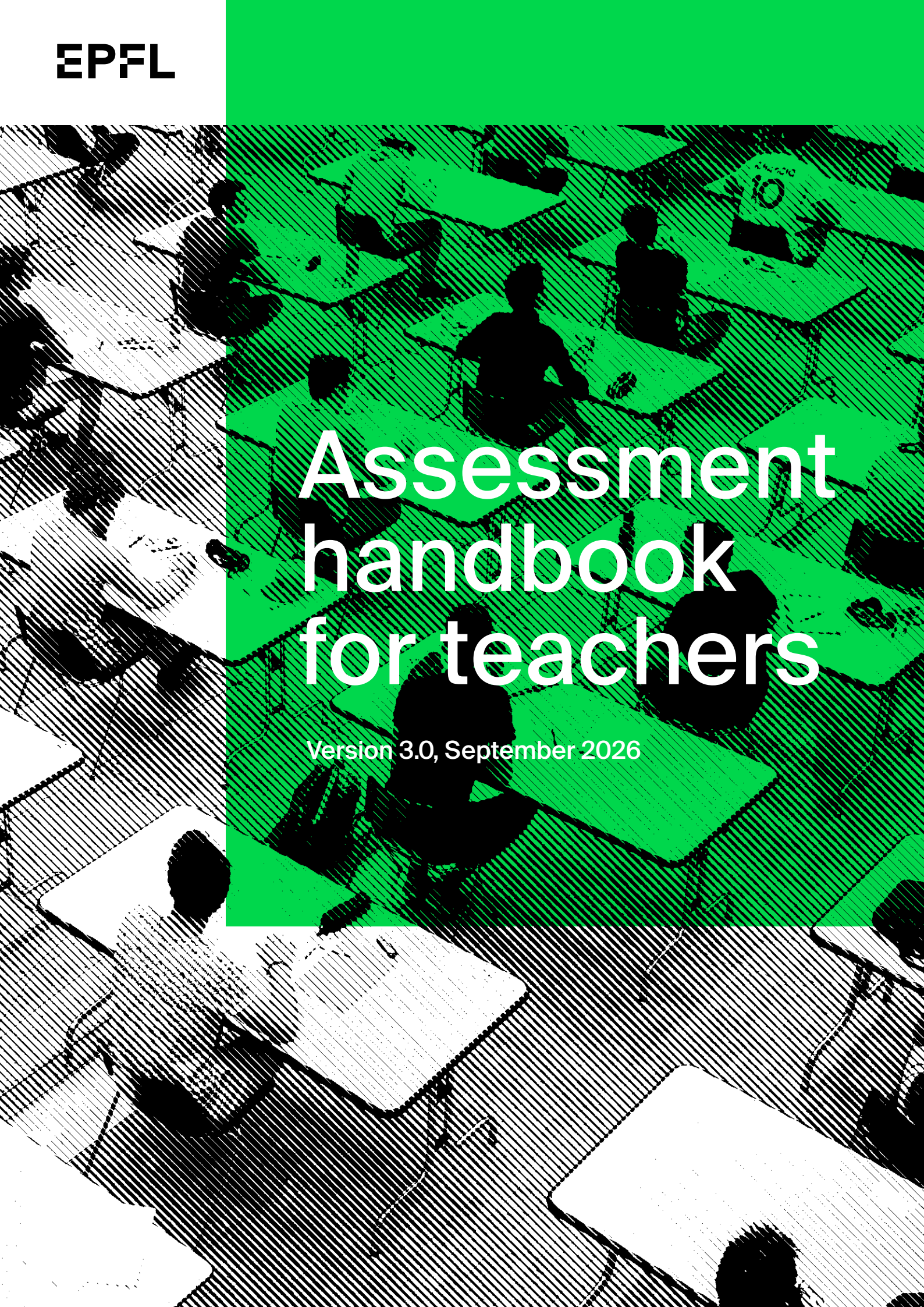




Assessment handbook for teachers

Version 3.0, September 2026

This document includes two types of information about assessing EPFL students' learning. First, it contains some recommendations for EPFL teachers on how to organise different types of assessment and assessment procedures. Second, it contains practical guidance for teachers to plan and execute formal examinations in accordance with the rules currently in force at EPFL. These rules derive from Swiss law, directives and ordinances concerning examinations at EPFL (Lex), and instructions communicated by the EPFL direction.

The distinction between recommendations and obligations is indicated graphically by the vertical green line: obligations are accompanied by a solid line and recommendations are accompanied by a dotted line.

This document was prepared by the Teaching Support Center (CAPE), in collaboration with colleagues from across EPFL.

Exam and assessment regulations

The EPFL examination regulations, which arise from several different sources, cover many aspects of student evaluation and grading (written and oral exams, mid-term tests, semester and master projects). They apply to the:

- CMS (*cours de mathématiques spéciales*),
- bachelor,
- master,
- PhD levels (in some cases).

The objective of these regulations is to guarantee that the examinations are conducted in a consistent and appropriate manner, and that any form of cheating is prevented (or, if necessary, documented). They aim to ensure that marks assigned to a student adequately reflect the student's performance.

A summary of EPFL assessment rules

1.	Reminder of key assessment regulations	5
1.1	Grading	5
1.2	Registering final grades when students have missed an evaluation	6
1.3	Grade submission	6
1.4	Failing a course	6
1.5	Changing a grade	6
1.6	Keeping exam scripts or notes	7
1.7	Procedure for the adaptation of examination procedures for people with disabilities	7
1.8	Deferred exams for MAN, Ba1, Ba2	7
1.9	“Make-up” exams	7
2.	Supervised written exams	8
2.1	Planning	8
2.1.1	<i>Writing the exam paper</i>	8
2.1.2	<i>Laying out the room</i>	8
2.2	Supervising the written exams	9
2.2.1	<i>Supervision of exams</i>	9
2.2.2	<i>Role of student assistants</i>	9
2.2.3	<i>Permitted materials</i>	9
2.2.4	<i>Checking students’ identity</i>	9
2.2.5	<i>Students leaving the exam room</i>	10
2.2.6	<i>End of written exams</i>	10
2.3	Request for an exam result to be omitted for medical reasons	10
3.	Oral exams	11
3.1	Planning	11
3.1.1	<i>Scheduling oral exams</i>	11
3.1.2	<i>Observers</i>	11
3.2	Supervising the oral exams	11
3.2.1	<i>Note taking</i>	11
3.2.2	<i>Feedback during exams</i>	11
3.2.3	<i>End of oral exams</i>	11
3.3	Rescheduling an oral exam	11
4.	Graded course work	12
4.1	Developing evaluation tasks	12
4.2	Absences during graded course work	13
4.3	Grading in-class activities	13
4.4	Managing plagiarism and inappropriate AI use	13

Assessment organisation and logistics

A.	Supervised written exams	14
A.1	Before the day of the exam	14
A.2	On the day of the exam	14
A.3	At the beginning of the exam	14
A.4	During the exam	15
	<i>A.4.1 Dealing with student questions</i>	15
	<i>A.4.2 Discouraging and detecting cheating</i>	15
	<i>A.4.3 Access to the toilet</i>	16
	<i>A.4.4 Accidents or illness occurring during an exam</i>	16
A.5	At the end of the exam	16
A.6	After the exam	17
B.	Oral exams	17
B.1	Before the day of the exam	17
	<i>B.1.1 Preparing the supervision of oral exams</i>	17
	<i>B.1.2 Communicating the condition of the exam</i>	17
B.2	At the beginning of the oral exam	17
B.3	During the oral exam	18
B.4	At the end of the oral exam	18
B.5	After the oral exam	18
C.	Communication with students regarding exams	18
C.1	Communicating the basic assessment format	18
C.2	Exam past papers	18
C.3	Pre-exam communication	19
C.4	Viewing scripts	19
D.	Assessing group work	20
E.	Grading advice	20
E.1	Assigning grades	20
E.2	Criteria rubric	20

Schematic representations

Before the exam	21
On the day of the written exam	22
On the day of the oral exam	23
After the exam	24

A summary of EPFL assessment rules

1. Reminder of key assessment regulations

For each course, the course description publicly visible on IS-Academia outlines whether the course is a:

- **'Session branch'** in which case the assessment must include an oral or written exam during the exam session, but may also include assessment(s) during the semester; the session exam must be a substantial proportion of the overall grade.
- **'Semester branch'** in which case the assessments take place entirely during the semester, with no final exam in the exam session.

The teacher prepares the course description (*fiche de cours*) that specifies the format the assessment. The course description is then validated by the relevant section. The weight of each assessment in the course grade can either be included in the course description or communicated to students at the start of the course, for instance by email.

1.1 Grading

For each course, students are awarded a grade on a 1 to 6 scale, including half points (e.g. 4½, 5½, etc.) and quarter points (e.g. 4¼, 4¾, etc.).

A course may be graded based on a number of different assessment components (e.g. multiple pieces of coursework, or coursework plus a session exam). For each component, a "0" can only be awarded:

- if the student misses a test and does not provide a valid justification,
- if they fail to answer any question, or
- if they do not submit an assignment on time.

If the overall mark for the course as a whole is less than 1 when all assessment components are taken into account, and no valid reason is given by the student for missing exam(s) and/or not submitting work, a grade of "NA" (not acquired) is awarded.

**EPFL
marking
scheme**

Grade awarded	Description	
6; 5.75	excellent	
5.5; 5.25	very good	
5; 4.75	good	pass
4.5; 4.25	satisfactory	
4	minimum pass	
3.75; 3	insufficient	
2.75–1	very insufficient	fail
NA	overall score less than 1	
M	justified absence	

It is up to the lecturer to decide how assessments are to be marked and how these marks are converted into grades. However, the overall marking scheme should always correspond to the table shown. In other words, 4 is a “minimum pass”; 4¼ to 4½ is “satisfactory”, and so on.

Where a course has multiple assessment components (e.g. a mid-term and a final exam), the sum of the marks available for each component must be 100% of the marks for the course (e.g. 40% for mid-term and 60% for the final exam). It is not permissible to have ‘bonus’ tests (e.g. 100% available for the final exam, with the possibility to increase the course mark by up to 20% via a mid-term test).

The exceptions to this marking scheme are required assignments carried out outside EPFL (e.g. an industrial placement), which can only be awarded an “R” (*réussite* / pass) or “E” (*échec* / fail) grade.

1.2 Registering final grades when students have missed an evaluation

In the case of a justified absence (i.e. medical certificate) during the final exam or a test during the semester (see also §4.2), the student is graded “M” without a final grade calculation. In this case, record “M” in IS-Academia and tick “absent”.

In the event of unjustified absence on a final exam or a test during the semester, the evaluation is marked “0”. As indicated in §1.1, when the student has a final mark of less than “1”, record “NA” in IS-Academia and tick “absent”.

1.3 Grade submission

The administrative procedure for submission of grades is set out by the Registrar’s Office (*Service académique*, SAC). Depending on the type of course and format of the evaluation (course work, project or exam session) the deadlines differ, so teachers must check the deadlines on the academic calendar for each semester.

Do not inform students of the marks they have obtained for an exam held during an examination session, until the grades are officially communicated to students via IS-Academia. The only exception is in the case of a master project: a candidate may be told whether or not they have succeeded in a master project, but without giving the mark. Only the designated representatives of the School can notify students of any decision regarding success or failure related to grades or credits for each subject/course.

1.4 Failing a course

In the event of a student obtaining a failing grade for a course, they must repeat all the assessments and not only the assessment which resulted in them failing.

1.5 Changing a grade

After a grade has been submitted, it can only be changed by the teacher in cases where there has been a verified error in grading. All grade changes must be verified and approved by a section director, who must confirm that a genuine grading error has been made.

A student who believes their grade was not attributed in accordance with the rules should be directed to contact the Student Services desk to determine their options (request for reassessment and/or an appeal procedure). These procedures are not managed by the individual teacher.

Students may contest the outcome of their study program (i.e. *propédeutique*, bachelor, master) up to thirty days after receiving their statement of results.

1.6 Keeping exam scripts or notes

Students' scripts (full sets of exam question papers plus students' answer sheets) and notes taken by the teacher and the observer during oral exams must be kept for six months after the end of the corresponding study program. Remember that not all students complete the programme in the minimum time possible. Therefore, in practice this means:

- First year *propédeutique* program: 2 years after the exam.
- Bachelor program, 2nd year: 4.5 years after the exam.
- Bachelor program, 3rd year: 3.5 years after the exam.
- Master program: 3.5 years after the exam.
- Master project: 1 year after the end of the project.

1.7 Procedure for the adaptation of examination procedures for people with disabilities

Students with special needs may apply to Student Affairs (SAE) for support measures for teaching and assessment. The teacher receives the list of their students who have been accorded accommodations by the commission which the teacher must apply.

For more information, see Lex 2.6.5 or contact sae.amenagements@epfl.ch.

1.8 Deferred exams for MAN, Ba1, Ba2

Students who are unable to attend a final exam due to a justified absence receive an 'M' (missed) and may register within three working days to take a deferred exam:

- For a **session branch**, students register with Student services desk. Deferred session exams take place in the weeks following the final exam session (February for winter exams, July for summer exams). CePro supports the logistical organization of deferred written exams, while the teacher remains responsible for preparing the exam, grading it and entering the grade in IS-Academia.
- For a **semester branch**, students register with the teacher. Deferred semester exams must occur during the semester or, at latest, one week before the start of the final exam session.

Deferred exams must follow the same format as the original exam.

For further information: go.epfl.ch/organisation-examens-differes

1.9 "Make-up" exams

Extra exams, for example to allow a student who was close to passing to improve their grade, are forbidden.

2. Supervised written exams

The following information applies to supervised written exams, whether they are conducted during the exam session or during the semester.

2.1

2.1.1

Planning

Writing the exam paper

The teacher is responsible for personally supervising the preparation of the examination. This includes making sure that confidentiality is maintained during all phases of the assessment development procedure. New questions must be used for each exam. Whenever possible, the teacher selects questions requiring detailed answers to make cheating difficult or easily detectable.

The teacher also:

- resolves, before the exam, any problems with regard to written examinations,
- checks the level of difficulty of the exam, and
- verifies that all the necessary information for solving the set problems appears on the question papers.

For multiple choice tests, the teacher prepares several versions of the test, varying the sequence of the questions. Software for automatic randomisation of MCQ exam papers, as well as their automated marking, is available at EPFL. More information can be obtained from the Propedeutic Center (CePro), go.epfl.ch/cepro-exam.

The language used for an exam is the same as that used for teaching the course. Students may, however, answer in French. To use another national Swiss language (German, Italian, Romansh) or English for a course taught in French, the student must make a request in writing to teacher when they register for the exam or test concerned (normally at least ten days in advance).

Additionally:

- The formulation of exam questions should take into account students working in a second language (e.g. German speakers) as well as students with dyslexia.
- Students have a right to take a bilingual dictionary into the exam; they should inform their teacher in advance.

Teachers are strongly encouraged – although this is not currently an obligation – to use pseudonymized (anonymous) exams to provide the highest level of data security. This means using a student's Sciper number (and optionally their initials) to identify their exam copy instead of their full name.

After grading, results are transferred to the grade list using the student Sciper number (and initials) and matched to student identities in IS-Academia (e.g. by sorting the grade list by student Sciper number).

2.1.2

Laying out the room

The teacher is responsible for laying out the exam room and should ensure that there is enough space for the exam in the room allocated. The Registrar's Office (SAC) will generally allocate exam rooms towards the end of April for spring session exams and in mid-November for winter session exams.

As the teacher is responsible for preventing fraud during the exam, it is advisable to employ the following strategies:

- Places should be individually pre-allocated to each candidate to avoid communication or other fraudulent behaviour during the exam.
- Ensure sufficient distance between assigned places. Students should occupy at most only every second place in the rows of seats and should not be placed in staggered rows. In a lecture theatre with tiered seating, alternate rows must be left empty (a higher student density is possible if different examinations are to be conducted simultaneously).

The plans of the rooms are available on go.epfl.ch/salles-examen and detailed plans can be created on go.epfl.ch/room-plan.

Consider printing several copies of the seating plan to post on the day of the exam, as this can reduce congestion at the start of the exam.

2.2 Supervising the written exams

2.2.1 *Supervision of exams*

The teacher is responsible for personally supervising the exam. For exams held during exam session, the teacher must be present at the examination. In the event of unforeseen circumstances preventing a teacher from attending, the associate vice president for education appoints a substitute (a professor, MER or lecturer) based on the teacher's suggestion.

The teacher is also responsible for organising the supervision of the examination, instructing invigilators about their duties and behaviour and about how they should reply to students' questions.

2.2.2 *Role of student assistants*

To participate in the invigilation of written exam or tests at the bachelor, MAN or CMS, a student assistant must hold at minimum a bachelor degree.

Student assistants must be supervised by a teacher or another staff member (such as a PhD candidate) who is present in the room.

2.2.3 *Permitted materials*

The teacher must communicate explicitly what materials students are authorised to use during the exam (documents, forms, notes, electronic instruments, etc.).

2.2.4 *Checking students' identity*

In preparation for the exam, the teacher prepares a list of students who are registered for the exam (this can be exported from IS-Academia after the tenth week of the semester) so that they can verify the presence of students on the day of the exam.

If a student arrives for a session exam without being registered for that exam, the teacher contacts the Student Services Office as soon as possible to clarify the situation. In the meantime, the student is not permitted to begin the exam. In the case of an error, the student should be given additional time to compensate for the delay.

During the exam, each student must have their student card or another form of photo ID – such as a passport or residence permit – on the desk in front of them. The teacher (or invigilator in the case of multiple rooms) is responsible for checking the identity of students.

The teacher records the late arrival of any students.

2.2.5 *Students leaving the exam room*

Students are in principle allowed to leave the exam room to go to the toilet during the exam, provided that appropriate supervision is available.

If a student asks to leave the room before the end of an exam for another reason, they must first hand-in their exam script, which will not be returned to them.

A student may only interrupt an exam for a duly justified reason, such as an illness or accident which has occurred or become apparent during the exam (see § 2.4). The student must immediately inform the Registrar's Office and submit the necessary supporting documents within three days.

For session written exams, the associate vice president for education decides if the reason given is valid. For semester written exams, the decision is taken by the section director.

2.2.6 *End of written exams*

At the end of the exam, the teacher makes a list of returned scripts and checks that each script handed in is complete.

Teachers must fill in a report on written exams completed during the exam session, which can be used in case of grade change requests. This needs to be uploaded to IS-Academia together with a copy of the exam paper in PDF format. The deadline is the same as for the submission of exam grades.

French and English language versions of the exam report forms are available here:
epfl.ch/about/overview/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2.6.2_prot_examen_fr.pdf
epfl.ch/about/overview/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2.6.2_prot_examen_en.pdf

2.3 **Request for an exam result to be omitted for medical reasons**

Teachers must direct students with this type of request to the Student Services desk.

If a student chooses to sit an exam despite feeling unwell or knowing that they are ill, their grade will be valid and cannot be omitted from consideration. If a student feels so unwell that their grade may be affected, they should not sit the exam. They must submit a medical certificate within the required deadline (currently three days).

3. Oral exams

The following information applies to oral exams held during the exam session. The information provided here is a summary; for full details of the rules please consult the Internal Directive concerning examinations at EPFL ([Lex 2.6.1](#) and [Lex 2.6.0.1](#)).

3.1 Planning

3.1.1 *Scheduling oral exams*

The teacher is responsible for scheduling the oral exam but may delegate this to the class representative(s). Class representatives may use student lists and appropriate software to do this, in consultation with the teacher.

3.1.2 *Observers*

All oral exams conducted during the exam session must take place in the presence of an observer; the presence of an observer is not necessary for oral tests conducted during the semester. The observer attends the oral examination and ensures that it proceeds smoothly by playing the role of supervisor and conciliator.

The observer is proposed by the teacher and approved by the section, which then informs the Registrar's Office. Colleagues of the teacher (e.g. same unit, laboratory) cannot perform the function of observer for the subject taught by the teacher.

3.2 Supervising oral exams

3.2.1 *Note taking*

Both the teacher and the observer take notes concerning each oral test. These notes may be requested by the conference for the ratification of exam results or, should the need arise, the appeal authorities.

3.2.2 *Feedback during an oral exam*

It is advised to not make comments to the candidate that might be interpreted as an indication of their grade. This includes comments made at the end of the exam such as, "Very good, you can go".

3.2.3 *End of oral exams*

As with written exams, an exam report must be completed for oral exams conducted during the exam session. This is uploaded to IS-Academia together with the grades (same deadline).

3.3 Rescheduling an oral exam

When a student has missed an oral exam for a valid reason, it may be rescheduled within the current assessment period.

4. Graded course work

Course work may be ‘supervised examinations’ during class time or ‘unsupervised assessments’, where students have access to external information (see Lex 2.6.1, art. 1), for example:

- exercises done at home,
- open-book remote exams,
- course works,
- semester and master projects.

For any classes assessed during the final exam session (“session branch”), teachers can also include graded course work as part of the final class grade, but must still set a final exam during the exam session. This final exam must account for a substantial proportion of the overall grade.

For graded course work:

- The teacher must ensure that the work has indeed been carried out by the student examined and without fraud. For further details on EPFL’s plagiarism policy, see go.epfl.ch/plagiat.
- Tasks may include questions that are corrected automatically (such as Moodle quizzes) or questions where the identity of the student answering is not necessarily checked (such as graded exercises). Taken together, these can account for no more than one-sixth of an overall course grade.
- Wherever possible, students should be provided feedback on graded course work activities in order to be able to improve their performance.
- In the case of group work or team-based assessments, the teacher must ensure that the mark obtained for group work actually corresponds to the work contributed by each student. In case of pronounced differences, the teacher must attribute individually assessed marks.
- Student assistants enrolled in a master can correct assignments for bachelor classes, provided that they are overseen by a PhD student or the teacher. The teacher is responsible for the grade assigned.

The course description (*fiche de cours*) specifies the format the assessment. The weight of each assessment in the course grade can either be included in the course description or communicated to students at the start of the course, for instance by email or Moodle.

4.1 Developing evaluation tasks

The teacher is also responsible for personally supervising the preparation of the exam material. This includes making sure that confidentiality is maintained during all phases of the assessment development procedure.

New questions must be used each year. Whenever possible, the teacher selects questions requiring detailed answers, in order to make cheating difficult or easily detectable.

The information provided here is a summary of the rules that apply to coursework; for full details please consult the internal directive concerning examinations at EPFL.

4.2 **Absences during graded course work**

If a student is absent during a test which takes place in the semester (e.g. a mid-term) and this absence is justified (e.g. with a medical certificate) three solutions exist:

1. Where feasible, the teacher organizes a make-up test during the current semester; this is at their discretion. The format of the test must remain the same.
2. Assign an 'M' to the final result and the student retakes only the missed test(s) the following year. This option is not possible in MAN, Ba1 and Ba2.
3. If agreed with the student, the teacher assigns a grade of 'O' for the missed test and calculates the final result keeping the initial weights.

It is not possible to simply ignore the missed test and use only the remaining assessments to calculate the overall grade.

An unjustified absence for a test during the semester must be awarded a grade of 0 for the missed test and then the final course grade is calculated keeping the initial weights.

4.3 **Grading in-class activities**

It is not permissible to grade attendance in class; grades can be awarded by evaluating the outcomes of the activities undertaken in class where those activities relate directly to explicitly stated learning objectives in the course description. Students should be aware of the grading criteria and teachers should be consistent.

4.4 **Managing plagiarism and inappropriate AI use**

Teachers should take all reasonable steps to detect and prevent plagiarism in graded coursework, including undeclared or inappropriate use of generative AI. EPFL uses the iThenticate tools provided by Turnitin. These tools are available via a Turnitin plug-in in Moodle. A guide can be found here go.epfl.ch/how-to-turnitin.

Combining multiple assessment methods (e.g. oral presentation with project report) is a useful strategy used by teachers to detect potential plagiarism or inappropriate AI use. For more information, see go.epfl.ch/ai-studentassessment.

In the case of any suspected fraud and/or cheating, the teacher writes a report which they send to the section director and the legal counsel for the domain of education together with evidence of the compromising or suspected item or behaviour. For further details on EPFL's plagiarism policy, see go.epfl.ch/plagiat.

Assessment organisation and logistics

A. Supervised written exams

This section describes the rules for supervised written exams as well as some recommendations for organising the logistics of the exam. Schematic representations are available at the end of this handbook.

A.1 Before the day of the exam

As soon as you have been informed of the exam room(s) you have been allocated, you should ensure that there is enough space to accommodate everyone. See § 2.1.2 for more information.

You also need to check that there are sufficient invigilators to supervise the number of students per room.

If you wish to have feedback on your assessment, you can contact the academic commission of your section.

If you will have your exam printed by the Print Center (Repro), please be aware that the deadline to submit the PDF is at least two weeks in advance to ensure the exam is ready on time. For more information go.epfl.ch/cepro-exam.

A.2 On the day of the exam

- Mark out the place allocated to each student in the exam room (e.g. using “post-it” notes), and post a map or list of assigned seating numbers outside the exam hall. Posting more than one copy is helpful to avoid congestion.
- Ensure that all invigilators are briefed and provided with student lists, emergency telephone numbers, etc.
- Ensure that invigilators have a phone (e.g. mobile phone) in each exam room.
- Check toilets near the exam hall to ensure that no unauthorised materials have been concealed there.

A.3 At the beginning of the exam

No student can leave the room during the first thirty minutes of the exam, and a student who arrives late during those first thirty minutes is allowed to sit the exam but their finish time remains the same (i.e. they do not get extra time). After the first thirty minutes, a student arriving late may sit the exam on condition that no other student has yet left the room(s) for any reason.

- At the beginning of the exam you should notify students of any exam requirements. These will normally include:
- No talking inside the exam room during the exam.
 - A reminder that only materials that have been explicitly authorized are permitted, and that it is students responsibility to avoid using unauthorized materials ('smart watch', 'smart glasses', phones or other communication devices, programmable calculators, notes, etc.).
 - A reminder to switch off mobile phones and all other devices and put them in their bags while they are in the exam room.
 - A valid photo ID (ideally a student card) must be on display throughout the exam.
 - A reminder to check that they have received all of the required exam documents (check the number of pages on the exam paper, ensure they have any permitted formula sheets, etc.).

A.4 During the exam

The invigilator has the following roles in the exam:

- To help with exam logistics, such as setting out places and picking up exam scripts, etc.
- To check the student IDs using the prepared attendance list and note any late arrivals.
- To manage the start and end of the exam.
- To channel student questions to the teacher, if appropriate.
- To discourage and detect attempted cheating through being visible around the room and through observing student behaviour and collecting evidence when necessary.
- Responding to students with problems.

A.4.1 *Dealing with student questions*

Exam regulations require that the teacher is, in principle, present for the exam. If a teacher is not present in an exam room for a period of time (e.g. the exam is spread across multiple rooms), then the teacher must be contactable by phone. If a student has a query, this should be relayed to the teacher.

To ensure equal treatment of all students, teachers will normally not answer queries unless an exam question is completely unclear (e.g. due to a translation or language problem), or unless there is a serious error in the exam question. In such a case, the teacher must make a general announcement for clarification. Ideally it will also be noted on a board if one is available.

It is recommended that teachers avoid introducing additional or rectifying material during the examination.

A.4.2 *Discouraging and detecting cheating*

To discourage attempted exam fraud, invigilators should be highly visible in the exam room. They should move regularly throughout the exam room. Invigilators should avoid engaging in behaviour which might suggest they are not paying attention (reading, using their phone, sitting in one part of the room, etc.).

Checking students' ID: students must display a valid photo ID on the desk during the exam. The invigilators must check each student's identity against the attendance list.

Presence of unauthorised materials: only material (documents, notes, electronic instruments, etc.) explicitly specified by the teacher prior to the examination is authorised.

Unauthorised communication: Students are not permitted to communicate with each other in an exam (by talking, passing notes, or by reading from another student's script, for example). Nor are they allowed to communicate with someone outside the exam room (using a concealed device).

When a student is found to be in possession of unauthorised materials ('smart watches', phones, unauthorised calculators, notes, etc.) or engaging in unauthorised communication, the invigilator has several responsibilities:

- They should, whenever possible, confiscate or photograph the item in question.
- They must immediately make a note describing what was observed and how.
- They may mark on the student's script the point at which the item was discovered.
- They must notify the teacher; the section or Registrar's Office may be called if necessary.
- The student can be allowed to complete the exam, if appropriate.
- They must retain the student's script at the end of the exam, as the student must not be allowed to depart with their script.

A.4.3 *Access to the toilet*

A student should be permitted to go to the toilet during an exam, providing that they are supervised.

A.4.4 *Accidents or illness occurring during an exam*

If a student has a problem during an exam (oral or written), the invigilator should consider the following actions:

1. Call emergency services at 021 693 30 00 (or 115 from a land line) if the student needs assistance.
2. If it is not possible for the student to continue the exam, assist the student to leave the room and inform them that a medical certificate must be provided to the Student Services (SAE).
3. Inform the teacher, if they are not already present.
4. Record this event in the exam report (see §A.6).
5. Record 'NA' grade for the student. The Registrar's Office (SAC) will change it (if necessary).
6. If the exam has been disrupted, consider whether the other students should be granted additional time or another compensation.

A.5 **At the end of the exam**

The teacher or invigilator(s) must ensure that the end of the examination is managed in an organised way.

No students can leave during the last fifteen minutes of scheduled exam time. Everyone must put down pens when instructed, and stay silent and seated until all scripts are collected. The students can then leave (but must stay silent if there are still other students working in the exam room).

The invigilators must check that each student submits the completed answer sheet containing all the required pages, then have the student confirm submission by signing the attendance sheet. Any missing answer sheets/scripts should be noted in writing at this time for the exam report (this will ensure a student cannot later claim that their sheet was handed in during the exam but was lost by the teacher).

A.6

After the exam

For all examinations conducted during an exam session, the teacher completes and uploads the exam report confirming that the exam was conducted in coherence with the internal directive concerning examinations at EPFL (Lex 2.6.1). This report needs to be uploaded to IS-Academia together with a copy of the exam paper in PDF format. The deadline is the same as for the submission of grades.

French and English language versions of the exam report forms are available here:
epfl.ch/about/overview/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2.6.2_prot_examen_fr.pdf
epfl.ch/about/overview/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2.6.2_prot_examen_en.pdf

In the case of any suspected exam fraud, the teacher writes a neutral report focusing on the facts concerning any suspected cheating (without imposing any sanctions). The teacher then sends the report to the section director and the legal counsel for the domain of education together with evidence of the compromising or suspected item or behaviour.

B. Oral exams

This section describes the rules for the supervision of oral exams as well as some recommendations for organising the logistics of oral exams. Schematic representations are available at the end of this handbook.

B.1

Before the day of the exam

B.1.1

Preparing the supervision of oral exams

An oral examination takes place under the supervision of the course teacher and an observer.

The observer is an experienced EPFL staff member who does not have a hierarchical relationship with the teacher. The observer is proposed by the teacher and validated by the section, who informs SAC.

In the case of a course with multiple teachers, the section must verify the absence of hierarchical relationships to allow them to fulfil both examination and observer roles.

B.1.2

Communicating the condition of the exam

- Establish the order in which students will be examined before the end of the semester. The assistance of the class representative may facilitate this task.
- Inform students about the location, procedure and the documents authorised during the examination at least one week in advance.

B.2

At the beginning of the oral exam

- Check the identity of each student.
- You may allow the student a preparation period once they have received the questions, although this is not mandatory; the oral examination may also begin without any preparation time.
- In the case of a preparation period, it is not mandatory to isolate the student in a separate room.

- B.3 During the oral exam**
→ The observer ensures that the examination proceeds properly and takes their own notes, which must be kept for the officially required retention periods.
→ The teacher also takes notes and keeps them for the officially required retention periods.
- B.4 At the end of the oral exam**
→ Do not communicate any result to the student and do not make any comment regarding whether they have passed or failed.
- B.5 After the oral exam**
The teacher alone is responsible for the final grade; the observer does not participate in the grading.

The grades and exam report sheet are submitted on IS-Academia (see §A.6).

C. Communication with students regarding exams

This section describes the rules for communicating with students regarding assessment and provides some additional recommendations.

- C.1 Communicating the basic assessment format**
The basic details of the assessment are included in the course description (*fiche de cours*). This includes whether it is:
- The type of course (session branch or semester branch).
 - The form of assessments used (written exam, oral exam or course work).
 - [optional] The percentage weighting of each component.
- If the weighting of each assessment task is not specified in the course description, this information should be communicated to students at the start of the semester.
- The conditions for the assessment set by the teachers, including the weight of each assessment for the final grade should not be modified during the semester. In the case that a modification is necessary, the change must be communicated with at least one dedicated email with a subject that makes the objective clear.
- C.2 Exam past papers**
Past exam papers are a useful study tool for students and it is recommended that at least one previous exam question sheet should be made available to students. The exam regulations stipulate that for supervised written exams, new questions must be used for each examination (Lex 2.6.1, art. 8.1).

A correction sheet for the previous exam papers is also useful for the students.

C.3 Pre-exam communication

For written exams, the teacher should communicate to students:

- the location and time of the exam,
- the room layout and student placement list,
- the materials students are allowed to have in the exam,
- any other relevant information.

For oral exams, the teacher has overall responsibility for developing the schedule but may delegate this to the class representative(s).

C.4 Viewing scripts

After they have been notified of their results, students have six months to ask the teacher to consult their exam scripts (see Ordinance on the evaluation of bachelor and master studies, Lex 2.6.0.1, art. 15).

Students must not be able to make changes to their script during the viewing process. Ideally students will get to view a copy of their script (rather than the original). Where students do view the original, viewing of the script must be carefully supervised.

In person viewing of scripts needs to take place on the Lausanne campus. Please contact your section if you need to book a room for this purpose. Teachers may also choose to send students electronic documents (typically to each student in the class) or to hold online consultations.

To aid clarity during script viewing, if requested the teacher must make available to students a grading scale which states the total points per question and how many points the student obtained (see §1.1).

In addition, the teacher may also wish to make available:

- A sample correction (*corrigé*) that shows a 'correct' answer to each question indicating what features are expected in a correct answer and how many marks are allocated.
- A grading rubric (*grille d'évaluation*) – an assessment scoring guide indicating criteria of judgement, weighting of each criteria, and what is expected in the answer in relation to each criterion.

During the viewing session, the teacher does not have to discuss their correction with the student. However, if a brief explanation can avoid subsequent formal action on the basis of a misunderstanding, everyone will benefit. If a student does not understand a correction or wishes to contest it, they should follow the procedure for appealing a grade by contacting the SAC (Registrar's Office) via the Student Services.

Teachers schedule the viewing time within normal working hours, and within a reasonable time period after a viewing request is made. It is possible to schedule multiple students to view a copy of their script at the same time. In large classes, it can be helpful to involve the class representatives.

D. Assessing group work

It is possible to grade students on the basis of work which they have completed as a group (e.g. a group project submission or report). The teacher is, however, required to have some mechanism to differentiate the individual students' contributions (it is not required to precisely weight each student's contribution – only to address pronounced differences in contribution).

There are a number of strategies that can be used to identify such pronounced differences and to differentiate grades if required (each of which have some strengths and weaknesses):

- Group submissions can be accompanied by an oral presentation which allows teachers to question each team member on their contribution.
- Each student can be allocated a task in the group and can report on that specific task.
- The group submission can be accompanied by a (shorter) individual submission which allows each individual to demonstrate their own grasp of the material.

Group work is often intended to assess both technical knowledge and transversal skills (such as team leadership or project management). Different components of a submission can be used by teachers to assign a weight to transversal as well as technical skills taught in a course (for example, an individual report may be used to assess a student's learning on project management, while technical knowledge may be assessed through the group submission).

It should be noted that grades are awarded by the teacher. Peer grading among students cannot be used. Peer feedback from one student to another remains, however, a valuable learning strategy.

E. Grading advice

E.1 Assigning grades

The teacher has considerable flexibility in terms of how they convert marks into grades. While strategies like normalizing grades on a Gaussian distribution are widely used internationally, under the EPFL system, grades should be related to attainment of particular learning goals and not to comparisons with other students.

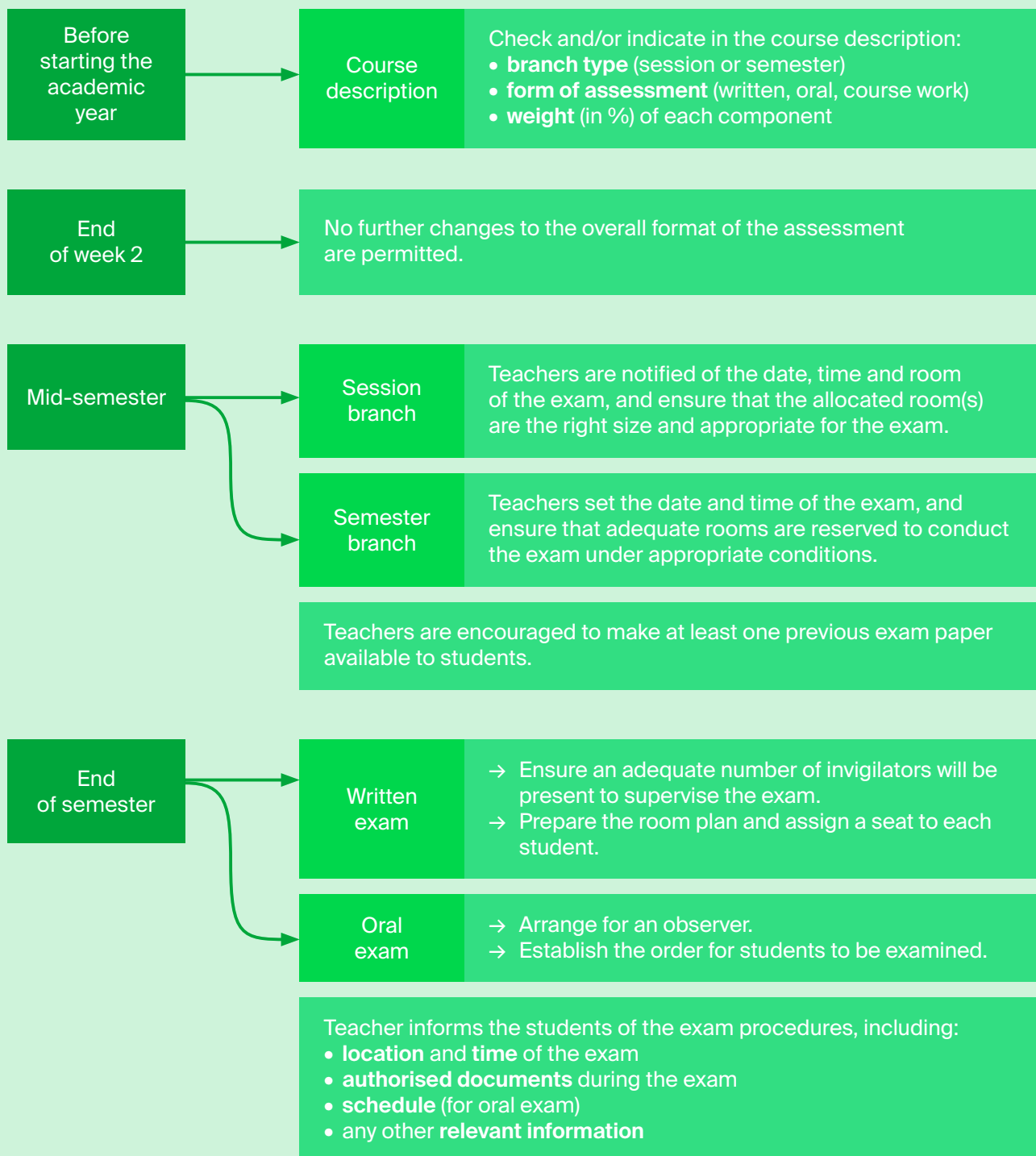
Since teachers design a new assessment each year, it is normal that there will be some variability in difficulty of exams, and thus it is not required that the same relationship between marks and grades is applied each year. In altering the mark to grade conversion, however, the focus remains on attainment of learning goals rather than on comparison between students in a cohort.

E.2 Criteria rubric

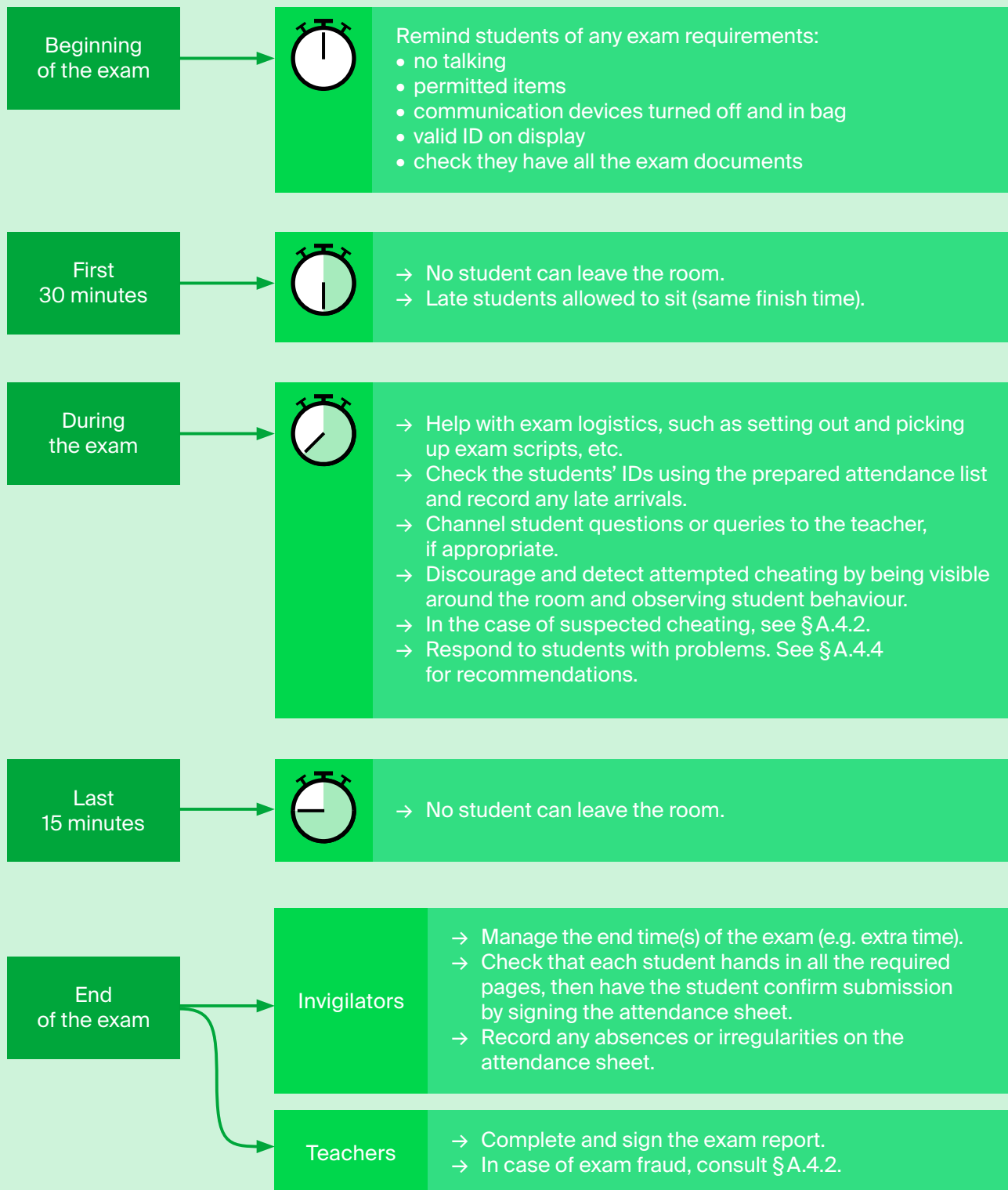
To make the assessment transparent, clear to students, and objective, you can use a grid which specifies the criteria for obtaining marks. This can be shared with the teaching assistants and the students.

For more information you can visit go.epfl.ch/grading.

Before the exam



On the day of the written exam



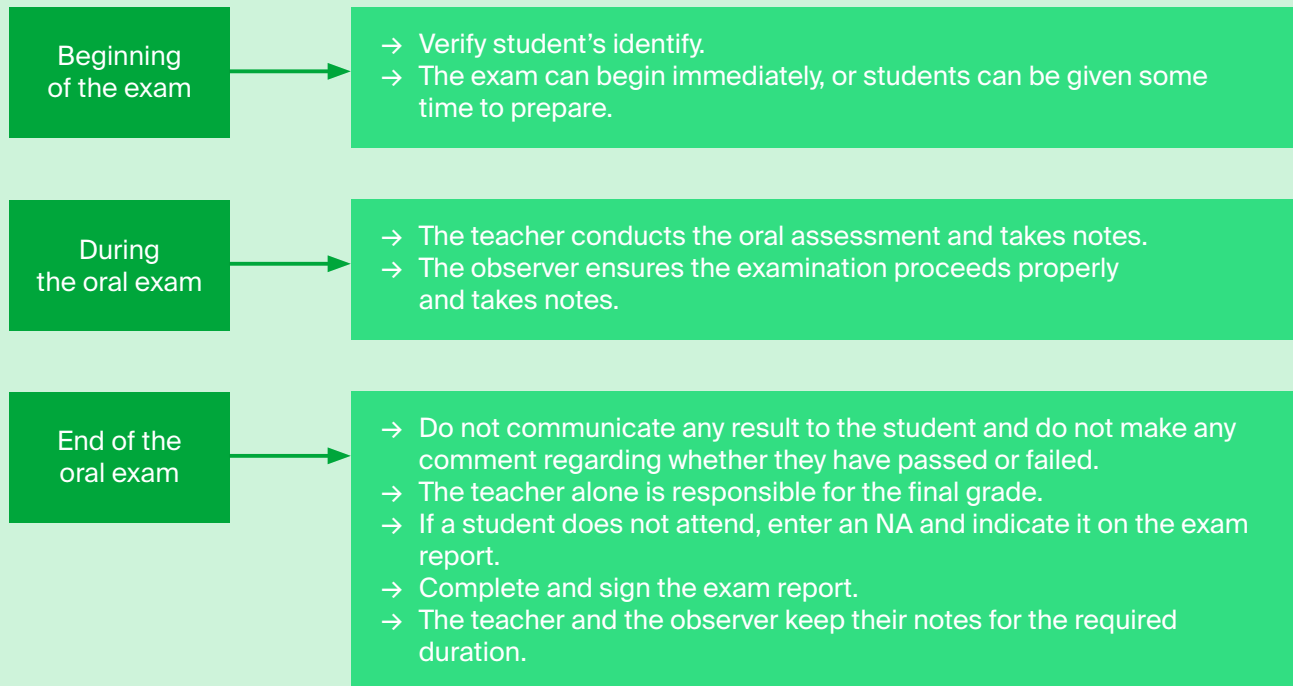
Registrar's Office (SAC) +41 21 693 43 45 | **Technical issues** +41 21 693 40 00 | **Help, emergency** +41 21 693 30 00

This schematic representation can assist teachers to navigate procedures for written exams. It contains both rules and recommendations. Teachers should consult § A.2 à A.5 of this handbook for more details.

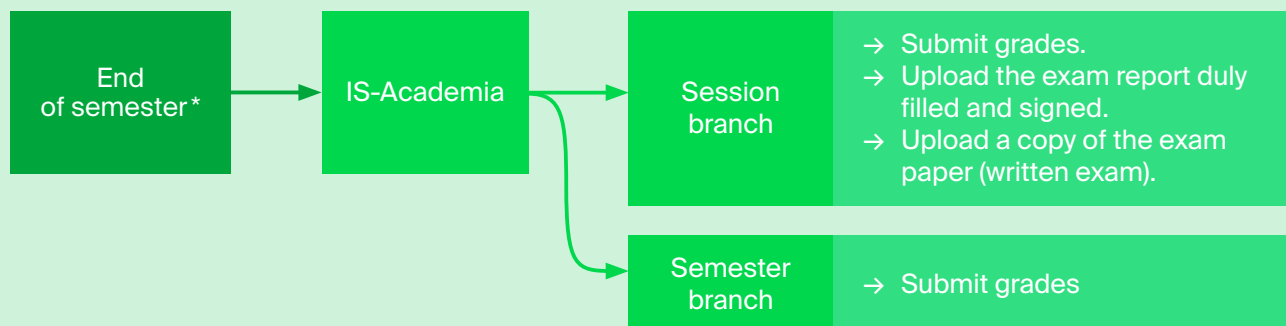
To access the digital version of this handbook and any updates
go.epfl.ch/assessmenthandbook



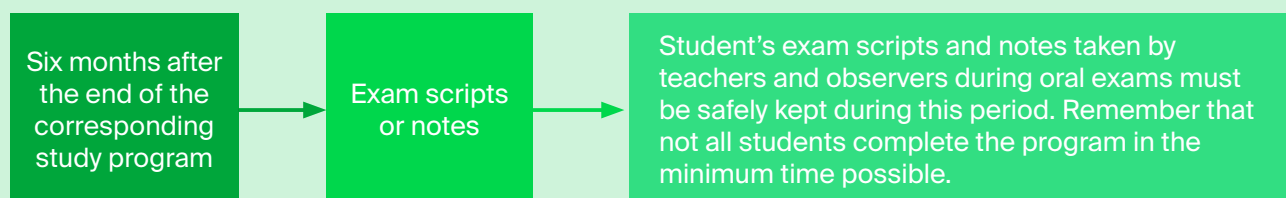
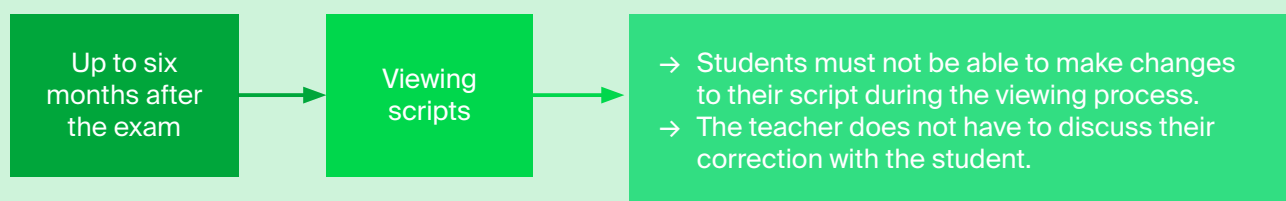
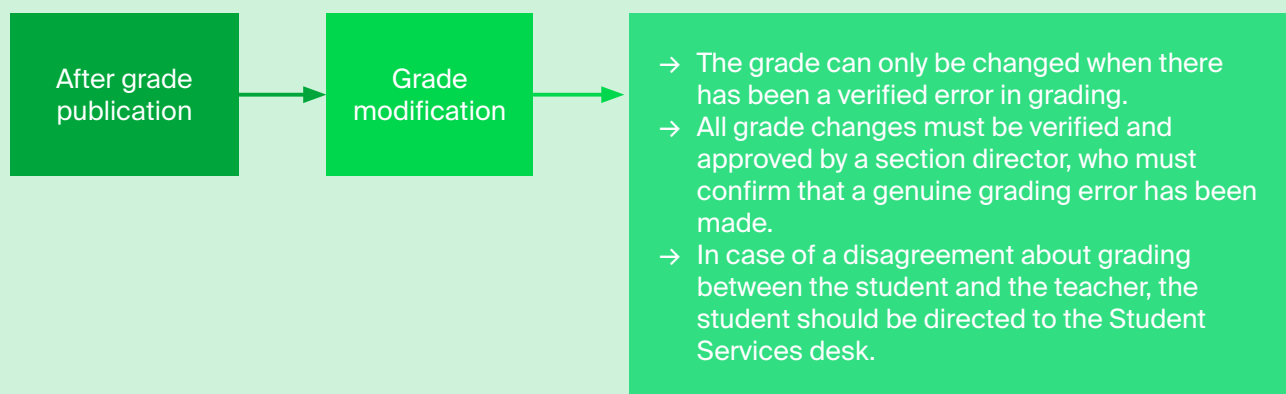
On the day of the oral exam



After the exam



* The procedure for submission of grades is set out by the Registrar's Office. Depending on the format of the evaluation (course work, project or session exam) the dates may vary, so it is advisable to check the deadlines in the academic calendar for each of your exams every semester.



For additional information,
please contact the Teaching
Support Center (CAPE)
at cape@epfl.ch

To access the PDF or check
for updates, visit [go.epfl.ch/
assessmenthandbook](https://go.epfl.ch/assessmenthandbook)

