



## Université libre de Bruxelles - ULB (Belgium)

### Ultrashort bio:

- Name : Philippe EMPLIT
- Position at university : Professor (tenured)
- Background : Dr Sc in Applied physics (ULB, 1991)
- Teaching activity : Applied physics
- Research activity : Nonlinear Photonics + HE Pedagogy & Strategy
- Responsibilities at university : Past Vice-Rector for Teaching & Learning affairs / Past Director of Teaching & Learning Center

# How to ensure constructive alignment for learning outcomes, with diverse delivery modes involved?

## General context (academic year):

- Academic year is split into 3 quadrimesters (Q1, Q2 & Q3)
- Second quadrimester is lasting from week # 21 (03 Feb) to week # 34 (04 May) (incl. 2 break weeks at Easter)
- Student assessment for Q2 courses is scheduled from week # 37 (25 May) to week # 40 (15 Jun)

## Covid-19 context:

- Remote emergency teaching has been decided on 12 Mar and has started on week #27 (16 Mar)
- Rector decision of generalized remote Q2 student assessment has been announced on 12 Apr
- Format of Q2 student assessment has been communicated to students on 27 Apr
- Format can be continuous assessment, personal production and/or presentation, written exam, oral exam or a mix of these
- In order to ensure the pedagogical alignment (of LOs with activities and assessment), each teaching team has been asked, as soon as 13 Mar, to reconsider content (e.g. theory and exercises) and activities (e.g. group activities, laboratories, internships, ...) of their Q2 courses, with respect to the covid-19 remote emergency teaching situation and the highly probable (at this time) remote assessment

# How do universities manage examination in the COVID19 times, when teaching had to swiftly adapt?

## General context:

- **Academic freedom** gives (mostly generally) to the teaching team the opportunity to **fix the teaching format** of a course (activities) as well as its **student assessment format**; on the contrary **LOs are fixed at the programme management level**
- Learning & teaching activities and assessment methods are both part of the **online description of the course**, edited by the teaching team, and available from the very beginning of the academic year to the students

## Covid-19 context (teaching):

- **Changes to the online description** of Q2 courses have been exceptionally authorized up to 27 Apr
- Rector strongly recommended **limiting content and skills of all Q2 courses to the strictly essential ones** with respect to each programme topical goals and LOs

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## Covid-19 context (student assessment):

- Teaching teams have been asked to firstly consider, whenever possible, **asynchronous student assessment methods**, based on **continuous assessment or personal production and/or presentation**; the recommended online platform therefore is the institutional moodle-based Learning Management System (LMS) and its various options
- If continuous assessment and/or personal production are not possible, **synchronous online oral examination** by means of O365 MS Teams video calls has been recommended as a second option for all courses with less than 150 students; each course has therefore been allocated by institutional IT services a dedicated team space on MS Teams whose members are the enrolled students to the course and the owners are the members of the teaching team
- The third option recommended by authorities is a distant **synchronous online written exam** organized on a specially created moodle-based platform, mirroring the LMS course platform students are used to surf on during the academic year; recommended moodle option is "Test"; there will be **no proctoring** system activated by ULB during online written exams
- Of course, **any mix of these 3 kinds of assessment methods is also welcome**
- Whatever the chosen assessment method, the authorities strongly recommend to teachers to show some **flexibility** in terms of deadlines (in case of technical issues encountered by the students), and for synchronous methods, they ask to set up a **formative "white exam"** asap in order to give the opportunity to students to check their connection issues and to train in "exam context"

# How to address equity and inclusiveness while there is increasing concern, notably among students, that online assessment, like online learning, may sparkle and reinforce inequity?

## General context:

- **Disabled students or students with specific needs** receive a **status and specific support** during their academic journey at ULB
- **Social services** of the university offer **financial** (e.g. reduced tuition fees, fellowships, job opportunities inside university, ...) **and/or material support** (e.g. lab equipment, books and references, IT equipment, ...) to students with poor **socio-economic situation** (appr 25% of ULB students are concerned somehow)

## Covid-19 context:

- **Complementary IT equipment** (and internet connections) are lent through social services to demanding students in case of insufficient technical personal environment
- A **physical access to university IT equipped spaces** are offered to students when their personal situation prevents them to prepare and/or pass an assessment in a quiet and adapted environment
- A **dedicated call-center** will be active for students during the exam period for any technical issues ; this call center will inform the concerned teaching teams
- But anyway, remote emergency teaching and covid-19 context will probably reinforce inequities ...