



Dispositions particulières **Bruges campus and Tirana campus**

Approved by the Academic Council of 11 September 2026

The *Dispositions particulières* of the study programmes at the Bruges campus and Tirana campus present specifications of and further elaborations on the provisions of the Study Regulations of the College of Europe. The provisions of the Study Regulations fully apply and – in case of dispute – take precedence over the stipulations of the *Dispositions*.

The document is divided into two sections:

- I. Digital Written Examinations;
- II. Supervision, Second Reading and Defence of Master's theses.

Section I: Digital Written Examinations

This section is applicable to the following programmes:

- Master of Science in European Economic Studies (ECO);
- Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies (IRD);
- Master in European Legal Studies, LLM (LAW);
- Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies (POL);
- Master of Arts in European Transformation and Integration Studies (ETI);
- Master of Arts in Transatlantic Affairs (MATA);
- Inter-Departmental European Advanced Studies (IDEAs).

The Study Regulations approved by the Academic Council stipulate the following general provisions for written examinations:

- a written examination can be hand-written or digital (cf. Art. 15 of the Study Regulations);
- all digitally written examinations are organised on a dedicated exam platform. Students use their own laptops (cf. Art. 30a of the Study Regulations);
- specifications regarding cheating (e.g., in digital written examinations) can be outlined in separate documents approved by the Academic Council (cf. Art. 30b of the Study Regulations).

In the following, the implementation of specific rules applying to written digital examinations will be outlined.

1. General instructions

All digitally written examinations are based on the following individual declaration that students accept and subscribe to:

“By submitting my exam paper, I solemnly declare that this exam is entirely my own work and that I have neither breached the rules set out in this document nor engaged in academic misconduct (including the unauthorised use of artificial intelligence, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion or falsification of data) as defined in the College of Europe Study Regulations (section 4.4), and that I have complied with the Dispositions particulières (Bruges campus and Tirana campus) adopted by the Academic Council.”

French translation: « En rendant ma copie d'examen, je déclare solennellement que cet examen est entièrement le fruit de mon propre travail et que je n'ai ni enfreint les règles énoncées dans le présent document, ni commis de fraude académique (en ce compris l'utilisation non autorisée de l'intelligence artificielle, le plagiat, l'auto-plagiat, la collusion ou la falsification de données) telle que définie dans le Règlement des études du Collège d'Europe (section 4.4), et que j'ai respecté les Dispositions particulières (campus de Bruges et campus de Tirana) adoptées par le Conseil académique. »

This declaration is included and accessible for students in each digital written examination.

2. Technical provisions

All digitally written examinations will be organised on a dedicated exam platform (e.g., exam.net platform) communicated to the students in due time before the start of the respective exam period. Students must familiarise themselves with the dedicated exam platform and all technical instructions provided by the College before the start of the examination period. Students will use their own laptops for the exams. It is their responsibility to ensure that their laptops work well and that they have, if required, properly installed the required trusted software (e.g., Safe Exam Browser) before the start of the examination period. While the College – in close cooperation with the provider of the dedicated exam platform – takes all reasonable measures to ensure the proper functioning of the platform across all common operating systems and devices, minor technical variations may occur depending on the students' hardware or software environment, for which the College cannot be held responsible.

The ICT service is responsible for the technical setup/equipment in the classrooms and provides on-site and/or remote support during the examinations.

In case of technical problems during the examinations, students must indicate this immediately – i.e. not after the examination – to the Academic Assistants or other persons supervising the

examinations.¹

Time that is lost during the exam due to major technical problems (immediately or post-hoc, as verified by the ICT service) will be added at the end of the respective exam. Complications, delays or interruptions during examinations related to the unpreparedness of students or lacking technical setup of their laptops (e.g., failure to install the required trusted software) do not fall under such major technical problems and cannot form the basis of a time extension.

In the unlikely event that the campus were to face a general internet failure on the day of an examination, the exam will be rescheduled.

The Bruges and Tirana campuses do not take responsibility for any complications related to students' own ICT equipment.

3. Exam formats

Digitally written examinations can take the form of open- or closed-book examinations.

For both open- and closed-book digital exams, the exam answers must directly be typed on the dedicated exam platform. **Under no circumstances may text be copy-pasted from any other sources or software applications.** The development of the word count will be retraced via the “version tracking”-function on the dedicated exam platform.

Students may not copy or restate the examination questions or instructions in the response windows, starting directly with their answers in the foreseen fields.

Academic Assistants will actively proctor the students' screens during the examinations.

3.a. Open-book examinations

In case of an **open-book examination format**, students can use all the materials that are part of a course (such as readings, lecture notes, slides in printed or digital form) and any other material, unless explicitly prohibited for a specific course. If applicable, the respective information will be communicated in a separate announcement at least two weeks before the date of the respective exam. Students are expected to have downloaded the course materials on their laptop before the exam.

Unless explicitly allowed in the ECTS card/outline of the course, and specified in the instructions of the examination, any use of AI models (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude or Gemini) and AI-powered tools (e.g., DeepL, Grammarly or ChatPDF) in digital written exams is strictly prohibited and will be sanctioned as cheating (under Art. 30b of the Study Regulations).

¹ For the remainder of the document, the wording “Academic Assistants” covers also other possible persons supervising/proctoring an examination.

The use of search engines and web browsers during examinations, if allowed for a specific examination for the purpose of searching and retrieving information online, must fully take into consideration the relevant provisions on (attempted) cheating in this document. (Attempted) Cheating entails here – unless explicitly allowed – the intentional use of or active engagement with Generative AI features that are integrated into search engines and web browsers. Academic Assistants will actively proctor the students' screens during the examinations.

In principle, students are neither required to use footnotes, nor to provide a bibliography, nor to include any annexes in their answers. If nevertheless, a student exceptionally uses a quotation, it should be paraphrased and referenced by indicating the full name of an author or the title of a document in the text (e.g., According to Author X, concept Y can be defined as...). Whenever appropriate, quotation marks must be used for any verbatim reproduction of text.

The open-book examination can take two different forms, that is, with or without the requirement to install a trusted software (e.g., Safe Exam Browser) before the exam.

(i) without the installation requirement

Students can freely access their course materials (and any other material, unless explicitly prohibited) stored on their laptop or online.

Students can use the built-in language dictionary on the dedicated exam platform and/or bring a printed language dictionary which may be subject to inspection. While the use of standard online language dictionaries (e.g., Collins or Merriam-Webster) is tolerated, the translation of entire sentences/sections of text (e.g., via translation tools like Google Translate, DeepL or plug-ins) is strictly prohibited and will be verified during the on-site supervision (observation of screens) as well as retroactively via the tools available on the dedicated exam platform. Inserting (auto)translated sections of text, or any attempt thereof, will be considered and sanctioned as (attempted) cheating.

(ii) with the installation requirement

Students will be required to install a trusted software (e.g., Safe Exam Browser) providing a “security/locking mode” that limits access to the dedicated exam platform and blocks other internet browsing and access to local files. The ICT service will provide the corresponding installation guides and manuals. Students will be expected to test the software and will receive practical guidance before the start of the examination session.

Course materials (such as readings) will be made available as pdf files in the dedicated exam platform, but students may also bring their own copies of any printed materials, unless explicitly prohibited for a specific course. The digitally provided materials and the materials students may bring in printed form, if applicable, will be communicated at least two weeks before the date of the respective exam.

Students can use language dictionaries in printed form or the built-in tool on the dedicated exam platform but cannot access other online dictionaries. For hand-written exams, students can only use printed dictionaries (not online).

Any printed materials, as permitted for a specific exam, and dictionaries are subject to inspection by the supervising Academic Assistants.

In case a student refuses to install the software on their computer, they must notify the Department at least 7 calendar days before the digital exams. They will be offered to take the same exam in a hand-written format (without the use of a computer). The same notification deadline applies for all other justified requests to sit an exam in hand-written instead of digital format.

3.b. Closed-book examinations

In case of a **closed-book examination format**, students must install a trusted software (e.g., Safe Exam Browser) providing a “security/locking mode” that limits access to the dedicated exam platform and blocks other internet browsing and access to local files. A few files in pdf format can be made available on the dedicated exam platform (e.g., the Treaties or a file related to an exam question). The ICT service will provide the corresponding installation guides and manuals. Students will be expected to test the software and will receive practical guidance before the start of the examination session.

Except for language exams, for which any kind of dictionary (printed or online) is forbidden, during closed-book digital exams students can use dictionaries in printed form or the built-in tool on the dedicated exam platform but they may not access other online dictionaries. For hand-written exams, students can only use printed dictionaries (not online).

Any printed materials (e.g., the Treaties), as permitted for a specific exam, and dictionaries are subject to inspection by the supervising Academic Assistants.

In case a student refuses to install the software on their computer, they must notify the Department at least 7 calendar days before the digital closed-book exams. They will be offered to take the same exam in a hand-written format (without the use of a computer). The same notification deadline applies for all other justified requests to sit a closed-book exam in hand-written instead of digital format.

4. Communication during examinations

Communication during the examinations is not allowed (neither oral nor digital communication), except, if necessary, communication with the person supervising the exam. The use of mobile phones, smartwatches as well as earphones/headphones, and – for open-book digital exams – all online shared spaces (such as messaging fora, shared drives like Google Drive, etc.) is strictly prohibited. Only in exams that require the upload of photos of hand-written elements (e.g., graphs, drawings in econometrics) to the dedicated exam platform is the use of smartphones allowed under the close, individual monitoring of the supervising Academic Assistants and strictly limited to the time necessary for this operation.

5. Sanctions

As regards sanctions, Art. 30b, 38, 39a, 39b, 40 and 41 of the Study Regulations apply, with the following clarifications:

- For ‘copy-pasting’/inserting text:

Copy-pasting/inserting text from any other sources or software (including translation applications) into the dedicated exam platform will be considered cheating and lead to a mark of 0 (the student’s explanation will be heard before, in line with Art. 30b of the Study Regulations).

- For use of artificial intelligence (AI):

The use of AI (in line with Art. 38 of the Study Regulations) remains strictly prohibited unless explicitly allowed for certain aspects. In open-book examinations (without the installation requirement) this prohibition explicitly entails copying from text or using/engaging with insights and analysis generated by AI. Any attempt to use or the illicit usage of AI will be considered cheating and will lead to a mark of 0 (the student’s explanation will be heard before, in line with Art. 30b of the Study Regulations).

- For (illicit) communication:

Any attempt to communicate or any illicit usage or accessing of communication tools, entailing having a communication tool open/active on screen, a phone taken to the bathroom or similar, will be considered cheating or attempted cheating and will lead to a mark of 0 (the student’s explanation will be heard before, in line with Art. 30b of the Study Regulations).

- For plagiarism:

All open-book exam answers will be checked for plagiarism. In line with Art. 39, 40 and 41 of the Study Regulations, the penalties will take the extent and nature of plagiarism into account. Additionally, the verbatim reproduction of large amounts of text can be considered cheating and will result in a mark of 0 (in such cases, the student’s explanation will be heard before, in line with Art. 30b of the Study Regulations).

- For collusion:

Any kind of collusion (as defined under Art. 39b of the Study Regulations) will be considered (attempted) cheating and will result in a mark of 0 (the student’s explanation will be heard before, in line with Art. 30b of the Study Regulations).

- For deliberately losing connection to the dedicated exam platform:

Any kind of cheating or attempted cheating leading to disconnection from the dedicated exam platform will lead to a mark of 0 (the student’s explanation will be heard, in line with Art. 30b of the Study Regulations). Only in case of purely technical problems requiring a “reconnection” to the exam will the lost time be added at the end of the respective exam for the concerned student.

- For late submission:

Digital exams submitted late via the dedicated exam platform will be awarded a mark of 0 unless a technical problem has caused the delay – for which the immediate support by the supervising Academic Assistant should be sought.

Section II: Supervision, Second Reading and Defence of Master's theses

This section is applicable to the following programmes:²

- Master of Science in European Economic Studies (ECO);
- Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies (IRD);
- Master in European Legal Studies, LLM (LAW);
- Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies (POL);
- Master of Arts in European Transformation and Integration Studies (ETI).

The obligatory thesis defence provides the students with the opportunity to present their insights and demonstrate their expertise in the field of their research, show that the thesis is their own original work, and answer questions that the supervisor or second reader may raise.

The Study Regulations approved by the Academic Council stipulate the following general provisions for the supervision, second reading and defence of Master's theses:

- the supervisor of a thesis should be teaching a course for which the student is registered, without prejudice to the specific rules established by the academic Departments (cf. Art. 33 of the Study Regulations);
- research for and the writing of the thesis must be undertaken in accordance with plans approved by the supervisor of the thesis (cf. Art. 33 of the Study Regulations);
- each Master's thesis undergoes an independent assessment by a second reader. Second readers may include, in principle: any current or former professor, research fellow and visiting scholar or a member of a College-affiliated research centre; former academic and research assistants; and external examiners approved by the Academic Council. The Academic Council may adopt specific regulations on the supervision and second reading of Master's theses (cf. Art. 33 of the Study Regulations);
- the supervisor and second reader of a Master's thesis will assess the work in accordance with the applicable criteria and provide a joint written evaluation of the thesis, deciding by consensus on the final mark. In case of disagreement, the final mark will be a weighted average of the proposed marks by the supervisor and the second reader, with the mark of the supervisor counting for double. The Academic Council may adopt specific regulations (cf. Art. 35 of the Study Regulations);
- all students must defend their Master's thesis orally in the presence of their supervisor and, in principle, the second reader during the regular examination period in May-June or – in case of a second-session submission or deferral – in later examination periods. The presence of an Academic Assistant during the thesis defence is required. The thesis defence should have a duration of at least 20 minutes. In principle, it entails a short presentation of the key elements of the thesis by the student, followed by a discussion with the

² For the MATA programme, in which the Master's thesis co-supervisor replaces the second reader (cf. Art. 35 of the Study Regulations), the MATA Joint Committee establishes a separate practice of thesis defences in the spirit of the provisions of these *Dispositions particulières*. The co-supervisor from the College of Europe side must participate in the thesis defence in any case.

supervisor and the second reader. The Academic Council may adopt further, specific regulations in this regard (cf. Art. 35 of the Study Regulations).

In the following, the implementation of specific rules applying to the second reading and defence of Master's theses will be outlined.

1. Allocation of supervisor and second reader

The Departments establish their own procedures for allocating thesis supervisors to students. In principle, the allocation of thesis supervisors must be completed by the end of the first semester of the respective academic year and cannot be changed thereafter. In the course of the second semester, at the latest by the Academic Council meeting in May, the Departments allocate the second reader of the Master's thesis (in line with Art. 33, para. 5 of the Study Regulations).

The students will be informed about the second reader of their Master's thesis with the invitation to their thesis defence (see below).

2. Thesis supervision

The Master's thesis supervisor's responsibilities include:

- Guidance: Be available to provide structured guidance on the thesis topic, scope, objectives and methodology;
- Consultation: Be available for regular consultations, both oral and written, to discuss the thesis progress in view of the overall timeline;
- Feedback: Offer constructive feedback on concept papers, focusing on ideas, structure, and methodology, but not commenting on fully formulated chapters or large parts thereof that might be included as such in the final text of the thesis.

The thesis supervisor is supported by an Academic Assistant of the student's study programme who follows the supervision process closely, i.a. by facilitating the exchanges with the supervisee and advising on departmental guidelines and standards as well as formal requirements.

Research for and the writing of the thesis must be undertaken in accordance with the Department's guidelines and the plans approved by the supervisor of the thesis. The student may be required to update their supervisor in writing on their work progress regularly. Non-compliance with clearly agreed deliverables will be considered in the final assessment of the thesis and may result in a substantial reduction of the mark.

The second reader of the Master's thesis provides an assessment of the final Master's thesis but may under no circumstances be involved in any part of the supervision process.

3. Preliminary evaluation

After submission of the Master's thesis by the date determined by the Academic Council, and in accordance with the applicable criteria (in line with Art. 34 of the Study Regulations and the departmental guidelines), the supervisor and the second reader will assess the quality of the work independently. They will submit their proposed marks and comments to the Department in line with the respective internal procedures. Afterwards, the proposed marks and comments will be shared with the supervisor and the second reader.

4. Thesis defence

Within a dedicated timeframe during the respective examination period (determined by the Academic Administration Office of the Bruges campus), the Department will organise the thesis defence with the supervisor and, in principle, the second reader. Both may connect remotely to the thesis defence session. In principle, the thesis defence is conducted in the language in which the thesis was written. During the regular examination period in May-June, the student will participate in the thesis defence in a dedicated room on campus – in the presence of the Academic Assistant acting as a notetaker (in principle, and if possible, the Academic Assistant who followed the supervision process). For deferred or second-session submissions in the supplementary examination period (September-October) or the regular examination period in May-June of the following academic year (cf. Art. 35, paras. 9 and 10 of the Study Regulations), students participate in the thesis defence remotely via videoconferencing.

In case a student has duly submitted their Master's thesis but is for legitimate reasons excused from the participation in their thesis defence on the originally foreseen day (Art. 37a applies by analogy), the thesis defence may exceptionally be rescheduled within the same examination period if this is deemed possible by the thesis supervisor, the second reader (if applicable), the Department and the Academic Administration Office after consultation with the student concerned. Otherwise, the thesis defence will be deferred to the supplementary examination period in September-October (or the regular examination period in May-June of the following academic year, if applicable), without resubmitting the Master's thesis as such.

Unexcused absence from/failure to participate in the thesis defence will cap the maximum mark that can be awarded to the Master's thesis at 10.0/20 (failing mark). Art. 35, para. 10 of the Study Regulations applies.

For cases that fall under Art. 40, para. 2(iii)a of the Study Regulations, an additional thesis defence in second session is not foreseen.

During the thesis defence (duration of min. 20 minutes), the supervisor and, if applicable, the second reader will raise questions about the submitted work with the student – ensuring that the thesis defence tests the student's ability to answer critical questions about their work and to demonstrate a firm grasp of the content of their work. The exact format of the thesis defence,

including the expectations on the students' short initial presentation of their work as well as the question of which materials are permitted during the defence, are determined on the departmental level.

5. Final evaluation and marking

Based on the additional insights derived from the thesis defence, the supervisor and the second reader agree by consensus on the final mark. Subsequently, the supervisor finalises the thesis evaluation form, taking into account the comments of the second reader. The final thesis evaluation form is agreed upon by the supervisor and the second reader whose names will be stated in the document.

In case of an insurmountable disagreement on the mark between the supervisor and the second reader, Art. 35, para. 6 of the Study Regulations will apply.

The final mark of the Master's thesis will be determined by the Department after the application of potential sanctions in line with Art. 35, para. 12, Art. 39 and Art. 40 of the Study Regulations.

In line with Art. 25, paras. 3, 5 and 7 of the Study Regulations, students who continue to have queries about the reasons for their thesis mark may request additional explanations ("written reasoned response") from their supervisor.