

Università
della
Svizzera
italiana

Faculty
of
Communication,
Culture
and Society

Vademecum for teaching staff



Dear colleague,

the Vademecum for teaching staff is a brief guide designed especially for lecturers who are not fully engaged at USI. A tool that will help you to navigate and better understand the “modus operandi” of our Faculty.

You will find this instrument useful for:

- planning your course(s) and describing it effectively on the relevant webpage in the Plan of studies, thus avoiding overlaps with other courses or programmes;
- giving your course and ensuring that all relevant information is made available to students on the online course portal;
- evaluating your course and allowing the students to respond fairly and in line with your colleagues' evaluations;
- applying correctly the Faculty Study regulations and guidelines.

This tool enables Faculty members to deliver high quality education and students to live a rich and fulfilling teaching and cultural experience.

We pay particular attention to the quality of teaching and of students' study curricula. One of the founding values of our University is the pivotal role of our students, who are thus enabled to find valuable opportunities for direct, open and constructive exchange.

I thank you for your contribution to the Faculty and wish you a successful academic year.

Kind regards,
Prof. Andrea Rocci



The Faculty Council

The official Faculty bodies are the Faculty Council, the Council of Professors and the Dean's Office.

The Faculty Council consists of full, associate, assistant and adjunct professors. Representatives of the intermediate body and of the students are also members.

The Council of Professors

The Council of Professors consists of full and associate professors. The two councils, which meet when called by the Dean, usually once a month, are the Faculty's main decision-making bodies. The Dean's Office is the body for the everyday management of the Faculty. It is responsible for implementing the decisions of the Faculty Council and the Council of Professors and for decisions regarding everyday matters.

The Dean's Office consists of the Dean and two Vice-Deans, one of whom has the function of study delegate. The Dean's office assists in carrying out the activities of the Dean's Office.

As far as teaching activities are concerned, the Dean's office ensures the correct functioning of the exams and decides on students' requests for equivalence and applications for extensions of the study plan. These two areas are generally the responsibility of the study-delegate Vice-Dean. You are warmly invited to contact the members of the Dean's Office whenever you need to discuss anything related to your academic activity in the Faculty.

You are also invited to consult the secretaries of the Dean's Office for anything relative to your activity in the Faculty that is not the responsibility of a specific service.

For everything concerning the organisation of exams, registration of grades and evaluation of the final dissertations, you should instead consult the Dean's office.

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Study Delegate

Prof. Sara Garau

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Assistant to the Study Delegate: Dr. Stefano Giacomelli

Teaching Indications**Harmonising
course
content**

To avoid any overlap between your course and those of your colleagues, you are invited to consult the Faculty's course descriptions, which you can find in the Plan of studies or online at the following address:

- www.search.usi.ch/courses
- Should you have any doubts about an overlap between your course content and that of other courses, you are invited to consult the Director of the Institute responsible for your course, or the Dean's Office directly.

**Compulsory
attendance**

The study regulations do not foresee compulsory attendance at all courses. Students who do not attend cannot, however, ask for a special ad hoc exam programme. Any teacher who requires attendance must specify it in the course description and inform the students accordingly.

**Lesson
times**

The lesson timetable is available online at the following address:

- www.com.usi.ch/en/practical-information/schedules
- It is important to respect starting and finishing times of lessons to allow students to get to their other classes.

**Students'
workload**

The students' workload is calculated on the basis of the number of ECTS credits attributed to a course. One ECTS credit is the equivalent of about 30 hours of student work, so for a course with 3 ECTS credits, for example, the students should have a workload of around 90 hours, including everything: class time, reading, individual or group work, exam preparation, etc. Naturally, this is a rough indication, not a cast-iron rule.

Means of evaluation, exams and grades

The knowledge and competences acquired by students during a course is normally evaluated by means of a final exam – written or oral – that is held during the exam session at the end of the course and in the supplementary session in September.

During the semester, the teacher can plan to assign individual or group marks for activities (for example presentations, papers, etc.) and progress tests. As a rule, the sum of the marks of the activities and tests during the semester does not constitute more than 30% of the final mark. The nature of these activities and tests, and their mandatory or optional nature, must be indicated in the course description and in the documents distributed to the students through the iCorsi platform.

The means of evaluation and the existence of any activity or progress test during the semester must be indicated in the official course description published in the Faculty's Plan of studies and/or online. The information must also be communicated clearly to the Dean's office at the beginning of the course.

For 'Open book' exams that require the use of material made available on the iCorsi platform, please make use of the USI computer room, so that limited and controlled access to the Internet is guaranteed.

The marks are on a scale from 1 to 10, including half marks (0.5); 6 is the pass mark. 10 must be reserved only for excellent results (awarded to a maximum of 10% of the group being examined).

Misconduct

If evidence emerges during an exam to suggest that a student is cheating, the teacher or assistants present at the exam as invigilators must present a written report to the study-delegate Vice Dean, who will initiate disciplinary procedures as appropriate (see Art. 33 of the Study Regulations).

The same obligation applies if there is evidence that a student has committed plagiarism in their written work (for intermediate tests, internship or project reports, final Bachelor dissertations or Master's theses). On this subject, it is important to point out that, at the beginning of their course of studies, the students in the Faculty are adequately informed about the gravity of plagiarism and the disciplinary consequences. Each student, moreover, has to sign a declaration of academic honesty at the start of their academic career and/or take the online course "Academic Integrity". The eLab can provide USI teachers with the software Turnitin (www.turnitin.com), a tool that can allow you to check whether the documents created by students contain plagiarized material. All Master's theses must be checked with this software before being accepted for presentation.

Evaluation of the quality of the course

Within USI's general quality-evaluation procedures, and more specifically those for the evaluation of teaching quality, each course with an exam is evaluated electronically by the students. The results of the evaluation of student satisfaction will be sent to you after the ordinary exams sessions.

The role of assistants

The attribution of assistants to your course must be agreed with the Director of the Institute responsible for the course. Assistants' responsibilities may include receiving students, correcting intermediate tests and written exams, managing material published online on the iCorsi platform and participation in class in seminars, always in the presence of the teacher responsible for the course. In any case assistants may not replace the teacher in regular class teaching.

Bachelor final research paper

The guidelines and information relative to handing in the final research paper dissertation can be found at the following address:

- www.com.usi.ch/en/practical-information/regulations-and-forms

Students are reminded that for the two study plans in communication sciences and in Italian Language, literature and civilisation the two documents are different.

Master's thesis

The guidelines and information relative to handing in the Master's thesis can be found at the following address:

- www.com.usi.ch/en/practical-information/regulations-and-forms

Students are also reminded that they must all upload their theses into the Turnitin system, without which a thesis cannot be accepted by the Dean's office.

The thesis supervisor is requested to check the antiplagiarism report and confirm to the Dean's office that there is no plagiarism and the Master's thesis can be handled in.

iCorsi

iCorsi (www.icorsi.ch) is an elearning platform based on the open-source software Moodle. It is used to make course teaching materials available; it is also useful to communicate with students, to give them assignments, to create quizzes for (self-) evaluation, etc. iCorsi is managed by eLab, the eLearning service of USI. To access the platform, you need an account (username + password) that will be given by the university. If you have not been given one, ask the eLab helpdesk: helpdesk@elearninglab.org.

You can send an email to the same address to ask for your course to be activated on the platform.

On the platform's help page you can also find some manuals that can guide you as you start using iCorsi (www.icorsi.ch/mod/folder/view.php?id=109435). If you need any other assistance to use the platform, or for

anything else relative to the platform, do not hesitate to contact the eLab staff by email (helpdesk@elearninglab.org) or by phone (058 666 4760). eLab can also provide USI teachers with other teaching support tools. Here are in particular:

- Turnitin (www.turnitin.com), already mentioned above, software that, along with its other functions, allows you to check whether the documents created by students contain copied material.
- MindMeister (www.mindmeister.com), software for creating mind maps collaboratively or for sharing them online. These can also be integrated onto the iCorsi platform.
- H5P (www.h5p.org), software for creating different kinds of interactive contents, like interactive videos, presentations, drag and drop questions, etc. H5P is integrated into iCorsi, too.
- SEB – Safe Exam Browser (www.safeexambrowser.org), a software that allows to safely run online exams through iCorsi.

For further information about these tools and to have access to them, please contact the eLab staff.

Personnel Administration

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Front desk

The secretaries' office on the Lugano campus is responsible for reception, phone calls, room bookings and managing travel. You are reminded that for everything concerning the organization of exams and registration of marks you should contact the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Communication, Culture and Society (see the section on the "Dean's Office").

Mattia Tamò
office Front office
tel + 41 58 666 4481
e-mail mattia.tamo@usi.ch

Sebastien Malisia
office Front office
tel + 41 58 666 4000
e-mail sebastien.malisia@usi.ch

Room bookings

to book rooms for rescheduled lessons, seminars or any other purpose, write to this address:

e-mail gestione-aule@usi.ch

Travel management

To book flights, trains and hotels and to register for conferences, write to this address:

e-mail gestione-viaggi@usi.ch

IT Services

Università della Svizzera italiana
Computer services

Via Buffi 13, 6900 Lugano
office 164
tel + 41 58 666 4610
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Extracts from the study regulations of the Faculty of Communication, Culture and Society

Below are some points from the Faculty's study regulations. You can find the complete regulations online at the following address: www.com.usi.ch/en/practical-information/regulations-and-forms

Art. 11.2 and 19.2 Assessment

2. A commission that rejects a thesis may make the following recommendations:
 - a) the candidate is invited to revise his/her Master's thesis or Final paper on the basis of the remarks and criticisms made by the commission members. In this case, the student must hand in a new thesis or Final paper within three months.
 - b) the candidate is invited to present another proposal, with a new topic and a different supervisor within a month from such an invitation. In this case the student must hand in the new thesis or Final paper within six months.

Art. 21 Examinations

1. Examinations are based on the course subjects that make up the study plan.
2. An examination is a test designed to assess a candidate's knowledge and skills.
3. Each course teacher is responsible for organising and setting an examination designed to assess the knowledge and skills acquired by a student during the lectures and seminars of the most recently held course.
4. Each teacher shall inform the Study Delegate of his/her own assessment method, to ensure that it is compatible with the present Regulations.

Art. 22 Examination sessions

1. There are two examination sessions for each course:
 - an ordinary session;
 - a supplementary session.
2. An ordinary session is held at the end of each semester (summer session and winter session). A supplementary session takes place at the end of summer, immediately before the start of the new academic year (autumn session).

3. The ordinary session comprises examinations on all the courses in the semester that precedes the session. The supplementary session comprises those examinations for which there are candidates registered.

**Art. 26
Format of
examinations
and language**

1. Examinations may be written or oral, or involve both a written and an oral component.
2. It is the responsibility of each course teacher to define, at the beginning of his or her course, the format of his/her examination, and notify both the students and the Dean's office.
3. The duration of a written or oral examination must be reasonably congruent with the specific course load.
4. Bachelor's exams and final dissertations are normally in Italian. Other language may be admitted with previous authorisation from the course teacher.
5. Master's written exams and dissertations are in the official language of the Master's programme. Other languages may be admitted with previous authorisation from the person in charge of the Master's programme.

**Art. 27
System of
evaluation**

1. Depending on the kind of examination, the grading system adopted may be binary (pass or fail) or on a numerical scale. The numerical scale goes from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 10, including half-points (0,5); 6 is the pass mark.
2. All course examinations are graded on scale of 1 to 10, except for language courses, or other courses which the Faculty considers to be equivalent to language courses, and for internships. For these, evaluation is expressed by means of a binary system (Pass or Fail).
3. Examinations and term papers that are assigned a mark lower than 6 (fail) must be repeated. In the case repeated exams and resubmitted papers, the latest result is the one that counts. Article 30.2 applies in any event.
4. To earn the ECTS points relating to each course, the student must pass the relative examination with a grade equal or to higher than 6, or obtain formal recognition of a grade earned in another university. When the evaluation is on a binary basis, a pass is the minimum requisite.

**Art. 28
Accreditation
(recognition of
examinations)**

1. Course teachers are entitled to evaluate their students' skills and performance during the teaching term through written or oral tests administered during exercises or seminar classes. The results of these tests may be taken into account in the calculation of the overall mark and therefore contribute to the award of ECTS points.
2. At the beginning of the course each teacher must inform both the Dean's office and students of the formula used to calculate the overall grade in his/her examination.

**Art. 30
Examination
reists and
resubmission
of papers**

1. A student who fails an examination may re-take it twice at the most. A student who fails the third attempt is excluded from the Faculty.
2. Out of the total of 180 ECTS points required for the Bachelor's degree award, the student is permitted to claim credits relating to 1 (one) examination he/she has failed, provided the grade is not lower than 5 out of 10. This also applies to Master's degree students. Any course counted in this way may not be included in the calculation of the number of ECTS credits necessary to go on to the second year of the Bachelor's degree programme.
3. Students who fail the Bachelor's final dissertation or the Master's thesis are allowed to re-submit a revised version of the same paper, in accordance with Article 11.2 or 19.2. Students who fail the second attempt are excluded from the Faculty.
4. Where the evaluation of an examination is composed of various parts, if the average mark obtained is a pass, the student is not allowed to re-sit any of the single component tests, unless otherwise stated by the course teacher concerned.
5. A pass mark in a course examination or paper/project or validated examination may neither be resat nor resubmitted.

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