

## Oral online examination - an experience report

It is always a special task to carry out an examination reliably and objectively ... especially when, due to special circumstances, suddenly an online examination has to be held. Good planning and preparation can therefore be a challenge, but it pays off! The oral online examination via MS Teams was a first for me and it was exciting for all of us, but it worked better than expected. Therefore, I want to share my very positive experiences with you!

### *Planning and preparation*

When it became clear that due to the corona pandemic, courses and exams could no longer be held at the university, my first step was to inform the students that the exam date would remain fixed. I was aware that postponing teaching and exams would only make the whole thing more complicated.

For a long time I thought back and forth how I could do this with the exam: whether a written work can replace the exam, or whether an oral exam will take place online or even a written exam online? After I had weighed the advantages and disadvantages of the online implementation, how to check the learning outcomes and considering the workload for students and myself it was clear: An oral exam will be conducted online! As an online tool, I chose MS Teams because the students and I had experience in distance learning and it would offer me all the options I would need for the exam.

The next consideration was the time factor: How much time would I need per student? How much time would I need as a buffer for technical difficulties? How much time would I need for change of the groups? In addition, how many hours would I be able to sit and prove in front of the computer? Without losing the quality of the exam-interview or losing my concentration and thus fairness would suffer? The first calculation showed around more than one day. It was therefore clear to me that I would split the online exam over two days and that I would shorten the time for "buffers / group changes".

On April the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> the exam was held in groups of 3 or 4 students. Before this dates they assigned themselves to the groups. Each student then received a meeting invitation from me via MS Teams for his/her group and they had to accept.

Why groups of 3 or 4? Because the students

- were not "alone" with me during the exam,
- had witnesses
- were able to learn something from the other interviews and
- if someone in the group was struggling, another could help in order to receive "extra points".

The final step in the preparation was to create the exam questions. I divided them into three areas according to course content.

### *The exam day: Conducting the first oral online exam*

MS Teams was started, the headset was put on, the test protocol and the examination cards were ready, as well as a coffee and a glass of water beside (to come through). It could start!

The student who was to take the exam had to use his camera to have "eye contact" with me and she/he had to share his/her screen with me. So I could see what was open on the computer.

The questions were "pulled" from the three areas, i.e. the student had to give a number between 1 and 15 each. There was no preparation time and all questions had to be answered spontaneously. After each group, the question cards were shuffled again (like in a card game), so that e.g. the number 1 in the next round was a completely different question than in the previous one.

### *Looking back*

- Teams MS Teams is a good tool for this type of exam and is easy to use.
- There were no technical problems.
- The meticulous planning and preparation have paid off.
- Good communication about the type and procedure of the exam is a prerequisite.
- The time it took to prepare and take the online exam did not take much longer than preparing, taking and correcting written works.
- The grade point average corresponds to that of previous years in this course.
- The students had to verbalize spontaneously. To be able to express yourself verbally, to put something into words, is especially important for the profession of a dietitian.
- The feedback from the students immediately after each exam group was positive. Some students lacked the preparation time because they had to answer spontaneously. But it was also a good exercise for later professional life

Dear colleagues keep calm and carry on! I wish you good and inspiring experiences with your online teaching and examinations!

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