



## **Guidelines for ideal open questions (e.g., short answer, essay questions)**

### **A. Model-answer**

- While creating an exam, make sure to write out the full correct answer yourself, or even start by doing so first. Then review the way the question and the answer relate to one another.
- Have one of your colleagues check whether the questions are clear. Do they interpret them as you intended? What kind of answer would they give? This is also useful for finding out how long it would take to answer a given question.

### **B. Language use:**

- There are no misconceptions because of ambiguous language use or because the question can be interpreted in more than one way
- There are no spelling errors, grammatical errors, complex sentence structures, unnecessarily difficult terminology or jargon
- There are no double negatives
- There are no unnecessary negations; try to use positive wording or accentuate important words

### **C. Information:**

- Enough information is provided to enable answering the question, with no trivial or irrelevant information; when presented, visual context information (an image, a graph, etc.) is necessary for answering the question.
- It is specified whether the students must provide an explanation, argumentation, clarification, etc.
- If students need to give examples, explanations etc., it is explicitly stated how many you want to see (i.e., give three examples, not give at least two examples).
- Restrictions on responses as necessary are incorporated to prevent students from over-elaborating on the answer (e.g., word count, number of lines, text box, number of reasons required).
- The question is separated from the contextual information (case study, problem, etc.), also visually.



- The maximum number of points that may be obtained for each question is specified, so that students can decide for themselves the order they want to answer the questions in.

**D. Presentation:**

- If a question consists of multiple sub-questions (for a case study, for example), these sub-questions are presented separately and clearly distinguishable (visually, through numbering, etc.).
- If a question refers to a drawing, piece of text, graph, etc., the reference is unambiguous, and takes into account potential colour blindness.

**E. The overall exam**

- The exam is constructed in accordance with the exam matrix
- The level of the exam is in accordance with the intended learning outcomes
- The mean level of difficulty is comparable to that of previous exam
- There is sufficient variation in questions with regard to level, form, and level of difficulty
- There is no overlap in the content of the questions: one question does not provide clues that can be used for answering other questions
- There is enough time to answer all questions.