

Development meeting

Part of the visitation

Academy	Primary Education and Secondary Education
Courses	ITEPS and ITESS
Date visitation	April 12 and 13, 2023
Date Development talk	April 13, 2023

Theme development talk

The team had planned to discuss other topics during the development talk, but because of the conversations during the visitation days, all agreed on the following topic: the theses and the rubric (specifically the distinction of E from F, also named the cut-off score). Both teams are curious about the suggestions and advice of the panel with regards to this topic.

Two questions were discussed:

- Can the panel give clarity about how the rubrics can improve for the students who graduate this academic year?
- What can ITESS and ITEPS do to improve the rubrics, ensuring that the rubrics are both supporting staff and the students of the next cohort finalising the thesis? And how to ensure that we do not pass students who are might not be reaching a sufficient level?

The main discussion that took place was about making rubrics clearer. Opinions are divided and both teams try to ask clear and focused questions to receive transparent and comprehensible feedback on improving rubrics. The ITEPS rubric currently consists of 5 columns A-E and it describes what students need to show to receive an A, a B or a D. The middle columns *B and D have not been specified, to avoid semantic discussions between columns. The panel noticed that it is not clear when a student gets a C or a D creating a risk that in the case of disagreement of two assessors they easily choose for the middle.

The ITESS rubric is designed with a Not yet acceptable, Acceptable with significant shortcomings, Good and Excellent column, each criteria have a written descriptor to indicate the expected level of achievement. Depending on

the levels achieved in the criteria, students receive a grade. The panel doubts that the column 'sufficient with significant shortcomings' is clear for students. Furthermore, they find the descriptors not clear enough, in the sense that the panel does not see a clear distinction between the descriptors.. The panel *furthermore* considers that a clearer cut-off score needs to be represented in the rubric. The panel also thinks that a very clearly described minimum sufficient level is essential in a rubric, since that minimum level for sufficient represents the minimum level at which the achievement of an assessment criterion is still demonstrated. ITESS chose the higher level of achievement, as part of the ITESS student profile is that students should try to achieve the highest possible grade, which is common practice in international education, rather than the minimal level for a sufficient grade. In the discussion, it is brought forward by the panel that the minimum level for sufficient should reflect the achievement of the assessment criteria. This is very important, especially for a final work.'

One suggestion the panel makes is for both programmes to institute a single-point rubric and clarify what the pass rate is. Feedback from assessor (experts) can then underpin the decision for the grading in the feedback. After this, a follow up discussion took place about the level of the passing grade should be: is the described level the lowest level (grade E) a student needs to achieve for a pass, is it the expected level for students (the average – grade C), or the highest level (grade A). The panel suggests that the described minimum level for a pass should be equal to a grade E.

Both programmes consider it important not only to strive for sufficient, but also to make students strive for more (excellence, grade A, for example). Suggestion: You have the LOs describe in such a way that you justify the Bachelor degree. And then you create the rubric, and in the rubric the E level should be described in such a way that the logical consequence of reaching the E level is that you just achieved the LOs at the lowest possible level.

The programmes were under the impression that the argumentation for the choice for these rubrics were clear and underpinned, but as this topic led to unclarity and debate with the panel, this obviously needs revising. The objective is a clear rubric for all stakeholders, in which the various levels are unambiguously described and there is a clear pass/fail rate. However, It is also important that it is in line with the international working field. ITESS and ITEPS operate in two main contexts: the Dutch education (university) and the international educational context. These two need to be balanced.

The grading of theses was further discussed. With ITEPS, the higher grades did not lead to discussion, the unclarity arose with some of the lower grades and the issue whether a work was assessed as sufficient.

The main recommendations that emerged from the development conversation for ITEPS and ITESS are:

- Decisions for designing and using the rubrics are partly based on the assessors and are therefore always subject to subjectivity. In the design of the rubric, the reliability of the rubrics needs to be enhanced as much as possible.
- The NQF indicators might support the criteria design, you can see if the description of an E matches the NQF-indicators.
- The panel advises to compare with other programmes, also other programmes outside the international school domain, such as the Dutch programmes.”, Part of the problem might be the use of the A-F grading system, which is used in most international educational organisations. As the committee looks at assessment from a Dutch framework perspective maybe we can compare the rubrics with the one from OLB or TLO and align a bit more with them.
- See examples from final works in other programmes, to compare the standard for works that are assessed at the cut-off score.

ITESS:

The main recommendations that emerged from the development conversation for ITESS are:

- The cut-off score needs to be very clear for staff and students, to ensure there is no unclarity of the minimum level, and by doing so making sure that the difference between grade E and F are distinguishable.
- The rubric descriptors need to be interpreted in a strict manner (e.g. research questions must be a part), For the current cohort examiners could look at the research proposals, and check whether those research questions are specific, attainable and time bound.

- The level descriptors need to be distinguishable level features, so students and staff understand the expectations on each level.
- Use of the term 'significant shortcomings' should be reconsidered. Advice to change the heading 'acceptable with some, minor shortcomings.
- The conversion table to from the criteria to a grade is not clear.
- Advice from the panel is to create a clear division between supervisor and assessor, and make sure this is visible in the assessment form and archiving.
- For the final work, reconsidering the form of the current assignment, focusing even more on educational design for the educational field.

ITEPS:

The main recommendations that emerged from the development conversation for ITEPS are:

- For the thesis, put the focus more on developing research skills than on doing (academic) research. This should also show itself in PILOs "(adaptation of the relevant PILO(s) could be considered)
- The rubrics could be described more clearly, especially where the separation between sufficient and insufficient is concerned. Use clear wording.
- Ensure that the way of giving feedback and the amount of feedback given is comparable between teachers
- If applicable, make clear which feedback was given and when in the process.
- Pull together with ITESS in the further development of the design of this thesis.

We will take up these recommendations and incorporate them into the development plan.