

This document has been translated from Swedish into English. If the English version differs from the original, the Swedish version takes precedence.

Examination and assessment on first- and second-cycle courses

Policy document Örebro University

Category: Guidelines

Reg. no: ORU 2023/07568

Adopted by: Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Last revised: 2023-12-12

Adopted: 2022-03-15

Document owner: Faculty Office



Contents

General	3
Appointment and change of examiner.....	3
Grading criteria	4
Adaptations to the mode of assessment	4
Anonymous marking	5
Time and date for examinations	5
Plagiarism checks	6
Lost student examination material and other mistakes on the part of the university... ..	6
Completion of compulsory components	6
Marking period	7
Communication of the grading decision	7
Reasons for the grading decision.....	8
Changes to grading decisions other than corrections or reviews	8
Supplementary assignments for a pass grade	9
Renewed assessment for a higher grade.....	9
Assessment in accordance with the latest version of the course syllabus.....	9
Re-examination/new opportunity to complete compulsory components.....	10
Catch-up examinations	10
Examination/completion of compulsory components when courses are discontinued or undergo certain modifications	11
Entry into force.....	11

General

This document accounts for national and local regulations concerning the planning and execution of examinations and assessment.

Under the provisions of the Higher Education Ordinance (HEO), assessment is when a teacher specifically nominated by the university determines a grade on the basis of the mode(s) of assessment for student performance that have been specified in the course syllabus¹. The award of a grade is a form of exercise of public authority, requiring the matter to be handled without jeopardising legal security².

Appointment and change of examiner

National regulations

Grades are to be determined by a teacher specifically nominated by the university – the examiner³. There are no formal impediments to having multiple examiners determining the grades for different students during an examination, however, equal cases must be treated equally⁴. The provisions of the HEO do not, however, permit a grading decision for the same student to be made by multiple examiners⁵.

Local regulations

In the case of independent projects on which the award of first- or second-cycle qualifications is based, the supervisor and examiner must not be the same person. Decisions nominating examiners must be communicated to the students.

Students who have failed the same examination twice are entitled to have another examiner nominated prior to the new examination. This does, however, not apply if there are special reasons to the contrary. Such a reason may be a lack of teacher resources at the university. A decision to nominate a new examiner is taken in accordance with the delegations in force.

¹ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 18 The qualifications required for appointment as a teacher are laid down in Chapter 4 of the HEO and in the university's appointment procedures for academic appointments.

² Administrative Procedure Act, Section 9

³ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 18 The qualifications required for appointment as a teacher are laid down in Chapter 4 of the HEO and in the university's appointment procedures for academic appointments.

⁴ Instrument of Government, Chapter 1, Section 9

⁵ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 18

Grading criteria

National regulations

A grade must be awarded on completion of a course, unless otherwise stipulated by the university⁶. Furthermore, the intended course learning outcomes must be evident from the course syllabus⁷.

Local regulations

On first- and second-cycle courses, grades must be expressed using one of the terms fail (U), pass (G) or pass with distinction (VG). For grades on an international master's programme (60 or 120 credits) or on the university's range of ECTS courses, the grading scale A–F is to be used. The vice-chancellor, or a person nominated by them, may decide on exemptions from this provision for a certain course if special grounds exist⁸.

By formulating intended learning outcomes for each course, it is clearly stipulated what knowledge, skills and/or abilities the student is expected to have acquired upon completion of the course. For all courses, grading criteria, specifying what knowledge, skills and abilities the student is expected to have acquired in order to obtain the grades in question, must be established and adopted in accordance with the delegations in force. It must be clear from the grading criteria how grades are determined in relation to the course's intended learning outcomes. The grading criteria must be in writing and be viewed as guidelines that must be complied with as far as possible. The students must be notified, no later than at the start of the course, of the grading criteria that will apply.

Adaptations to the mode of assessment

National regulations

For each course, there must be a course syllabus and the syllabus must provide information on the modes used for assessment of student performance (examination format)⁹.

Local regulations

If there are special grounds, and within the bounds of the course syllabus provisions, the designated examiner may decide on adaptations to the mode of assessment for students with documented disabilities. If there are exceptional grounds, other modes of examination than the ones stipulated in the course syllabus may be approved for students with documented disabilities. When an adaptation to a mode of assessment is made or

⁶ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 18

⁷ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 15

⁸ *Föreskrifter om betygssystem för utbildning på grundnivå och avancerad nivå vid Örebro universitet*, ORU 00929/2018.

⁹ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 14–15

when a different mode of assessment is to be used, it must be in compliance with the intended course learning outcomes.

Anonymous marking

National regulations

National regulations do not prescribe that anonymous marking of examinations. There is value, however, to both students and teachers if the marking of written examinations is done without the identity of the students being known to the teacher. Due to the provisions on conflicts of interest¹⁰, however, the identity of the students must towards the end of the grading process be made known to the examiner.

Local regulations

Written examinations, such as hall-based and take-home exams, must be marked anonymously unless special grounds exist. Such grounds must be specified in a decision made specifically by the examiner or be stipulated in the course syllabus.

Time and date for examinations

National regulations

When scheduling examinations, the university must observe its responsibility as a public authority to facilitate the individual's contacts with the authority and that discrimination must be avoided¹¹.

Local regulations

An examination shall take place at such time determined by the university, and it may be scheduled to any day of the week. If the mode of assessment used means that the student may undertake their assignment elsewhere than on university premises (e.g. take-home exams) and submit it to the university before a fixed deadline and in a certain manner, it must be evident from the course syllabus how the examination is to be undertaken if the student would fail to meet the deadline. The examiner must, however, take into consideration if there are special grounds for such failure to meet the deadline.

¹⁰ Administrative Procedure Act, Sections 16–17

¹¹ Administrative Procedure Act, Section 6; Discrimination Act

Plagiarism checks

Local regulations

All written examination components on the first- and second cycle are to be checked for plagiarism using the university-wide system for plagiarism checks. The exception is written hall-based exams.

Lost student examination material and other mistakes on the part of the university

National regulations

The examiner is to assess student performance and the modes of assessment used are to be evident from the course syllabus. The assessment is based on the material submitted by the student¹².

Local regulations

If an examination cannot take place as scheduled due to an oversight by the university, or if a student's performance as a result of other mistakes on the part of the university cannot be assessed, arrangements must be made promptly for the student to undertake their examination again. The student should not have to wait until the first examination session the next time the course is offered.

In cases where examination material has been lost, an assessment cannot be made. If it is established that the university is at fault, arrangements must be made promptly for the student to undertake their examination again. The student should not have to wait until the first examination session the next time the course is offered.

Completion of compulsory components

National regulations

When a course syllabus stipulates that participation is required on a particular component for the student to receive a pass grade, this compulsory component is part of the assessment. If a student is denied an exemption from participating in the compulsory component, they may appeal the decision¹³.

Local regulations

A student who according to university documentation has not completed a compulsory component is to be permitted to take part in the final examination, unless otherwise

¹² Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Sections 15 and 18

¹³ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 12, Section 2

stipulated in the course syllabus. If the compulsory component can be completed in any other way, this must be evident from the course syllabus.

Marking period

National regulations

Each matter must be handled as simply, rapidly and cost-efficiently as possible without neglecting legal security¹⁴.

Local regulations

When assessing student performance, the marking period may not exceed 15 working days after the day of the examination, unless special grounds exist, for example temporary peaks in workload or illness. The grading decision must also be communicated within the marking period. Students must be informed promptly of any decisions concerning extended marking periods. Decisions concerning extended marking periods are to be made in accordance with the delegations in force.

Communication of the grading decision

National regulations

An authority that issues a decision in a matter shall notify the person concerned of the full content of the decision as soon as possible, unless this is obviously unnecessary¹⁵.

The authority decides how the notification shall be given. However, a notification shall always be given in writing if a party so requests¹⁶.

Local regulations

Grading decisions are normally communicated through publication on the university's website for student information (*Studenttjänster*) as well as via email to the student in question. When the student is notified of the decision, they must also be informed that any requests for a change to the grading decision should be made in writing to the examiner. It should also be evident that if the student intends to request a review of the grading decision, it is to the student's advantage if they collect a copy of their examination material and leave the submitted original examination material with the university until a decision concerning a review has been made.

¹⁴ Administrative Procedure Act, Section 9

¹⁵ Administrative Procedure Act, Section 33

¹⁶ Administrative Procedure Act, Section 33

Reasons for the grading decision

National regulations

A decision that can be expected to affect someone's situation in a not insignificant way shall contain a clarifying statement of reasons, if this not obviously unnecessary¹⁷.

Local regulations

After each assessment, students are generally to be offered a run-through of the examination. This should take place no later than four weeks after the day of the examination and no later than two weeks before the re-examination. Students must be given the date for this run-through no later than in connection with the examination. If decisions concerning an extended marking period have been made, a run-through must be offered the students no later than a week after the end of the new marking period. The run-through is to be held by the examiner, alternatively by another coordinating teacher. If a run-through does not take place, the students must be provided with an examination answer key or corresponding comments, orally or in writing.

Changes to grading decisions other than corrections or reviews

National regulations

The university may correct a decision that contains an obvious inaccuracy on account of a clerical error, arithmetical error or a similar oversight by the university or someone else. Such a correction may be both to the advantage and detriment of the student¹⁸.

The university may change a decision it has issued if it considers that the decision is incorrect because of new circumstances or for some other reason. A decision that is favourable to the student may under certain circumstances be changed to the detriment of the student¹⁹.

Local regulations

The examiner may change a grading decision that is manifestly wrong also in cases other than those described in the HEO. If it has been established that a student, for instance, has cheated during an examination and have been notified of a favourable grading decision, the grade may be lowered in accordance with standard practice. There is also some scope for changing a decision in favour of the student. Great caution should, however, be taken when changing any grading decisions. For an assessment to be considered legally secure, it is of crucial importance that examiners treat equal cases equally.

¹⁷ Administrative Procedure Act, Section 32

¹⁸ Administrative Procedure Act, Section 36

¹⁹ Administrative Procedure Act, Section 37

Supplementary assignments for a pass grade

National regulations

A grade must be awarded on completion of a course, unless otherwise stipulated by the university²⁰. This provision means that the examiner is obliged to make a grading decision²¹. The grading decision made by the examiner must be documented²². The grade on the course must also be recorded in the student registry²³.

Local regulations

Grades must be expressed using one of the terms fail (U), pass (G) or pass with distinction (VG). The vice-chancellor, or a person nominated by them, may decide on exemptions from this provision for a certain course if special grounds exist²⁴.

Once the examiner has made a grading decision and this has been recorded in the student registry, the examiner may decide that a student who has failed the examination can undertake supplementary assignments for a pass grade. A prerequisite for this is that the student in question is close to the pass mark and that the possibility of undertaking supplementary assignments is stipulated in the course syllabus. The course syllabus must also stipulate the time frame for and format of such a supplementary assignment.

Renewed assessment for a higher grade

Local regulations

A student who has received a pass grade in an examination does not have the right to undertake the examination again with the purpose of improving their grade.

Assessment in accordance with the latest version of the course syllabus

Local regulations

At Örebro University, the main rule is that assessment is done in accordance with the course syllabus version in force, regardless of when the student registered on the course.

If significant changes are made to a course, preventing the student from undergoing assessment in accordance with the current course syllabus, a transitional provision has to

²⁰ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 18

²¹ Comp. Swedish Higher Education Authority's report *Rättssäker examination*, 4th ed, p. 71

²² Administrative Procedure Act, Section 31; and Government Agency Ordinance, Section 21

²³ *Studieregisterförordningen*, Chapter 2, Section 3

²⁴ *Föreskrifter om betygssystem för utbildning på grundnivå och avancerad nivå vid Örebro universitet*, ORU 00929/2018.

be drawn up. The transitional provisions must be evident from the new version of the course syllabus.

The transitional provisions must consider the HEO requirements stipulating that if a university limits the number of occasions on which a student may take an examination in order to pass a course or part of a course, this number of occasions must be at least five. If passing a course or part of a course requires the student to have successfully completed a placement or corresponding training, the number of periods of placement or corresponding training must be at least two²⁵.

Re-examination/new opportunity to complete compulsory components

National regulations

National regulations stipulate that students are entitled to re-assessment²⁶.

Local regulations

Re-examinations must take place no earlier than two weeks and no later than five weeks after the grading decision for the first examination has been communicated.

Any exemptions from this time frame must be evident from the course syllabus. Decisions on exemptions from this time frame may not result in re-examinations being scheduled to take place later than eight weeks after the notification of the grading decision for the first examination, unless special grounds exist.

When planning re-examinations, the date and time of other scheduled examinations on the course or programme must be considered.

The date for re-examination is normally to be communicated no later than in connection with the first examination.

The provisions above also apply to any new opportunity to complete compulsory components.

Catch-up examinations

Local regulations

In addition to first examinations and re-examinations, students must, unless there are special reasons to the contrary, be offered a catch-up examination prior to the autumn semester. If possible, catch-up examinations must also be offered prior to the spring semester.

²⁵ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 21

²⁶ Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 21

Examination/completion of compulsory components when courses are discontinued or undergo certain modifications

Local regulations²⁷

When a course is being modified in such a way that the student, on the basis of the course they have taken previously, is unable to undertake the examination or compulsory components of the modified course, transitional provisions must be drawn up.

When a course is being discontinued, students who have commenced but not completed the course, bar the first examination and the re-examination, are to be given access to at least three designated examination sessions over a period of at least 12 months but no more than 18 months. This period of at least 12 months and no more than 18 months will start directly at the end of the semester when the decision to discontinue the course was made.

Entry into force

These guidelines will enter into force on 14 January 2024 and replace previous decisions.

²⁷ In cases when the faculty board has decided to limit the number of examination sessions, by virtue of the Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 21, the examination concerned is not covered by these guidelines.