



UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

RULE FOR GRADES AND EXAMINATIONS

Type of document:	Rule ¹
Date:	29 May 2026
Reg. no.:	FS 1.1-1048-25
Approved by:	Vice-Chancellor
Validity:	Until further notice
Field:	First- and second-cycle education Access and foundation education
Office in charge:	Student Services Office
Replaces document:	Rules for grades and examination FS 1.1-574-22, 29 April 2022

¹ This document has been translated from Swedish into English. If the English version differs from the original, the Swedish version takes precedence.



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1. Description

This document clarifies and promotes fair grading and examinations at Umeå University. It includes rules and procedures for examinations, grades, compulsory course elements, adapted examination forms and re-sits.

2. Background

In order for examinations to be conducted fairly, regulations and procedures must be clear to students, teaching staff and administrators. This document is based on sources including the Higher Education Act, the Higher Education Ordinance, the Administrative Procedure Act and the Swedish Higher Education Authority's 'Fair examination'² guide and aims to create the right conditions for fair decision-making.

Student, accessibility and work environment perspectives have been incorporated into the following rule. The policy document is not deemed to have any consequences from collaboration or sustainability perspectives. Nor is it deemed to have any consequences for international perspectives or for gender equality at Umeå University.

This policy document must be translated into English, as it is of fundamental importance and has great significance for employees and students.

3. Examiners

An examiner is a specially appointed member of teaching staff who decides on grades for a course. In order to be appointed as an examiner, the individual must be employed as a member of teaching staff at Umeå University or must be employed as a member of teaching staff at another Swedish higher education institution. The Vice-Chancellor's delegation of authority and the relevant faculty's delegations of authority state who appoints the examiner.³ The examiner must normally be appointed at least one month before the course begins. If a question of a conflict of interest arises, the examiner or member of teaching staff participating in the examination must personally notify the head of department or equivalent.

The examiner may not delegate decisions on grading but may, in a grading matter, get assistance from someone else – for example another member of teaching staff or a placement supervisor – to assess the students' performance (referred to in these regulations as 'the marking teacher').

In the case of degree projects (independent work), the supervisor and the examiner must not be the same person.

A student who has completed a first summative assessment and a re-sit for a course or part of a course without achieving a pass is entitled, at the next re-sit instance, to have a different examiner or marking teacher appointed, unless there are specific reasons for not doing so.⁴ Students must submit such a request to the director of studies or equivalent at the department holding the course no later than ten working days before the re-sit date, unless the course syllabus or the department holding the course stipulates otherwise.

In cases where placement instances, clinical training or equivalent education periods are limited to two instances, the student is entitled to change examiner or marking teacher after the first examination instance, unless there are specific reasons for not doing so.⁴

² 'Fair examination' guide, 4th edition, Swedish Higher Education Authority 2020, reference number 32-314-18.

³ Decisions regarding examiners are archived in accordance with the retention and deletion plan for first- and second-cycle courses and study programmes.

⁴ Such a reason may be, for example, that there is no other suitable examiner.



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4. Examinations and grades

An examination constitutes grading data for an examiner to set a grade based on the form(s) for assessment of students' performance as stated in the course syllabus. The date of the grade assessment is the same as the date of the examination. The assessment of the examination is carried out based on the results from different forms of tests, also known as examination forms, including on-campus written examinations, take-home examinations, oral examinations, participation in compulsory course elements, theses, group assignments, reports, laboratory work, placements/clinical training and seminars.

The examination must be designed as stated in the course syllabus. The examination must be designed so that an individual assessment of the student's performance can be made.

A grade assessment must be made for a completed course. See Umeå University's regulation regarding grading systems FS 1.2-970-26. The grades used must be stated in the course syllabus.

The grade assessment must be documented in Ladok. If other members of teaching staff have been involved in the assessment of an examination, they are deemed to have contributed to the handling of the case, and their names must also be stated in the grade assessment.

4.1. Correcting grades

A grade assessment that is based on an obvious irregularity due to clerical errors, errors in calculation or similar oversights may be corrected, to both the benefit and the detriment of the student. Such a correction decision must be made by an examiner. Corrections to the detriment of a student must be made with great care, and Sections 37 and 38 of the Administrative Procedure Act (2017:900) should be taken into account. Before such a correction is made, the student must be offered an opportunity to submit a statement.

4.2. Reassessment of grade assessments

Grades cannot be appealed against, i.e. reviewed by a higher authority. However, a student can always raise objections to the assessment or request that the examiner reconsiders their grade assessment.

If an examiner finds that a grade assessment is an obvious irregularity due to new circumstances or for some other reason, the examiner must change the decision if this does not result in the grade being lowered (see 4.1 Correcting grades).

5. Examinations

Wherever possible, first summative assessments must take place on Monday to Friday, between 08:00 and 17:00, during the course period. In the event of circumstances that could cause delays and risk postponing the examination beyond the course dates, the department holding the course is required to identify alternatives so that the examination can be held.

To book a central examination venue, see *Rules for on-campus written examinations*.

If a student cannot be offered a planned examination due to a mistake on the part of the University, the student is entitled to a new examination instance as soon as possible, but no later than five working days after the date of the first summative assessment.

An examination cannot be withdrawn by a student, regardless of whether or not a grade assessment has been made.

Provided that the student complies with the University's rules for on-campus written examinations and does not exceed any limit on the number of examination instances, a student may not be denied the



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opportunity to participate in an examination. This also applies when there are compulsory course elements that must be completed before the element (module) or the course is graded. However, in order to pass the course as a whole, the student must subsequently complete the compulsory element or, following an application, be exempted from it. For examination forms involving a third party (such as patients) or where otherwise necessary for safety reasons, it may however be required that relevant teaching elements are completed before the student is allowed to participate in an examination.

Students must be informed of examination results within 15 working days of the examination instance, regardless of the examination form. For written assignments, laboratory reports or similar, the submission deadline is considered to be the examination instance. If the result is delayed due to extraordinary events, the department must notify the student of the delay and must inform them about the reason and when the result is expected to be ready.

The examiner is not obliged to justify the grade assessment when it is made, but it must be justified if the student subsequently requests this.

5.1. Limit on the number of examination instances

Any limit on the number of examination instances must be applied with restraint and must be justified by the fact that an unlimited number would lead to a waste of resources.⁵ If the University limits the number of instances on which a student may sit an examination to pass a course or part of a course, the number of instances must be set at a minimum of five. If a pass grade for a course or part of a course requires the student to have successfully completed placements/clinical training or equivalent training, the number of placements/clinical training or equivalent training periods must be set at a minimum of two. Any limits on the number of examination instances must be stated in the course syllabus.

At those departments that have introduced a limit on the number of examination instances, there must be procedures for support measures for students who risk losing their right to participate in examinations for a specific course.

In order for an examination instance to be considered to be used, the student must have been present at the examination instance. Participating in an examination without reporting a result, known as a 'blank submission', is counted as an examination instance. A student's absence from an examination instance that they have registered for may not be counted as a used examination instance.

5.2. Examinations at another location

Examinations are normally held at the location where the course is given or are location-independent. If special reasons exist, a student may be given the opportunity to sit an examination at another location. A student who has a special need to sit an examination at another location must apply to the department holding the course at least one month before the examination instance in question. Where special reasons exist, an examiner may decide that an examination can be held at a different location if it can be held in an equivalent manner to the examination at the main location, if premises can be arranged at a reasonable cost to the department, and if the examination can be held at the same time as the examination at the main location. Students participating in elite-level sports who have an agreement with Umeå University are deemed to have special reasons for taking examinations at another location.⁶

5.3. Additional tasks

In those cases where a student is close to the threshold for a pass grade, the examiner may decide that the student can undertake an additional task in order to achieve a pass grade instead of a re-sit. The additional task must then be completed within ten working days of the student having received the offer, unless otherwise stated in the course syllabus.

If the examiner has decided that an additional task is an option, the student is entitled to choose either to carry out an additional task or, instead, to carry out a re-sit when this is held.

⁵ The Swedish Higher Education Authority's inspection visit report 2014:5.

⁶ Vice-Chancellor's decision "Policy for combining elite-level sports and studies" Reg. no. 102-329-07 and Vice-Chancellor's decision "Establishing Umeå School of Sport Sciences" Reg. no. 103-2905-12.



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5.4. Re-sits

The dates of re-sits must be announced no later than at the time of the first summative assessment. Students who have obtained a pass grade may not carry out a new examination.

Students who have not achieved a pass grade in an examination are entitled to carry out a new examination (a re-sit) linked to the course instance for which the student is registered, provided that any restriction on the number of re-sit instances is not exceeded. The right to carry out a re-sit beyond this is only guaranteed at specific re-sit instances. Participation in future first summative assessment instances for other course instances may only be offered as re-sit instances, subject to availability.

The first re-sit must be offered no later than two months after the first summative assessment, but no sooner than ten working days after the results of the first summative assessment have been announced. For examinations held during May and June, the first re-sit may be offered within three months of the first summative assessment instance. To take into consideration students who have children or different faiths, first summative assessments and re-sits should be held on different days of the week wherever possible.

In examinations with a special examination form where the stated time limits for the first re-sit would lead to unreasonable costs or significant practical difficulties for the higher education institution or a third party, an exception from the time requirement can be made. In order for an exception to be permitted, it is required that:

- the examination form is clearly justified based on the objectives of the course syllabus, and cannot be replaced by another task;
- the first re-sit is normally offered no later than the following semester; and
- the examination is worth a maximum of 15 higher education credits.

In the case of *placements/clinical training* where the time limits stated above for the first re-sit would lead to unreasonable costs or significant practical difficulties for the higher education institution or a third party, an exception from the time requirement can be made. In order for an exception to be permitted, it is required that:

- the examination form is clearly justified based on the objectives of the course syllabus, and cannot be replaced by another task; and
- the first re-sit is normally offered no later than the following semester.

In those cases where examinations or placements/clinical training cannot be repeated in accordance with the above, they may instead be replaced with another task. The scope and contents of such a task must be in reasonable proportion to the missed examination or placement. At least one second re-sit (known as a catch-up) must be offered within one year of the first summative assessment instance.

In those cases where a course syllabus has ceased to apply or has undergone significant changes, guidelines for re-sits must be stated in transitional provisions within the course syllabus. Under these transitional provisions, students must be guaranteed at least three examination instances in accordance with the previous course syllabus for a maximum of two years from when the previous course syllabus ceased to apply or the course ceased to be offered. The same applies for placements/clinical training, with the limitation that students must be guaranteed at least one examination instance in accordance with the previous course syllabus for a maximum of two years from when the previous course syllabus ceased to apply or the course ceased to be offered. If the course syllabus specifies a limit regarding the number of examination instances and placements/clinical training, this limit on the number of instances applies even if a course syllabus has ceased to apply or has undergone major changes.

A student with a wartime assignment who is called up for refresher training by the Swedish Armed Forces, and who is therefore unable to sit a planned examination during their absence, must be offered an examination instance when they return to their studies. If the student is unable to sit either a first summative assessment or a re-sit due to refresher training, an examination instance must be offered when



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they return. If the student has not had the opportunity to sit one or more partial examinations during their absence, a re-sit corresponding to these partial examinations must be offered. If a completely new examination instance needs to be arranged, notification of this instance must be sent to the department holding the course no later than four weeks before the start of the refresher training.

5.5. Adapted examination forms

For students with a decision on recommended support due to disabilities, individual adaptations of the examination form must always be considered based on the student's needs.⁷ The examination form is adapted within the framework of the course syllabus's intended learning outcomes.

Students who need an adapted examination must request an adaptation from the department holding the course no later than ten working days before the examination. The examiner decides on an adapted examination, which is then communicated to the student.

5.6. Failing a student during an ongoing placement

The responsible examiner is entitled, in consultation with the relevant supervisor, to decide to fail a student during an ongoing placement if the student shows such shortcomings regarding knowledge, skills or approach that these, either individually or in combination, entail a significant risk of the student harming another person, either physically or mentally, during the placement. The placement will then be ended early, and the student will be given a fail grade for the module/course in question. This means that one placement instance has been used. The entitlement to fail a student during an ongoing placement only applies if this is stipulated in the course syllabus.

In connection with such a decision, an individual development plan must be drawn up by the examiner in consultation with the student. The development plan must state what knowledge, skills or approach the student needs to acquire in order to recommence the placement, and a date when this new placement instance will be assessed. The student is entitled to two such assessments for the new instance in question. However, the total number of assessments must not exceed four, unless exceptional reasons exist. This only applies provided that the number of placement instances has not been used.

6. Compulsory course elements

A compulsory element must be based on the course objectives and must be clearly stated in the course syllabus. This component must form part of the course examination and must be of an evaluative nature, whereby the student is assessed based on clearly defined intended learning outcomes. For safety reasons, demonstrations (or similar activities) and preparations for clinical teaching may be deemed to be of such importance that compulsory attendance may be required without an evaluative element being included.

If a student has missed a compulsory course element, they are entitled to participate again in accordance with the same rules as for a re-sit. In the event that a compulsory course element cannot be repeated, it must be replaced with another equivalent course element. The scope and contents of such an element must be in reasonable proportion to the missed compulsory course element.

A student may request to be exempted from a compulsory element for ethical or religious reasons. Such a request must be made in advance to the examiner, no later than ten working days before the element takes place. In order for a student to be exempted from a compulsory course element it must be possible for equivalent knowledge to be acquired in another way, taking into account the quality requirements in place for the education in question and the significance of the course element in question for the student's intended professional work.⁸

⁷ Decisions regarding entitlement to educational support are made by the educational support coordinator at the Student Services Office.

⁸ SOU 1994:84.



Decisions not to grant a student exemption from a compulsory course element can be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board. The examiner must therefore inform the student how to make an appeal if their request is rejected.