



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

# RULES FOR GRADES AND EXAMINATION

Type of document:	Rule <sup>1</sup>
Date of approval:	29 April 2022
Reg. no.:	FS 1.1-574-22
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 at first- and second cycle (FS 1.1-2368-18) approved by the Vice-Chancellor on 4 June 2019

---

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



## UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

# Table of contents

Rules for grades and examination.....	1
1. Description .....	1
2. Background.....	1
3. Examiners .....	1
4. Examination and grades .....	2
4.1. Rectifying grades .....	2
4.2. Reassessing grades .....	2
5. Examinations (modes of examination).....	2
5.1. Limits on the total number of examination opportunities.....	3
5.2. Place of examination .....	3
5.3. Supplementation .....	4
5.4. Retakes .....	4
5.5. Adapted modes of examination .....	5
5.6. Failing a student during an ongoing placement .....	5
6. Compulsory course components .....	5



# UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

## 1. Description

These rules are intended to clarify and ensure the legal certainty of grades and examination at Umeå University. Among other things, the document contains rules and procedures for examination, grades, compulsory course components, adapted examination forms and retakes.

## 2. Background

In order to ensure the legal certainty of examinations, rules and procedures must be clear to students, teachers and administrators. This document is based on the provisions of the Swedish Higher Education Act (1992:1434), Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) and Administrative Procedure Act (2017:900), as well as the Swedish Higher Education Authority's guidelines Fair Examination. The purpose of this document is to enable legally certain decision-making.

The student, accessibility and work environment perspectives have been integrated into this rule. Due to the content and nature of this document, the collaboration and sustainability perspectives have not been integrated. This policy document is not expected to have any consequences for internationalisation or gender equality at Umeå University.

## 3. Examiners

An examiner is a specifically appointed teacher that decides on grades for a course. To be appointed as an examiner, the individual is to be employed as a teacher at Umeå University or another Swedish higher education institution. The Vice-Chancellor's decision-making and delegation procedure and the delegation procedures at each faculty delegate the authority to appoint examiners.<sup>2</sup> Under normal circumstances, the examiner is to be appointed no later than one month before the start of the course instance. In the event that a conflict of interest arises, it is the responsibility of the examiner or teacher participating in the examination to inform the head of department or equivalent.

Examiners are not permitted to further delegate grading, although they may seek assistance in assessing the student's performance from, for example, another member of teaching staff or a placement supervisor (hereafter referred to as the "marking teacher").

When assessing degree projects, the supervisor and examiner may not be the same person.

A student who has taken a regular examination and retake in a course or a part of a course without obtaining a pass grade is entitled to request the appointment of another examiner or marking teacher, unless there are special reasons to the contrary.<sup>3</sup> Students should address any such request to the director of studies or equivalent at the department holding the course.

In the event that a placement (VFU) or corresponding training is limited to two opportunities, the student retains the right to request a change of examiner or marking teacher after the first examination session.

---

<sup>2</sup> Decisions to appoint an examiner are archived according to the Retention and deletion plan for first- and second-cycle education.

<sup>3</sup> A special reason may, for example, be that no suitable alternative examiner is available.



## UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

# 4. Examination and grades

An examination involves an examiner deciding on a grade based on the mode(s) of assessment of a student's performance stated in the course syllabus. The basis of assessment is the result of various examination formats, also called modes of assessment, such as written hall examinations, take-home examinations, oral examinations, participation in compulsory course components, academic papers, group assignments, reports, laboratory exercises, placements (VFU) and seminars.

The modes of assessment to be used during a course must be clearly stated in the course syllabus. Examinations are to be designed so that an individual assessment can be made of each student's performance.

A grade must be awarded for each completed course. The grades used are fail (U), pass (G) and pass with credit (VG).<sup>4</sup> It is not possible to give a failing grade (U) for a course, only for a module. The Vice-Chancellor may decide to grant an exemption from this three-grade scale.<sup>5</sup> The grades used must be stated in the course syllabus.<sup>6</sup>

All grading decisions must be documented in Ladok. If another teacher helps the examiner to grade an exam – by marking papers, for example – then they have participated in the final decision on the grade and their name(s) must also be stated on the grading decision.

## 4.1. Rectifying grades

A grading decision that contains an obvious error due to a typographical error, calculation error or similar oversight may be rectified, both to the advantage and the detriment of the student. Any such decision rests with the examiner. Any rectification that is to the detriment of the student must be made with the utmost caution. Before any such rectification is made, the student must be offered the opportunity to express an opinion.

## 4.2. Reassessing grades

While there is no right of appeal against a grade – i.e., it is not possible to have the decision reassessed by another instance – a student can always remark on or request that the examiner reconsiders their decision.

If an examiner finds that a decision on a grade is obviously incorrect owing to new circumstances or for some other reason, the examiner must change the decision if this can be done quickly and easily and if it does not mean lowering the grade.

# 5. Examinations (modes of examination)

Regular examinations are usually arranged on weekdays between 08:00 and 17:00 during the course period. Should circumstances threaten to cause a delay, the department must identify another solution so that the exam can take place.

---

<sup>4</sup> Vice-Chancellor's decision (540-1133-07).

<sup>5</sup> Vice-Chancellor's decision (100-1190-11).

<sup>6</sup> Successful completion of courses in programmes leading to the award of a qualification as a preschool teacher, primary school teacher, secondary or upper-secondary school teacher, or vocational teacher that either entirely or to some extent include placement must, however, always be graded at more than one level. This only applies if the placement element of the course covers over three higher education credits.



## UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

If it proves impossible to assess a student due to a mistake on the part of the University, the student has the right to a new examination session at the earliest opportunity, but no later than five (5) days after the date of the regular examination.

Students are not permitted to withdraw an examination, regardless of whether or not a grade has been decided.

As long as the student complies with the University's rules for written hall examinations and does not exceed any limits on the number of examination opportunities, the student may not be refused the opportunity to sit an examination. This also applies if there are compulsory course components that should have been completed before the module or course is examined. However, in order to pass the course as a whole, the student must subsequently complete the compulsory components or, on request, be excused from doing so. If the mode of examination involves the participation of a third party (patients, for example) or if deemed necessary for safety reasons, the student may be required to complete relevant teaching activities before they are allowed to sit the examination.

Regardless of the mode of examination, students must be informed of the results of examinations within 15 working days of the examination date.<sup>7</sup> For written assignments, laboratory reports and similar, the deadline for submission is considered to be the examination date. If, due to unforeseen circumstances, results are delayed, the department must inform students of the delay and when results are likely to be available.

While the examiner is under no obligation to justify grading decisions when they are made, wherever possible a justification should be provided at a later date if the student requests one and it is necessary in order for them to exercise their rights.

### 5.1. Limits on the total number of examination opportunities

Restraint must be exercised in limiting the number of examination opportunities afforded to students, and any such limitation must be justified on the grounds that an unlimited right would be a waste of resources.<sup>8</sup> If the University limits the number of occasions on which a student may sit an examination in order to achieve a passing grade for a course or module, the number of opportunities must be at least five. If a passing grade for a course or module depends on the student successfully completing a placement (VFU) or corresponding training, the total number of placement or corresponding training must be at least two. Any limits on the total number of examination opportunities must be stated in the course syllabus.

Departments that introduce limits on the number of examination opportunities must have procedures in place to support students who risk losing their right to take examinations on a given course.

For examination opportunities to be deemed exhausted, the student must have attended the examination sessions. Sitting an examination without providing any means by which to assess performance counts as an examination opportunity. A student's absence from an examination session for which they have registered may not be counted as a used opportunity.

### 5.2. Place of examination

Examinations are normally conducted at the study destination where the course is given. If special reasons exist, a student may be permitted to sit an exam at another location. Any student wishing to do so must apply to the relevant department no later than one month before the date of the examination

<sup>7</sup> JO Reg. no. 3980–1990.

<sup>8</sup> Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) inspection report 2014:5.



## UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

in question. Examiners may decide that an examination can be taken at another location if it can be achieved in an equivalent manner as at the main study destination, if premises can be arranged at a reasonable cost to the department, and if the examination can be held at the same time as at the main study destination. Elite athletes who have a dual career agreement with Umeå University are deemed to have special reasons to take examinations at another location.<sup>9</sup>

### 5.3. Supplementation

The examiner may ask a student who is close to the threshold for a passing grade to perform supplementary assignments in order to achieve a passing grade, rather than retaking an examination. Unless otherwise stated in the course syllabus, supplementation must be completed within 10 working days of the student being offered such an opportunity.<sup>10</sup>

Should the examiner decide that supplementation is a viable option, the student has the right to choose whether to perform the requested supplementary assignments or to retake the examination at the next opportunity.

### 5.4. Retakes

Students who do not pass an examination have the right to retake examinations on courses that they have been registered on to the extent that any limit on the number of examination opportunities is not exceeded. The date of the retake must be notified no later than the date of the regular examination. Students who have achieved a pass are not permitted to retake an examination.

The first opportunity to retake an examination is to be offered no later than two months after the regular examination, but no earlier than 10 working days after students have been notified of the results of the regular examination. For examinations held in May and June, the first opportunity to retake the examination is to be offered within three months of the regular examination session. Out of consideration for students with children or reasons related to various religious beliefs, regular examinations and retakes must be held on different days of the week.

Exceptions may be made for *special modes of examination*<sup>11</sup> for which the stated time limits on the first retake would lead to unreasonable costs or major practical difficulties for Umeå University or a third party. For an exception to be granted, it requires that:

- the mode of examination is clearly justified given the intended learning outcomes in the course syllabus and cannot be replaced by another assignment;
- the first retake is normally offered no later than the following semester; and
- the mode of examination covers a maximum of 15 credits.

Exceptions *may be* made for placements (VFU) for which the above stated time limits on the first retake would lead to unreasonable costs or major practical difficulties for Umeå University or a third party. For an exception to be granted, it requires that:

- the mode of examination is clearly justified given the intended learning outcomes in the course syllabus and cannot be replaced by another assignment; and
- the first retake is normally offered no later than the following semester.

In the event that an examination or placement cannot be repeated as per the above, it may instead be replaced by another assignment. The scope and content of such an assignment must be reasonably proportional to the missed examination or placement.

<sup>9</sup> Vice-Chancellor's decisions on policy for combining elite sports with studies (Reg. no. 102-329-07) and the establishment of the School of Sports Sciences (Reg. no. 103-2905-12).

<sup>11</sup> Fair Examinations, Swedish Higher Education Authority.



## UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

At least one second retake (a so-called catch-up examination) must be offered within one year of the regular examination session.

In the event of a course syllabus being withdrawn or undergoing major changes, the guidelines for retakes must be stated in the transitional provisions in the course syllabus. The transitional provisions must guarantee students at least three examination opportunities (including the regular examination session) in accordance with the previous course syllabus during a maximum of two years from the expiry of the course syllabus or the discontinuation of the course. The same applies to placements (VFU), with the limitation that students are to be guaranteed at least one examination opportunity (including the regular examination session).

### 5.5. Adapted modes of examination

Individual adaption of examination modes based on the student's specific needs must always be considered for students who have a recommendation of support for students with disabilities.<sup>12</sup> The adaption of examination modes is to remain within the framework of the intended learning outcomes in the course syllabus.

Students who require an adapted examination must submit a request to the department holding the course no later than 10 days before the examination. The examiner decides on the adaption of the examination, after which the student will be notified.

### 5.6. Failing a student during an ongoing placement

In consultation with the supervisor, the responsible examiner may decide to fail a student during an ongoing placement if the student demonstrates shortcomings in knowledge, skills or approach that, either individually or in combination, present a significant risk that the student will cause physical or psychological harm to another person during the placement. The placement will then be prematurely terminated and the student given a failing grade for the module or course in question. In such cases, the student is to be deemed to have used up one placement opportunity. The right to fail a student during an ongoing placement only applies if it is prescribed in the course syllabus.

In conjunction with such a decision, an individual development plan is to be drawn up by the examiner in consultation with the student. This development plan is to state the knowledge, skills and approaches that the student needs to acquire before they can begin a new placement, as well as a date on which this will be checked. The student is entitled to two such checks each year but, unless special grounds exist, to no more than four checks in total. This only applies if the student has not exhausted their total number of placement opportunities.

## 6. Compulsory course components

Compulsory course components are to be based on the intended learning outcomes stated in the course syllabus. A compulsory course component is either part of the examination of the course or something that by its nature requires the student's active participation if they are to benefit from it. For safety reasons, demonstrations and preparations for clinical training could be considered to be sufficiently important for attendance to be compulsory, even though there is no examination component involved. All compulsory course components must be stated in the course syllabus.

---

<sup>12</sup> A decision on the right to pedagogic support rests with the coordinator of pedagogical support at Student Services.



## UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

If a student misses a compulsory course component, the student has the right to participate at a later date based on the same rules that apply to retaking examinations. In the event that a compulsory course component cannot be repeated, it must be replaced by another equivalent course component. The scope and content of such a component must be reasonably proportional to the missed compulsory course component.

A student may request to be excused from a compulsory course component for ethical or religious reasons. Any such request must be addressed to the examiner in advance. The right to be excused from a compulsory course component is limited by the possibility to acquire equivalent knowledge in some other way, by the quality demands placed on the course or programme in question and by the significance of the component for the student's intended professional practice.<sup>13</sup>

A decision to refuse to excuse a student from a compulsory course component may be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board. When refusing a request, the examiner must therefore inform the student of their right to appeal.

---

<sup>13</sup> SOU 1994:84.