

# Regulations for education and examination at first-cycle and second-cycle level

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**Description:**

The document contains the national and local regulations governing education and examination at first-cycle and second-cycle level.

*Disclaimer: In case of a discrepancy between the Swedish and the English version of the decision, the Swedish version will prevail.*

Stockholm University provides education at the first-cycle, second-cycle and third-cycle level. This document contains **national** statutes and regulations for first-cycle and second-cycle education, as well as **local**, common core regulations for courses, programmes and examinations in these two cycles at Stockholm University. The basic (national) regulations can be found in the Higher Education Act (HL) (1992:1434) and the Higher Education Ordinance (HF) (1993:100). Other laws and regulations referenced in this document include the Government Agencies Ordinance (2007:515), the Administrative Act (2017:900), the Language Act (2009:600), the Regulation on Fees and Charges (1992:191), the Discrimination Act (2008:567), the Freedom of the Press Act (1949:105) and the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act (2009:400). The national regulations also include decisions made by the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) and the Parliamentary Ombudsman (JO), following, for example, a student notification, as well as recommendations developed by UKÄ in connection with inspections and publications such as Rättssäker examination 2020 (“fair examination”, Report 2020).

The local rules at Stockholm University are based on the national laws and regulations, as well as the decisions and recommendations mentioned in the previous paragraph. In addition, the University follows the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions’ (SUHF) recommendations concerning curricula and syllabi, training plans and grading systems (REK 2011-1) as well as reporting grades in accordance with ECTS (REK 2009-4). The document also refers to several decisions by the University Board and the President that can be found in Stockholm University’s Rules and Regulations on the staff website: Admission regulations for first- and second-cycle education, Admission regulations for doctoral studies, Local degree ordinance, Regulations for disciplinary matters, Regulations for written seated exams, Regulations for recruitment and promotion of teachers, Regulations for student influence, Language policies, Regulations and procedure for establishing and discontinuing courses and study programmes, Regulations and procedure for credit transfer and various decisions relating to archiving and screening. The Legal Secretariat’s Handbook in Case Handling was also used.

At Stockholm University, each scientific area board is responsible for education at its own faculty/faculties, unless otherwise specified in the regulations. For more information, see Decision and delegation procedures for Stockholm University.

In addition to these regulations, which are decided by the President, each scientific area board may adopt additional guidelines and rules concerning education and examinations with the field of its activities.

The regulations will apply as of 01.12.2020 for new course and programme syllabi, as well as for revisions of older course and programmed syllabi. The new regulations for section 1.5 course evaluations and course reports are to be applied as of 18.01.2021.

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# 1 General provisions

## 1.1 Extent of education

### National regulations

The extent of a course or study programme shall be denoted by credits, with full-time study during a normal academic year of 40 weeks corresponding to 60 credits (Chapter 6, Section 2 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

### Local regulations

All instruction and regular examinations shall take place during the regular duration of the course and/or course component (see Section 1.2.3 Course component). It is the President who makes decisions regarding semester times.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2 Courses and Syllabi

Regulations concerning course syllabi can also be found in other sections in this document.

### National regulations

All first-cycle and second-cycle education shall be offered in the form of courses (Chapter 6, Section 13 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

A course shall have a course syllabus and the syllabus shall include the following (Chapter 6, Sections 14-15 of the Higher Education Ordinance):

- the level of the course,
- the number of higher education credits,
- the course objectives,<sup>2</sup>
- specific entry requirements,
- the forms of student performance assessment, and
- other necessary provisions.

### Local regulations

At Stockholm University, the course syllabus shall also include:

- the name of the course in Swedish and English; (see Section 1.2.2, Course name and cycle),
- level (see Section 1.2.2, Course name and cycle),
- language of instruction (see Section 1.2.1 Language requirements),
- examination language (see Section 2.2.6 Examination languages),
- the main content of the course,
- where appropriate, information about whether the course is web-based (a so-called distance learning course) and requires a physical presence (see Section 1.2.4 Special rules for certain courses and 2.3.8 Mandatory course elements),

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<sup>1</sup> See decisions regarding semester times on the employee Web.

<sup>2</sup> At Stockholm University, the course objectives are referred to as intended learning outcomes.

- where appropriate, whether the course may involve additional expenses for the student (see Section 1.2.4 Specific regulations for certain courses),
- whether or not the course is divided into components (see Section 1.2.3 Course components) and the rules that apply final school grade (see Section 2.2.1.2 Final school grade),
- which grading scales are used and for which components they are used and for which parts of the course they are used (see Section 2.2.1.1 Grading systems and grading scales),
- where appropriate, if the test is designed in such a way that an approved grade is required for a part of the test in order for the remainder of the test to be corrected,
- where appropriate, whether there is a limited number of opportunities to take an examination or complete placement or corresponding practical training and, if so, the number of opportunities (see Section 2.2.4. Limitation of examinations on the same course),
- the number of examinations on the course and what rules apply when a student misses an examination opportunity or when a written examination assignment is submitted too late (see Section 2.2.2. Forms of assessment, 2.2.2.1 Specific rules for certain forms of examination and Section 2.4.4 Number of examination opportunities per course),
- where appropriate, whether those rules apply if there is a possibility to complement a failed grade, e.g. (see Section 2.4.2 Additional assignment for a passing grade after receiving the grade Fx),
- where appropriate, if there are mandatory course elements and rules as to whether there are opportunities for additional assignments (see Section 2.3.8 Mandatory course elements),
- where appropriate, if a degree project is done in a group (see Section 2.2.2.1 Specific rules for certain forms of examinations),
- that the examiner has the right to decide on and adapted or alternative form of examination for students with permanent disabilities (see Section 2.2.9 Equality of treatment),
- rules for changing an examiner (see Section 2.4.5 Changing examiners),
- where appropriate, whether there are voluntary exams or other assignments that are not credited, but that provide advantages in examination and rules if there is an opportunity for additional assignments (see Section 2.2.3 Voluntary exams),
- where appropriate, if the course cannot be included in a specific qualification,
- when the syllabus or a change to this will take effect, and
- any necessary transitional regulation.

All syllabi shall be designed in accordance with the templates found in the University's education database.

A syllabus shall be adopted and available by no later than the date when the course becomes open for registration. Where specific reasons exist, the relevant scientific area board concerned may grant an exemption. Note that an exemption can only be granted for courses that are offered in programmes and courses in continuing professional development of teachers (VAL) and the continuing professional development of foreign teachers (ULV) and contract education. In the event of an exemption, the syllabus shall be adopted no later than two months prior to course start.

Note that even syllabi for courses with no application period (registration only) shall be adopted and available at least two months prior to course start.

What is written in a syllabus is **binding** and applies in general, which impacts the ability to **prescribe** anything else about the course other than what is in the syllabus (see Section 1.3 Information to be provided before and in conjunction with the start of the course, especially the part about the status of the course description/equivalent).<sup>3</sup>

### 1.2.1 Language requirements

#### National regulations

Syllabi shall always be written in Swedish (Section 10 of the Language Act).

#### Local regulations

A syllabus from Stockholm University shall be written in Swedish, but should also be translated into English whenever possible. If the language of instruction is not Swedish, there shall be an English translation of the syllabus (compare with Language Policy at Stockholm University). Among other things, the language of instruction for the course will be provided in the course instance in the University's education database, but shall also be specified in the syllabus. If a course is examined in a language other than Swedish (in full or in part), this shall be specified in the syllabus (see Section 2.2.6 Language of examination). The Swedish language syllabus takes precedence.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.2.2 Course name and cycle

#### National regulations

A course is either in the first or second cycle (Chapter 1, Section 7 of the Higher Education Act). The educational cycle shall be specified in the syllabus (Chapter 6, Section 15 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

#### Local regulations

If a course is part of a clear progression, this shall be indicated by the name of the course. The general rule is that the progression is to be indicated by Roman numerals (I, II, III) after the course name.

For courses in a main field, the level of progression shall be defined in the syllabus.<sup>5</sup>

The name of the course shall always be in Swedish in the syllabus, even if the course is provided in a language other than Swedish.

### 1.2.3 Course components

#### Local regulations

The syllabus shall specify whether a course is divided into components. A course component refers to a credited and examined part of a course, which shall have its own intended learning outcomes (see Section 2.2.1.3 Intended learning outcomes) and should include a description of content.

<sup>3</sup> Unless it is the same decision-making body that is adopting both the course syllabus and the course description, see Section 1.3.

<sup>4</sup> See Higher Education Appeals Board (HEAB) decision of 03.02.2017, Reg. no. 23-77-17.

<sup>5</sup> The progression code indicates where the course is situated in the successive progression of the main area for general degrees (even combined with professional degrees) and for courses with degree projects and courses at a level of education that cannot be classified according to this. See recommendations for facilitating opportunities for student mobility between different universities in Sweden, SUHF, (Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions), 04.12.2008. The progression code can be found in the SISU, the University's educational database.

## 1.2.4 Specific rules for certain courses

### National regulations

#### *Open online education (e.g. Massive Open Online Courses)*

Open online education refers to education provided via the internet and is open to everyone, with no entry requirements. Open web-based learning may be provided if it links to and promotes higher education at first-cycle, second-cycle and third-cycle for which the higher education institution has degree-awarding powers, or if it links to and promotes research conducted at the higher education institution (Chapter 11, Section 1 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

Other provisions on education, students and doctoral students in this ordinance do not apply to open web-based learning. References to the Higher Education Ordinance in other ordinances only include provisions in this chapter if it is specifically stated (Chapter 11, Section 2 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

The higher education institution may arrange tests for the participants and grade completed courses in open web-based learning or parts of such courses. The higher education institution may issue regulations regarding tests and grades (Chapter 11, Section 3 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

The higher education institution may issue course certificates to participants who complete courses. The higher education institution may issue regulations about course certificates (Chapter 11, Section 4 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

The higher education institution may issue additional regulations about open web-based learning (Chapter 11, Section 5 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

### Local regulations

It is important to distinguish between web-based learning that is regulated in the new Chapter 11 of the Higher Education Ordinance (see above) and regular education that can be conducted in the form of courses with full or partial online instruction (so-called distance learning courses). At present, Stockholm University has no local regulations for web-based learning.

The following rule applies to courses with entrance requirements that are taught in whole or in part online (so-called distance learning courses).

#### *Courses with online instruction (so-called distance learning courses)*

The syllabus shall indicate whether there are mandatory elements that require physical attendance; see Section 2.3.8 Mandatory course elements (Mandatory teaching elements).

#### *Internship courses*

It is the responsibility of the course giving department to offer the student an internship for courses with a compulsory internship.

#### *Courses that may involve expenses for the student*

The syllabus shall state whether participation in the course may involve expenses for the student, e.g. field studies and excursions. Students shall also be clearly informed of this when the course opens for registration.



## 1.2.5 Course literature and other course materials

### Local regulations

The syllabus shall indicate where to find information about course literature and other course material that the student needs to have access to at the start of the course. Under normal circumstances, this material shall be determined at least two months before the start of the course.<sup>6</sup>

Information about course literature shall be provided to Stockholm University Library and also be available on the responsible department's website at least two months before the start of the course.

## 1.3 Information to be provided before and at the start of the course

### Local regulations

In addition to the syllabus, other relevant course information (e.g. a course description) shall be provided for all courses at Stockholm University. For courses that do not require any knowledge of Swedish, course information shall be easily accessible in English (see Regulations for student influence in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations).

Note that the course description cannot **prescribe** anything that is not included in the syllabus (see Section 1.2 Courses and syllabi). In order for the course description to have the same binding status as the syllabus, it shall be attached to the syllabus and approved by the same administrative body that adopts the syllabus.

The following information shall be available on the coordinating department's website at least one month before the start of the course:

- the course description (or equivalent),
- the course schedule (including date and time of all examinations and when examination tasks are handed out and are to be submitted), (see Section 2.2.2.1 Specific rules for certain forms of examination, 2.2.7 Times of examinations and mandatory course elements, 2.2.9 Equality of treatment and 2.4.3 Additional assignments for a passing grade after receiving the grade Fx). Note that any timetable changes should be used restrictively and that the students shall be informed as early as is practically possible, and
- the examiner, and, where possible any teacher assisting in the grading process (see Section 2.1 Examiner).

At the start of the course, the students should be informed of:

- the relationship between the intended learning outcomes, grading criteria, the form(s) of instruction and examination (see Section 2 Examination and the role of the examiner),
- what parts of the course constitute mandatory elements, and whether, and in such cases how they can be made up (see Section 2.2.7 Times of examination and mandatory course elements and 2.3.8 Mandatory course elements),

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<sup>6</sup> This is necessary from an accessibility perspective. For example, it takes about two months to “record” an audio book. The production time for Braille or e-text books is also about two months, and about one month for enlargements (see the guide Studying with a disability on Stockholm University's website for education).

- how different examination data within a course or part of the course are taken into consideration when awarding grades (see Section 2.2.1.2 Final grade),
- how and when a course evaluation should be conducted and the last published compilation and course report should be provided (see Section 1.5 Course evaluation and course report),
- how and when decisions about grades should be announced (see Section 2.3.13 Information regarding decisions about grades, justification, etc.) and
- that so-called “blank exam answers” that are submitted in a written seated exam/take-home exam will be graded with a failing grade (see Section 2.3.10 Blank exam answers).

If the course includes a written seated examination, the students must also be informed of the content in the Regulations for written seated exams.

The students should also be informed of the general rules for examination listed below, as well as where they can find more information and support concerning the proper use of references and citations and other things in order to prevent situations where someone is suspected of cheating.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, it is incumbent on the department to provide information about cheating during an examination and its consequences. The rules specify:

- whether collaboration between students is permitted during the examination, and if so to what extent,
- whether the use of aids is permitted during the examination, and if so to what extent,
- that misleading or incomplete references may lead to suspicion of plagiarism, which also applies when students refer to their own previous work (self-plagiarism), and
- that attempts to cheat during examinations or other forms of study performance assessment may lead to disciplinary measures possibly resulting in the student being suspended from his or her studies at the university<sup>8</sup> (see Regulations for disciplinary matters in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations).

## 1.4 Study programmes and programme syllabi

### National regulations

Courses may be grouped together into study programmes (Chapter 6, Section 13 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

Study programmes must have a programme syllabus and the following should be specified in the programme syllabus (Chapter 6, Sections 16-17 of Higher Education Ordinance):

- the courses included in the programme,
- specific entry requirements, and
- other necessary regulations.

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<sup>7</sup> Stockholm University’s web page for educational support, e.g. in order to prevent plagiarism, can be found on the Staff website; also see information on the Centre for the Advancement of University Teaching (CeUL) website. For help with study techniques, etc. there is also the Study and language workshop (Studie- och språkverkstaden).

<sup>8</sup> As a consequence of this, students may, among other things, be required to repay student grants and loans for the duration of the suspension, since a suspension is regarded as an interruption of studies.

### Local regulations

At Stockholm University, a programme syllabus should also include:

- information about which courses in the programme are compulsory,
- information about elective courses, or information about which body makes decisions about the programme's elective courses defined in a specific list,
- when the programme syllabus or a change to this will take effect, and
- any necessary transition arrangements.

All programme syllabi should be designed in accordance with the templates found in the University's educational database.

A programme syllabus must be adopted and available by no later than the date when the course becomes open for registration.<sup>9</sup>

### 1.4.1 Language requirements

#### National regulations

Programme syllabi shall always be written in Swedish (see Section 10 of the Language Act).

#### Local regulations

A programme syllabus from Stockholm University shall be written in Swedish, but shall also be translated into English whenever possible. If the primary language of instruction is not Swedish, there must be an English translation of the programme syllabus (compare with Language Policy at Stockholm University). Among other things, the language of instruction for the course will be provided in the University's educational database, but should also be specified in the programme syllabus. The Swedish language programme syllabus takes precedence.<sup>10</sup>

## 1.5 Course evaluation and course report

#### National regulations

According to Chapter 1 Section 4 of the Higher Education Act, the operation at the universities shall be arranged to ensure that high standards are attained in courses and study programmes and in research. The resources available shall be used effectively to sustain a high standard of operation. Quality assurance procedures are the shared concern of staff and students at the universities.

The students shall be entitled to exert influence over the courses and study programme at the universities and the universities shall endeavour to enable students to play an active role in the continued development of courses and study programme (Chapter 1, Section 4 a of the Higher Education Act).

The university shall enable students who are participating in or have completed a course to express their experiences of and views on the course through a course evaluation that is arranged by the university. The university shall collate the course evaluations and provide information about their results and any actions prompted by the course evaluations. The

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<sup>9</sup> Swedish Higher Education Authority Supervision 05.06.2018 Reg. no. 32-0048-17.

<sup>10</sup> Compare Higher Education Appeals Board (HEAB) decision of 03.02.2017, Reg. no. 23-77-17.

results shall be made available to students (Chapter 1, Section 14 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

### Local regulations

The purpose of the course evaluations and course reports is to contribute to quality development of courses. Through the **course evaluation**, the student is given the opportunity to express opinions and influence their education. Together with the teachers' opinions and the course's results, they constitute a basis for the analysis that is documented in the **course report**, which forms the basis of the development work with the course. The course report is also intended to provide information to future students about the views of earlier students and teachers and about the development work that was done.

The university provides an IT service that automates several steps in the process. For the IT service, there is a special manual that describes how this is done.

The regulations below must be complied with regardless of the manner in which course evaluations are done and the course report is prepared.

#### *Regulations for course evaluation*

All courses (see Section 1.2 Course and syllabus) at Stockholm University must be evaluated through a course evaluation and a course report. Information on **when** and **how** the course evaluation is done must be provided to the students at the start of the course.

The basis of the course evaluation is comprised of a number of university-wide questions that must always be included. The university-wide questions must begin the course evaluation (see the course evaluation template in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations). In addition to this, the department board can decide on other compulsory questions.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, the course coordinator/equivalent can add course-specific questions.

A **component** of a course can also be evaluated. If all components of a course have been evaluated, no separate evaluation of the entire course needs to be done, but if some components were evaluated and others not, an evaluation of the **whole** course also needs to be done.

If other forms of course evaluations supplement the compulsory summative course evaluation described above, they must be documented and compiled and be included in the course report (also see below).<sup>12</sup>

Students should be able to do course evaluations anonymously. The integrity of personnel and students should be taken into account in all work with course evaluations.

The course evaluation should be done no earlier than after the final exam session, i.e. at the end of the course (see Section 1.1 Extent of education).

#### *Regulations for the course report*

After course completion or course component completion, the students' course evaluations must be compiled regardless of the number of responses. Together with the participating teacher's opinions and the course's results, the compilation of the students' opinions should

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<sup>11</sup> Note that the scientific area board or faculty board can also decide that certain questions are to be added to the course evaluation.

<sup>12</sup> The opinions may have been gathered through e.g. a paper questionnaire, Post-it notes, verbally or electronically. The documentation may be brief, but must be done.

form the basis of analysis that is documented in a course report.

Note that when the course evaluations are compiled, a review must always be done of the free text responses and any inappropriate/offensive comments and personal attacks must be removed.

The course report must follow the template prepared for the purpose (see course report template in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations). The course report must also include any change proposals and any decisions already made to develop the course before future course dates. The course report should be used to make informed decisions regarding the development and change of courses or course components.

#### *Regulations for information and making the compilation available*

The compilation of the quantitative questions in the course evaluation and the course report should be made **easily accessible** to students and staff at the University no later than ten weeks after completion of the course. For the courses ending at the end of the spring term, the time will be extended by four weeks due to the summer holidays. The compilation of the quantitative questions in the course evaluation and the course report for at least the last three course dates must also then be kept easily accessible on the department's website or in the digital course catalogue and be archived.

At Stockholm University, the students who participated in the course should be informed of the compilation of the course evaluation and the course report by email.<sup>13</sup> The last published compilation and the course evaluation should also be shared with students in connection with course start<sup>14</sup> (see Section 1.3 Information to be provided before and at the start of the course).

#### *Responsibility*

The Head of department /equivalent at the respective department is responsible for course evaluations being done for the whole course or for all course components, that a review is always done of the free text responses and any inappropriate/offensive comments or personal attacks are removed, that course reports are prepared and that students who have taken the course and students in the subsequent course date are informed of the results, i.e. both of the compilation of the students' course evaluations and of the course report.<sup>15</sup> The Head of department /equivalent is also responsible for course evaluations being made available and being archived. Likewise, the Head of department /equivalent is responsible for the results of the students' opinions being taken into account in the course report and that the course report forms part of the decision input in the development of and changes to the course.

Written procedures for the work with course evaluations and course reports should be in place at each department.

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<sup>13</sup> The students can also receive the compilation of the course evaluation and course report through e.g. Athena.

<sup>14</sup> Via e.g. Athena.

<sup>15</sup> This regulation is based on a 2013 UKÄ decision (reg. no. 31-460-13, Complaint against Uppsala University regarding shortcomings relating to course evaluations and the disclosure of public documents).

## 2 Examination and the role of the examiner

Examination is part of the student's learning process resulting in a decision about grades. In order for the examination to be legally certain, it is important to have clear rules and ensure that staff and students adhere to these.

The Higher Education Ordinance does not define what an examination is. Based on various provisions in the Higher Education Ordinance, it can be established that the examiner sets a grade based on an assessment of the student's performance as specified in the syllabus (Chapter 6, Sections 14, 15 and 18 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

A fundamental rule for all examinations is that it is the intended learning outcomes of the course (or course components) that should be examined – nothing else. This also means that the examination is not limited to being based on course literature and other teaching materials, since the exam questions relate to the intended learning outcomes.<sup>16</sup> This relationship can be further clarified through clear grading criteria. Therefore, it is crucial that students should be informed of this at the start of the course (see also Section 1.3 Information before and at the start of the course).

The provision in Chapter 6, Section 18 of the Higher Education Ordinance (see Section 2.1 Examiner below) that states that grades should be set by a teacher – an examiner – appointed by the higher education institution means that a grading decision made by an examiner cannot be overruled by other officials at the same institution (including the President). Since the Higher Education Ordinance also stipulates that a grading decision cannot be appealed either (see Section 2.4.1 Correction and reassessment of a grading decision and footnote referring to the Discrimination Act), the examiner has great responsibility in the grading process. In addition to the demands that this places on knowledge in the field, the examiner must also know what it entails, as an employee at a public authority, to make decisions that involve the exercise of authority against individuals.

### 2.1 Examiner

The rules concerning the examiner and the role of the examiner can also be found under other sections in this document.

#### National regulations

According to Chapter 6, Section 18 of the Higher Education Ordinance, the grade shall be determined by a teacher specifically nominated by the university (examiner).

Multiple examiners may grade **different** students taking the same examination. However, the Higher Education Ordinance (Chapter 6, Section 18) stipulates that multiple examiners together cannot make **one** grading decision for the same student.

#### Local regulations

An examiner should be employed as a **teacher** at Stockholm University.<sup>17</sup>

The examiner must be knowledgeable in the field examined and know what it entails as a public employee at a public authority, to make decisions that involve the exercise of authority

<sup>16</sup> The fact that the examination is not limited to being based on course literature and other course material is a consequence of the Higher Education Act (Chapter 1, Section 2, 4, 8 and 9) and the Higher Education Ordinance (Chapter 6, Section 15).

<sup>17</sup> Teaching positions at Stockholm University are in accordance with appointments procedure: Associate senior lecturer, Senior lecturer, Professor, Lecturer, Adjunct professor, Visiting professor, Adjunct teacher, Visiting teacher and Part-time fixed-term teacher.

against individuals (see introductory text under Section 2 Examination and the role of the examiner). Moreover, the examiner must also be familiar with the course content and the student's performance.

The examiner and supervisor of an independent project (degree project) cannot be the same person.

At Stockholm University, the President has delegated the decision to appoint examiners to the scientific area boards. The decision cannot be delegated further than the than the Department board/Head of department. The examiner should be appointed for a course, and, where appropriate, course component. Normally, information about the examiner and any teacher assisting in the grading process<sup>18</sup> should be available no later than one month before the course starts. However, for a course with independent project (degree project), information must be made available no later than four weeks before the examination.

## 2.2 Decisions to be made before an examination

The specific information about examinations that should be provided to students at the start of the course is listed in Section 1.3 Information to be provided before or at the start of the course.

### 2.2.1 Grading systems, grading scales, grading criteria, etc.

#### National regulations

The higher education institution can prescribe the grading system to use. However, a scale with more than one passing grade should always be used for courses that include complete or partial placement (VFU courses) and are part of a programme leading to a degree as a preschool teacher, primary school teacher, subject teacher, or vocational teacher. This only applies if the placement element in the course comprises more than three higher education credits (Chapter 6, Section 18 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

#### 2.2.1.1 Grading Systems and grading scales

##### Local regulations

##### *Principal rule concerning grading scales*

As a rule, Stockholm University shall use a seven-point scale related to the learning objectives of the course. The grading scale relates to the intended learning outcomes of the course, which are defined in the syllabus (see Sections 1.2 Course and syllabus and 2.2.1.3 Intended learning outcomes).

##### Passing grades (in descending order)

A = Excellent

B = Very Good

C = Good

D = Satisfactory

E = Adequate

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<sup>18</sup> For example, teachers assisting with the grading process can also be doctoral students, researchers and laboratory assistants.

### Failing grades

Fx = Fail, some additional work required

F = Fail, much more work required

The syllabus shall specify which grading scales are used and for which components of the course they are used (see Section 1.2 Course and syllabi) and whether or not a student who receives the grade Fx may complete an additional assignment in order to receive a passing grade (see Section 2.4.3 Additional assignments for a passing grade after receiving the grade Fx).

### *Grading scales for VFU courses within teacher education worth more than three higher education credits*

For courses covered by the national rule above, passing grades are Pass with Distinction and Pass; a failing grade is Fail.

### *General exceptions to the rules concerning grading scales*

In addition to the principal rule (seven-point grading scale) and the specific rule for VFU courses (three-point grading scale) within teacher education, the following general exceptions are permitted:

- a course or course component that included less than 4.5 higher education credits,
- a course or course component, regardless of the credit range, predominantly consisting of laboratory work, internships or excursions, etc.

For such courses or course components, either a two-point grading scale (Pass/Fail) or a three-point grading scale (Pass with Distinction, Pass/Fail) can be used.

However, in a course that is graded using a seven-point scale, the number of higher education credits assessed according to a two- or three-point scale must not exceed half of the credits on the course.

### *Exemptions from the principal rule*

Exemptions from the principal rule (the seven-point scale) for courses other than the general exceptions above may be granted by the President upon request by the relevant scientific area board.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.2.1.2 Final grade

### **National regulations**

Unless otherwise provided by the higher education institution, a grade shall be awarded on completion of a course (Chapter 6, Section 18 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

### **Local regulations**

If the **final grade** on a course divided into components is set by “weighting” the grades from the various components, the principles for how this is done shall be specified in the syllabus.<sup>20, 21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> This may apply, for example, to courses provided in collaboration with other universities using different grading scales or some forms of contract education.

<sup>20</sup> Swedish Higher Education Authority Supervision, report 2011:21R, site visit at Stockholm University 2010, p. 26.

<sup>21</sup> Information concerning how different examination tasks **within** a course component are weighted together to form a grade for that component can be provided separately or be included in the course description/equivalent (see Section 1.3 Information to be provided before and at the start of the course) or the grading criteria (see Section 2.2.1.4 Grading criteria).



Note that the final grade can be determined in ways other than those described above, e.g. via an overall assessment of all examinations in a course. In such cases, the principles for how this is done shall be specified in the syllabus.

In exceptional circumstances, the syllabus may prescribe that students can be failed before they have completed the entire course. However, the syllabus must indicate what special circumstances are required for a student's grade to be determined before that student has completed the whole course (see section 1.2 Course and syllabus).

The general rule is that only grades on entire courses can be included in a degree. If a course component clearly constitutes a defined thematic component, this may be included in the degree after credit transfer. In such cases, this is determined by the administrative body that adopts the syllabus and must be specified in the syllabus.

Note that a decision regarding **credit transfer** implies that grades shall not be set or transferred. The student's performance has already been graded (see more on credit transfer in Regulations and procedures for credit transfers in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations). If a study performance is credit transferred as a course component, the examiner should weigh in the grade on the credit transfer study performance in the grading of the whole course.

#### *Specific rule for courses with placement (VFU)*

Students who prematurely voluntarily interrupt, or are forced to discontinue a nationally regulated placement course within an educational programme for preschool teachers, teachers, psychologists, psychotherapists, medical physicists or social workers will not be graded. Grades can only be awarded for a completed course. However, note that such interruptions are counted as an expended examination opportunity (see Section 2.2.4.2 Expended examination opportunity).

### 2.2.1.3 Intended learning outcomes

#### **National regulations**

The syllabus shall include the course objectives (Chapter 6, Section 15 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

#### **Local regulations**

The syllabus shall include a description of the course's intended learning outcomes (see Section 1.2 Course and syllabi). The intended learning outcomes shall express what each student is expected to know, be able to understand, relate to, or carry out in order to receive a passing grade at the end of the course. Parts of a course shall also have intended learning outcomes (see section 1.2.3 Course components).

### 2.2.1.4 Grading Criteria

#### **Local regulations**

Grading criteria specify the qualitative requirements that the student must meet for each grade on an examination. The criteria shall be based on the intended learning outcomes of the course or course component that is being examined.

The grading criteria shall be provided to the students in writing at the start of the course. If the course is divided into components, the students shall also be informed of the requirements for each grade on the entire course.

Any announced grading criteria related to the learning objectives are binding.

### 2.2.1.5 Implementation of the ECTS Grading Table

#### National regulations

According to the ECTS Users' Guide, which has been adopted by the EU, each European higher education institution can use its own grading scales, but should complement these grade distribution tables of passing grades awarded in its courses. At a later stage, these tables can be compared to the grade distribution in equivalent courses at another European university. The ECTS Grading Table (EGT) should be based on a period of at least two academic years. On 20.10.2009, the General Assembly of the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions adopted recommendations for how EGT should be used in Sweden.

#### Local regulations

Students can have EGT included in their study certificates upon request. The Ladok certificate then shows (for courses with results for at least two years) the number and proportion of students per grade. Only passing grades awarded before or on the same date are included in the grade distribution.

### 2.2.2 Forms of assessment

#### National regulations

The forms of student performance assessment shall be specified in the syllabus (Chapter 6, Section 15 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

#### Local regulations

The syllabus (see Section 1.2 Course and syllabi) shall include the following:

- the forms of examination used in the course (and were applicable also for respective course components), (see also Section 2.2.2.1 Specific rules for certain forms of examination).

A syllabus containing an **independent project (degree project)** shall also include the following:

- basic assessment criteria (for grading of the degree project),
- if the degree project is written by a group, i.e. by more than one student,
- the minimum supervision time a student writing a thesis is entitled to,
- under what circumstances there may be changes of supervisors or examiners,
- potential consequences relating to supervision or grades or grades for students who do not finish their degree projects in time during the course. Unless otherwise prescribed in the syllabus, students shall, within reasonable limits, be given supervision until the degree project is finished, and
- possible deadline for complementing the grade Fx (see Section 2.4.3 Additional assignments for a passing grade after receiving the grade Fx).

Examination shall be carried out as clearly described in the syllabus (see, however, Section 2.2.9 Equality of treatment).

Since the grade is based on individual student's performance, each individual's contribution shall be discernible in all forms of examination. Likewise, it must be possible to ascertain the student's identity regardless of the form of examination. In addition to these general rules, the following specific rules apply to the forms of examination listed below.

### 2.2.2.1 Specific rules for certain forms of examination

#### Local regulations

##### *Group examination*

A group examination shall be carried out in a manner that allows for individual assessment of each student's performance, which shall also be documented. Group examination can usefully be combined with other forms of examination (see more below).

##### *Degree project (independent project)*

It is important that the supervisor and the examiner place similar demands on the student's degree project and agree on the assessment criteria. It is also important that the examiner's and supervisor's respective different roles are made clear to the students. However, the examiner is not required to award a passing grade simply because the supervisor has given the go-ahead to publicly present the degree project. Note that the supervisor may never deny a student an opportunity to publicly present his or her degree project.

In the case of **co-writing**, i.e. students writing a thesis together, the department must have written guidelines regarding how to guarantee the assessment of individual student performance and if there are any limitations on how many students are allowed to work on the same thesis.

The final thesis should be publicly discussed and reviewed.

##### *Oral examination*

In the event of an oral examination, there must be clearly defined grading criteria and adequate documentation of the examination, primarily to facilitate opportunities to review the grading decision.

##### *Placement (VFU) and other practical training*

There shall be written guidelines regarding the examiner and the role of the supervisor in the assessment of individual student performance during placement and other practical training. The examiner is responsible for grading.

See also Section 2.2.1.2 Final grade and Section 2.2.4.2 Expended examination opportunity for the local rules that apply when prematurely terminating **certain** courses with placement (VFU).

##### *Continuous examinations (examination that is part of instruction), combined examination tasks, written assignments, etc.*

A syllabus shall contain clear information about how many examinations are included in the course and what rules apply if a student miss any of them. If it is possible to submit an additional assignment, this should be specified in the syllabus (see Section 2.4.3 Additional assignments for a passing grade after receiving the grade Fx). The syllabus shall also specify whether a student is required to retake the entire course after missing an examination opportunity. If no rules are specified in the syllabus, the student cannot demand the opportunity to submit an additional assignment, nor can the university demand that the student retake the entire course.

When a course is examined on the basis of continuous assessment, written assignments and/or combined examination tasks, students must be provided with information about which seminars and assignments will be graded, how big a part of the grade they constitute, whether absence will affect the grade, and what is required to be granted an exemption, including how to request such an exemption, no later than a month prior to the start of the course (see Section 1.3 Information before and in conjunction with the start of the course).

When continuous examination is employed, it is important that this is documented in a legally certain manner so that the individual student's performance can be assessed.

#### *Take-home exam/assignment*

Students shall be notified of the deadline for submissions no later than one month before the start of the course, as well as when they receive the take-home exam or assignments. If the assignment can be graded in spite of late submission, this, as well as whether and how the delay will affect the assessment, shall be specified in the syllabus.

#### *Examination with digital aids*

Students shall be informed about how the examination will be conducted no later than at the start of the course. It is of the utmost importance that the examination is conducted in a legally secure manner and that the students can be identified. If the examination cannot be carried out due to technical difficulties, the student should promptly be given the opportunity to retake the exam preferably within one week (see also 2.3.7 Misplaced examination assignment and Regulations for written seated exams in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations).

### **2.2.3 Voluntary exams**

If a course includes voluntary exams or other assignments that are not credited, but provides advantages in examination, this must be stated in the syllabus. Note that voluntary exams or other assignments may not be a requirement for a final grade. The syllabus shall also specify whether it is possible to compensate for missed voluntary exams or other assignments.

### **2.2.4 Limited number of examination opportunities on a course**

#### **National regulations**

There are no regulations concerning the maximum number of examination opportunities, but a higher education institution may limit the number of examination opportunities if having no restrictions would claim an unreasonable amount of resources. Decisions to limit the number of examination opportunities shall be made restrictively, and the number of examination opportunities must be specified in the syllabus. If a higher education institution limits the number of times a student may undertake an examination in order to receive a passing grade on a course or course component, the number of opportunities should be set to at least five. If a passing grade on placement or corresponding training is required in order for a student to receive a passing grade on a course or course component, the number of placement or corresponding training periods shall be at least two (see Chapter 6, Section 21 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

#### **Local regulations**

Limiting the total number of examination opportunities (exams) on a course shall be done restrictively. Some of the most common forms of examination at Stockholm University are written seated exams and take-home exams. Please note that it is very rarely justifiable to claim that these forms of examination are so resource intensive that the number of examination opportunities needs to be limited in the syllabus (see also the local regulations in Subject 1.2 Courses and syllabi).

When it comes to examinations based on placement (VFU) and any restriction of the number of practical training period or equivalent training sessions, please refer to the relevant syllabus.

See also Section 2.4.4 Number of examination opportunities per course instance, for the local regulations that exist for this.

#### 2.2.4.1 Discontinuation of a course/programme and cancellation of a course/programme syllabus

##### Local regulations

See Regulations and procedures for establishing and discontinuing courses and study programmes in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations.

#### 2.2.4.2 Expended examination opportunity

##### Local regulations

An examination opportunity is considered to be expended if the student has formally failed the examination or taken part in the examination without presenting a result, i.e. handed it in “blank” (see Section 2.3.10 Blank exam answers and Regulations for written seated exams in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations). However, not attending an examination opportunity for which the student has signed up for is not considered an expended examination opportunity (see Section 2.4.3 Additional assignments for a passing grade after receiving the grade Fx).

For regulations that apply when a course is discontinued, see Section 2.2.4.1 Discontinuation of a course/study programme and cancellation of a course/programme syllabus.

##### *Specific rule for certain courses with placement (VFU) with a limited number of examination opportunities*

If students voluntarily drop out of placement courses within an educational programme for preschool teachers, teachers, psychologists, psychotherapists, medical physicists or social workers, or if the student is forced to cancel the course early, this is considered an expended examination opportunity. However, in these cases, no grade will be set since the course is not completed (see Section 2.2.1.2 Final grade)

#### **2.2.5 Anonymous written examinations/take-home examinations**

##### Local regulations

At Stockholm University, all written seated exams (including written tests) **shall** be anonymised. However, the examiner and any teachers assisting with the grading process<sup>22</sup> must take note of the names of the participants via a list before starting correction so that any conflict of interest can be detected and decisions about grading can be made (see Section 2.3.2 Conflict of interest).

At Stockholm University, all take-home exams **should** be anonymised. However, the examiner and any teachers assisting with the grading process must take note of the names of the participants via a list before starting correction so that any conflict of interest can be detected and decisions about grading can be made (see Section 2.3.2 Conflict of interest).

#### **2.2.6. Language of examination**

##### National regulations

All grading decisions shall be written in Swedish (see Section 10 of the Language Act).

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<sup>22</sup> For example, teachers assisting with the grading process can also be doctoral students, researchers and laboratory assistants.

### Local regulations

If a course is examined in a language other than Swedish (in full or in part), this shall be specified in the syllabus (see Section 1.2.1 Language requirements).

Students participating in a course that is given in Swedish are normally not entitled to oral interpretation or written translation during examinations. Note that the right to sign language interpretation is not affected by this rule. Normally, students who speak Danish or Norwegian are entitled to use their respective languages during an examination, unless this is in conflict with the intended learning outcomes in the syllabus. Normally, students participating in a course given in English have the right to use Swedish (Danish and Norwegian) during examinations, unless it is contrary to the intended learning outcomes in the syllabus (see section 1.2.1 Language requirements).

## 2.2.7 Scheduling of examination and mandatory course elements

### Local regulations

The scheduling of daytime courses shall be done in such a way that teaching, mandatory course elements and examinations are normally conducted from 8 am to 5 pm during weekdays. For courses in the evenings, teaching, mandatory course elements and examinations are normally conducted from 6 pm to 10 pm during weekdays. As a rule, regular examination opportunities and subsequent examination opportunities should not take place on the same day of the week. (See also Section 2.2.9 Equality of treatment)

## 2.2.8 Examination and mandatory course elements in student representation

Students who give notice at the start of the course that they are unable to take part in an examination or other compulsory course element as a result of student representation at a compulsory meeting appointed by the university in a body or group shall be offered equivalent examination options or possibilities to complement mandatory course element (also see the section on student influence in Regulations for student influence in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations).

## 2.2.9 Equality of treatment

### National regulations

The Discrimination Act (Chapter 3, Section 16) stipulates that a provider of education conducting education or other activities under the Higher Education Act is to conduct goal-oriented work within the framework of these activities to actively promote equal rights and opportunities for the students participating in or applying for the activities, regardless of sex, cross-gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age (Chapter 1, Section 1 and Chapter 3, Section 1 of the Discrimination Act). The work with active measures should also include the possibilities of reconciling studies with parenthood (see Chapter 3, Section 5, of the Discrimination Act).

### Local regulations

#### *Disabilities*

Students with long-term disabilities may be eligible for a certificate with recommendations for special educational support during teaching and examinations (also see Studying with a disability on the university website for education). Forms of teaching and examination shall be clearly indicated in the syllabus (see Section 2.2.2 Forms of assessment). In order to ensure equal rights and opportunities for all students, the examiner can decide to deviate from

the syllabus regulations regarding forms of teaching and examination for a student who has a certificate with recommendations for special educational support. In such a decision, the examiner shall determine the forms for alternatives or an adapted form of examination or a mandatory course element. However, such a decision must not be in conflict with the intended learning outcomes. The syllabus shall provide information about the possibilities for an examiner to do this.

#### *Religion or other belief*

Teaching, group assignments, mandatory course elements and examinations should, as far as possible, be scheduled for students who, for religious reasons other beliefs, are unable to participate on certain religious holidays. If no such consideration has been taken into account, an equivalent examination option or mandatory course element shall be offered to those students who have given notice at the start of the course that on certain dates or at certain times for religious reasons or due to a different belief system, they will not be able to attend an examination or mandatory course element.

#### *Gender, transgender identity and expression*

Students who give advance notice by no later than the start of the course that they are unable to take part in an examination or other mandatory course element due to gender reassignment surgery shall be offered equivalent examination options or possibilities to complement mandatory course elements.

#### *Studies and parenthood*

Students who give notice at the start of the course that they are unable to take part in an examination or other mandatory course element due to childcare obligations for minors shall be offered equivalent examination options or possibilities to complement mandatory course elements. Breaks for breastfeeding should be arranged for students with infants when the length of an examination exceeds three hours.

### **2.2.10 Completing an examination at different location**

#### **Local regulations**

If a student is unable to physically attend an examination, the examination may take place elsewhere in Sweden or abroad under certain conditions. However, examinations at a different location shall be held very restrictively and should only be permitted under exceptional circumstances.

The examination must take place at a public authority or similar (e.g. a university, embassy, consulate, police station, hospital, etc.). The examination should be carried out under the same conditions as an examination at Stockholm University. This means that the student shall be examined at the same time as the other students and have as much time at their disposal, sit in a private space without disturbance, and have access to the same aids as other students. In addition, and invigilator shall monitor the examination.

Decisions to allow an examination to take place at a different location are made by the examiner, who is responsible for ensuring that the examination is carried out under satisfactory conditions. The examiner, in consultation with the director of studies/equivalent, will determine whether the requirements for examinations at a different place are fulfilled and whether the department has the practical ability to organise such an examination opportunity.

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the requirements for examination at different location place can be met, as well as to find an appropriate location and a coordinating person at a public authority or similar. Any costs for the student to take the exam at different location will be paid by the student.

## 2.3 Grading

In addition to the final grading decision, the examiner also makes other decisions during the preparatory stage. For example, the examiner has to determine whether the student has fulfilled the mandatory course elements specified in the syllabus (see Section 2.3.8 Mandatory course elements). Note, however, that the preparation and presentation (where applicable) of such a decision may be carried out by someone other than the examiner (see also Section 2.3.12 Documentation of grading decisions and the Handbook in Case Handling).

### 2.3.1 Decisions to be made during the preparatory stage

#### Local regulations

The examiner must always ensure that there is sufficient documentation to allow for the grading process to be carried out in an objective and impartial manner, and for the grading decision to be legally certain.

### 2.3.2 Conflict of Interest

#### National regulations

An examiner and any teacher assisting in the grading process shall act objectively and impartially in the grading process, and is not allowed to process cases where there is a conflict of interest (see Internal regulation concerning conflicts of interest in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations and rules on conflict of interest in Sections 16-18 of the Administrative Procedure Act.).<sup>23</sup>

### 2.3.3 Representative or counsel

#### National regulations

Section 14 of the Administrative Procedure Act stipulates that anyone who is a party to a matter may appoint a representative or counsel. However, the party using a representative shall attend in person if the public authority so requests.<sup>24</sup>

### 2.3.4 The student's right to insight into the grading process

#### National regulations

Pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act (Section 10), a student has the right to access any material that has been included in a grading matter, such as corrected exams or written comments from the supervisor during placement.

### 2.3.5 Credit limits

#### Local regulations

Any credit limits announced prior to an examination should be adhered to as far as possible. Credit limits included in the syllabus are binding unless the syllabus specified an exception (see Section 1.2 Courses and syllabi).

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<sup>23</sup> The authority must make a prompt decision if an objection of disqualification is submitted. If the authority finds that there is no conflict of interest, the individual concerned may appeal the decision.

<sup>24</sup> A student may wish to appoint a representative or counsel in a grading matter, e.g. in order to argue that the examiner be disqualified due to a conflict of interest, or to request another form of examination due to disability. A representative or counsel should not take part in actual teaching.



### 2.3.6 Cheating and deceit, disciplinary measures and special rules for written seated exams

#### Local regulations

For relevant information about the examination to be given to students at the start of the course, see Section 1.3 Information before and in conjunction with the start of the course.

Detailed regulations concerning written seated examinations and suspicions of deceit can be found in the Regulations for written seated exams and Regulations for disciplinary matters in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations.

### 2.3.7 Lost course/examination assignment

#### Local regulations

If it can be proven that the University is responsible for the loss of a student's written assignment, or for misinforming a student about the date or time of an examination, the student should promptly be given a new opportunity to complete the examination, preferably within a week of the mistake being discovered. The examiner is not permitted to pass a student simply because an assignment or examination has been lost.

### 2.3.8 Mandatory course elements (mandatory teaching elements)

#### National regulations

Unless otherwise provided by the higher education institution, a grade shall be awarded on completion of a course (Chapter 6, Section 18 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

#### Local regulations

The syllabus shall include **mandatory course elements**, e.g. attendance, compulsory assignments, laboratory sessions, study visits, when these are requirements for the awarding of a final grade. The syllabus shall also specify whether it is possible to compensate for missed mandatory course elements with replacement assignments. A student who, according to the examiner, has not completed a mandatory course element, should normally still be permitted to participate in subsequent examinations for the same course. Otherwise, the syllabus shall specify that completing the course element is an absolute requirement for the student to participate in subsequent examinations (see Section 1.2 Courses and syllabi). However, the final course shall not be set until the student has completed all mandatory course elements. Only then can the course be considered to be “completed” (see Section 2.2.1.2 Final grade).

### 2.3.9 Withdrawal of the submitted examination assignment

#### Local regulations

A student is not permitted to withdraw a submitted examination assignment for a course in order to avoid being graded.

### 2.3.10 Blank exam answers

#### Local regulations

If a student turns in a “blank exam answer”, the examination is to be graded with a failing grade. The students must be informed of this rule no later than the start of the course (see Section 1.3 Information to be provided before and in connection with the start of the course, Section 2.2.4.2 Expended examination opportunity and Regulations for written seated exams in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations).

### 2.3.11 Grading time, examination date and notification obligation upon a delay

#### National regulations

Section 9 of the Administrative Procedure Act stipulates that matters should be handled as simply, quickly, and cheaply as possible without jeopardising legal certainty. When it comes to examinations, the Parliamentary Ombudsman (JO) has, in one individual case, determined that an examination should be graded within three weeks of the examination date and at least two weeks before any retake opportunity.<sup>25</sup>

Based on Section 11 of the Administrative Procedure Act, when a matter has been substantially delayed, the University must inform the student who initiated the matter and state the reason for the delay.

If a matter that has been initiated by a student has not been decided within no later than six months, the student may request in writing that the University make a decision in the matter. Within four weeks from when such a request is received, the University must either decide the matter or decide to deny the student's request (see Section 12 of the Administrative Procedure Act).

#### Local regulations

An examination assignment should be corrected, graded and reported in Ladok within 15 working days of the examination and more than 10 working days before the next examination session, which is an important thing to take into consideration when establishing times for examination opportunities. Note that working days cannot just be interpreted as the working days of the affected examiner, but constitute an absolute measure.

In documentation in Ladok of the results of an examination, the date that the examination was held shall be stated. The examination date is not the date when the assessment was done or when the results were documented in Ladok.

If a grading decision is at risk of being significantly delayed, the student must be informed of the delay and the reason for the delay (e.g. orally, by email or on a learning management system). According to the preparatory works for the Administrative Procedure Act, the premise for what a significant delay is can be the normal time that the authority stated for a certain type of matter, which in grading matters is within 15 workdays from the exam date.

If in exceptional cases it were to occur that a grading decision is delayed, there is a possibility for the student to request that the University make a decision on the grade. If a student requests that a grading matter that has not been decided within six months be decided, the examiner shall either decide on the grade or deny the request within four weeks. If the student's request is denied, a clarifying justification shall be provided.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See JO decision of 18.07.1991, reg. no. 3980-1990.

<sup>26</sup> It is not possible to appeal such a denial decision as a grading decision in itself cannot be appealed (see Section 2.4.1 Correction, reassessment and change of a grading decision).

## 2.3.12 Documentation of grading decisions

### National regulations

All grading decisions should specify the date and content of the decision, as well as who made the decision (see Section 21 of the Government Agencies Ordinance). If someone acted as rapporteur or attended the final proceedings without participating in the decision, this should also be specified.

### Local regulations

The name of the examiner and any teacher assisting in the grading process shall also be specified in Ladok.

Note that at Stockholm University, grading matters do not have to be presented before a decision is made.

Grading decisions shall be archived as an electronic document in Ladok.

## 2.3.13 Information about grading decisions, justification, etc.

### Local regulations

A grading decision can always be changed by the higher education institution before it has been announced. At Stockholm University, grading decisions should primarily be announced via digital channels.

At the start of the course, students shall be informed of how and when the grades will be announced (see also 1.3 Information to be provided before and in conjunction with the start of the course).

### 2.3.13.1 Justification for grade

#### National regulations

According to the Higher Education Ordinance (Chapter 1, Section 4a), the reasons for decisions do not need to be applied to cases regarding admissions to or grading in education. However, if a reason has not been provided, one must be subsequently provided if possible, if a person request this and it is necessary for his or her to be able to exercise his or her legal rights.

#### Local regulations

The examiner is required to justify the grade on a student's examination assignment, either orally or in writing, if the student so requests. For reasons of legal certainty, the request should be submitted to the examiner in writing. If no review of the examination is carried out, and no grading template has been drawn up, the student is entitled to receive written justification of the grade upon request.

### 2.3.13.2 Review of examination

#### Local regulations

A review of the exam with the examiner present gives students an opportunity to have their grades justified. Each written seated examination should normally be followed by a review at the end of the course, in which it may be appropriate to pay special attention to explaining the relationship between the intended learning outcomes, the grading criteria, the form of examination, and the set grade. The date of such a review should be announced no later than at the time of the examination, and should take place at least ten working days before any retake examination.

### 2.3.13.3 Written grading template

#### Local regulations

If, for practical reasons, it is difficult to carry out a review of the examination, the examiner may draw up written grading templates that can be made available to students along with the opportunity to contact the examiner for additional information. A student who requests a grading template should, if one is available, be provided with one once the grade has been set.

## 2.4 Measures after the grade has been set

### 2.4.1 Correction, reassessment and change of a grading decision

#### National regulations

Pursuant to Chapter 12, Sections 2 and 4 of the Higher Education Ordinance, grading decisions cannot be appealed.<sup>27</sup> However, a student is entitled to request a correction or reassessment. Note that there is no time limit for when such a request should be submitted, even if the examination assignment is signed and handed out.

#### *Correction*

A grading decision that has become clearly inaccurate due to a typographical error, a calculation error or a similar oversight **may** be corrected to the student's advantage or disadvantage. Corrections to the student's disadvantage must be made with great care, and only in clear cases. Before a correction is made, the student shall normally be given an opportunity to be heard. Such a correction shall be made by the examiner (see Chapter 6, Section 23 of the Higher Education Ordinance and Section 36 of the Administrative Procedure Act).<sup>28</sup>

#### *Reassessment*

If an examiner finds that a grading decision is clearly inaccurate due to changing circumstances or for any other reason, the examiner **shall** change the decision if it can be done quickly and easily and does not result in a lower grade (Chapter 6, Section 24 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

#### *Change*

A grading decision that is deemed to be incorrect due to new circumstances or for some other reason **may** be changed by the examiner. A passing grade may, however, only be changed to the student's disadvantage under certain stated circumstances, such as in the event of deceit in the examination (Section 37 of the Administrative Procedure Act).

#### Local regulations

Examination assignments shall be preserved for two years (degree projects will be retained indefinitely). If the original is handed over to the student, its copy must be saved for two years from date of hand-over<sup>29</sup> (see Rules regarding removal and return of documents when admitting and educating students in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations).

<sup>27</sup> However, see Chapter 4, Section 18, Paragraph 1, Items 2-3 of the Discrimination Act. For questions regarding the possibility of appealing a grade in accordance with the Discrimination Act, please contact the equality coordinator at Student Services.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example JO 2000/2001 p. 434 regarding the withdrawal of course credits.

<sup>29</sup> The rule is based on a 2016 UKÅ decision (reg. no. 31-00340-15), Complaint against Mid Sweden University regarding shortcomings relating to the saving of copy in connection with grade reassessment. This rule also applies if a new grade has been set after the student requested reassessment.

The examiner may change a passing grade to failing with support of Section 37 of the Administrative Procedure Act if the President or Disciplinary Committee have established that the student cheated in the examination (see also Regulations for disciplinary matters at Stockholm University in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations).

Great caution shall be observed when changing grades. Always contact the university lawyers when it comes to matters concerning the correction of grades to the detriment of the student or a change of a grade with support of Section 37 of the Administrative Procedure Act.

#### **2.4.2 Examination with the purpose of raising a passing grade (“plussning”)**

##### **Local regulations**

A student who has received a passing grade on an examination may not retake the examination to achieve a higher grade. A passing grade cannot be changed to a failing grade at the student’s request.

#### **2.4.3 Additional assignments for a passing grade after receiving the grade Fx**

##### **Local regulations**

Both F and Fx are **failing grades**, which means that the normal procedure after receiving the grade Fx is for the student to retake the examination at the next examination opportunity. However, a department may allow students who have received the grade Fx that has been reported in Ladok to complete an additional assignment in order to receive a passing grade - in particular when it comes to larger assignments, essays, degree projects, etc. The syllabus should specify if this procedure is permitted. This procedure requires that there is a well thought-out schedule for all examinations (see Section 2.4.4 Number of examination opportunities per course and Section 1.3 Information to be provided before and in conjunction with the start of the course).

However, if the syllabus allows students who receive the grade Fx (i.e. have almost fulfilled the criteria for a passing grade) to complete an additional assignment, the students may be given this opportunity instead of having to retake the examination. The examiner will decide what tasks the student shall carry out, and each additional assignment shall be based on the intended learning outcomes that the individual student has failed to achieve. The additional assignment shall be completed as soon as possible after the student has been notified of the results of the examination and before the next examination opportunity. The examiner will decide whether the new assignment is adequate and will report the new grade in Ladok. If the assignment is of insufficient quality, the grade Fx will be retained in Ladok. The same will apply if the student does not submit the assignment in time. The student will then be referred to the next examination opportunity. Any time limit for a course with independent project (degree project) shall be specified in the syllabus.

Note that a supplementation procedure does not affect the number of expended examination opportunities (see Section 2.2.3.2 Expended examination opportunities).

#### **2.4.4 Number of examination opportunities per course**

##### **Local regulations**

Normally, at least three examination opportunities shall be offered within a one-year period. If the course is not provided every academic year, at least one examination opportunity shall normally be offered during the year the course is not provided.

For written seated examinations (and take-home examinations whenever possible), the first additional examination opportunity shall normally take place at least two weeks after the students have been notified of the results from the first examination, and no later than six weeks thereafter. Note that these times need to be adapted for the final examination opportunity in the spring semester.

Regulations for examinations shall be specified in the syllabus. For example, this applies to any limitations on the number of examination opportunities, how often examinations are offered on the, transition arrangements, etc. (see Section 1.2 Courses and syllabi).

The date, time and form of examination for all examination opportunities shall be available at least one month before the start of the course (see Section 1.3 Information to be provided before and in conjunction with the start of the course).

### 2.4.5 Changing examiners

#### National regulations

A student who has taken two examinations in a course or course component without obtaining a pass grade is entitled to the nomination of another examiner, unless there are special reasons<sup>30</sup> to the contrary (Chapter 6, Section 22 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

#### Local regulations

The rules for changing examiners shall be specified in the syllabus (see Section 1.2 Courses and syllabi).

For courses that have limited the number of examination opportunities to two, students have the right to have a different examiner, and, wherever possible, another supervisor, appointed after the first examination, unless there are specific reasons for not doing so.

### 2.4.6 Official documents

#### National regulations

Chapter 2 of the Freedom of the Press Act regulates what constitutes an official document. An official document is generally public unless the law says otherwise (see the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act). Grades, examination questions and answers are official documents, as are course evaluations, course reports, guidelines and policies.

The disclosure of copies of official documents is subject to fees under the Regulation on Fees and Charges.

#### Practical guidelines

Grades are documented in Ladok and thus constitute finalised and official documents.

Examination **questions** are finalised and thus constitute official documents when they are distributed or otherwise made available to students who are going to be examined. The general rule is that examination questions become public as they are made official.

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<sup>30</sup> UKÄ decision of 24.08.2015, Reg. no. 31-516-14.

When it comes to certain forms of examination, such as written seated examinations, the examination questions are not public until no more students are permitted to participate in the examination.<sup>31</sup>

Examination **answers** have been finalised, and thus constitute official documents once the examiner concluded the examination and signed the grading decision (see Section 2.3.1.1 Documentation of the grading decisions).

In order to avoid suspicion of cheating, students who want to examine their written examinations before potentially requesting a reassessment should be given a copy of their own examination free of charge (see Section 2.4.1 Correction, reassessment and change of a grading decision).

(See rules pertaining to the removal of official documents in Governing Documents – Rules and Regulations.)

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<sup>31</sup> Questions are subject to confidentiality since giving students access to the questions before the examination would counteract the purpose of the examination. For this reason, the examination questions can temporarily be kept confidential pursuant to the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act (Chapter 17, Section 4). In some specific cases, examination questions can be kept confidential for a longer period of time (e.g. for so-called standardised tests). For more information about the possibility of keeping examination questions confidential, please contact the University's legal counsels.