



**Central Administration**  
Department of Education  
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Note: The Swedish version of information and regulations prevail over this translation which is written for informative purposes.

## **Guidelines for examination**

### **Introduction**

The intention of these guidelines is to improve the prerequisites for a lawful processing of questions regarding examination. The collective rules further report how different questions regarding examination shall be handled at Karolinska Institutet (KI).

In Chapter 6 Section 18 in the Higher Education Ordinance it is stated: *''Unless otherwise provided by the higher education institution, a grade shall be awarded on completion of a course. The higher education institution may determine which grading system is to be used. The grade shall be determined by a teacher specifically nominated by the higher education institution (the examiner). Ordinance (2014:371).*

In order to complete their assignments examiners must be aware of applicable national rules, administratively legal praxis, and statements by the ombudsperson of justice and more. It is the responsibility of KI to guarantee that this information is provided.

### **The concept of examination**

The concept of an examination is complex, but could be defined as an assessment of whether a student has reached the intended learning according to the set course syllabus.

### ***Examiner or examining teacher: what is the difference?***

An examiner means a teacher who makes grading decisions. The examiner is assigned by the head of the department for a designated period of time, for instance during one school year (according to The Board of Higher Education's work- and delegation of authority). The list of assigned examiners should be easily accessible to the teachers for instance through the institution administrator.

Each course shall only have one examiner. However, courses with degree projects make up an exception. Within these courses an examiner can be chosen for each separate degree project.

In addition to there being an examiner in a course, there can also be an examining teacher who can be responsible for the project through revising and correcting examination assignments or examining students orally/in writing on course parts or the full course.

However, the examining teacher is liable to present the basis for grade evaluation to the examiner after the examination, since it is the examiner who decides on the grade. The student should not receive their result until the examiner has decided on the grade. The examiner chooses the examining teacher.

### ***The Examiner's Responsibility***

The examiners responsibilities, among other things, include:

- to ensure that the course syllabus is followed and that the examination occasions at all course occasions during a school year are handled equally
- to ensure that an examination assignment is given appropriate formation and is completed by a set time prior to the examination
- to ensure that the guidelines and rules put forth by KI are being followed for instance for written examinations or suspicions of cheating
- to be in charge of coordinating examination as well as compiling results in cases where several teachers are involved with a course
- to ensure that the correction/assessment of examination assignments is consistent
- to ensure that a grade is set for a completed course (the examiner sets the grade)
- to make decisions regarding credit transfers in accordance with KI's credit transfer regulations
- to sign archived lists of completed courses in a proper and correct manner

### ***Student***

Within the context of these guidelines, a student is a person who has been admitted to and registered on a course.

A student shall at an examination be able to verify their identity with an approved ID as well as with signature verification. In a case where a student is not able to show ID at the time of examination, they must as soon as possible after the examination do so or verify their identity in a different manner. The examination can be corrected even if the student cannot verify their identity at the time of the examination. However, the student is not allowed to receive the examination result until their identity has been confirmed.

## **Examination Routines**

### ***Reporting of grades***

Grades are allowed to be reported at public announcement boards within KI. When

reporting separate students' grades, names but not personal identity numbers are allowed to be used. If it is decided that names shall not be publicized the announcement can for instance be organised by numbering the examination assignments and then use the same numbers when the result is announced. If the grade is posted on the course web, the student's name and personal identification number are *not allowed* to be listed (according to data protection regulation).

### ***Anonymous examinations***

The Board of Education has decided (2004:9 Section 13) to ordain that written examination assignments be coded. It can be of value for the student and teacher alike that the correction of written examination assignments occurs without the evaluating teacher knowing who the examinee is.

From a student-oriented perspective it can be argued that the objectivity of correcting written examinations is encouraged if the name and birthdate of the examinee is not revealed. However, the grading teacher does need to be aware of the student's name toward the end of the administration process. This assumes that there are functioning routines in place, for instance that the course administrator stores the information concerning student identification. Each programme committee determines to what extent anonymous examinations shall be used.

### ***Limits on the right to undergo examination***

A higher education institution can decide to limit the number of times a student can take an examination to pass. Decisions regarding limits shall be based on the requirement of effective resource use set out by the Swedish Higher Education Act and shall not be interpreted as a general limit.

If it is incentivized to limit the number of examination opportunities, the student shall, according to KI's local guidelines, have a right to at least six examination times per individual examination to receive a pass (these can follow the set examination times of the course). The student has a right to undergo Placement/Clinical training (hence called Placement) twice. A potential limit must be put forth in the course syllabus. If a student is at risk of not passing within the stipulated number of examination opportunities, support measures ought to be offered in order to avoid a case where the student is forced to discontinue their education.

It is important to be especially careful with specifying what counts as an examination opportunity in the case of a take-home examination. For instance, in a system where the student signs for their take-home examination and a signed for examination counts as an examination opportunity this must be adjusted in the course syllabus.

### ***The grade date***

The grade date is the date when the examination is carried out. Note that the result must be documented in Ladok within at most five working days following the grade decision.

### ***Change of examiner***

A student who has failed an examination twice is entitled to change examiner on request and if no significant reasons speak against the change. This means that the student at the next examination date has a right to be examined by a different teacher than the one involved at the previous examination.

At KI, a student who has undergone Placement without passing on one occasion has the right to have a new examiner appointed.

### ***Opportunity to make up for missed compulsory education parts***

It shall appear in the course syllabus that the department determines if and how a student can make up for missed compulsory education parts as well as if the compulsory parts have to be completed in order for the student to carry out with the other parts of the course.

Absence from a compulsory educational part may entail that the student is not able to make up for the missed part until the next time the course is offered.

### ***Examination of degree projects***

If several examiners are selected for a course in which degree projects are included the Head of Department is responsible for ensuring that all degree projects receive equal quality.

When it comes to examination of degree projects it is important to keep in mind the consequences of announcing grades at the time of degree project presentation/public discussion and examination. If the student is notified on this occasion that the degree project passed, the grade cannot be increased if the student reworks the project to the value of a higher grade (see “Renewed examination for higher grade”). The grade is never allowed to be conditioned – “*you will pass if you make these changes...*” If the degree project does not reach the requirements for ‘pass’ it should be failed. If the intention with the presentation/public discussion and examination is that the student shall receive feedback and from that be able to improve the degree project, the grade shall be reported only after the project has been handed in for examination.

If a delayed submission affects the possibility to receive a higher grade than a pass, then this shall be communicated through the course syllabus. This procedure shall only be used when the motivation has pedagogical grounds.

The number of examination opportunities can be limited by KI, which in that case shall be communicated in the course syllabus. A failed degree project shall therefore be registered in Ladok just like a failed grade on an examination.

### ***Grading of take-home examinations***

If a take-home examination shall be submitted on a certain date in order to be graded this shall be communicated in the course syllabus. Students who have not submitted their work on time are referred to the retake opportunity that according to KI guidelines shall be offered 2-6 weeks after the reporting of the first examination result.

If a delayed submission affects the possibility to receive a higher grade than a pass, then this shall be communicated through the course syllabus. This procedure shall only be used when the motivation has pedagogical grounds.

### ***Examination of placements (VFU)***

Placements are evaluated according to an assessment template, set by the programme committee. If a student is at risk of failing their Placement the student shall be informed orally and in writing, for instance at half-time evaluation. This shall occur within enough time for the student to be able to improve their knowledge. There shall be an action syllabus laying out how the student will be able to pass. If the examiner deems that the student shall fail before the Placement period is over, there needs to be support for this in the course syllabus. However, the student does have the right to complete their Placement for learning purposes.<sup>1</sup>

If a student starts a Placement and chooses, without legitimate reason, not to complete it, the student has used up one Placement opportunity. However, if a student misses parts or fails to complete their Placement and has legitimate reason (shall be able to be confirmed/supported) the student shall be granted an opportunity to complete their Placement at a later time.

### ***Examination in a different language than Swedish***

If a course is offered in Swedish the student is not entitled to demand to undergo the examinations in a different language. However, KI usually allows for students with a Scandinavian language as their mother tongue to use this for examinations given that the student can write in such a manner that the language is understandable to the examiner.

### ***If a student is inhibited from participating in examination***

A new examination opportunity shall be offered students who can't participate in an examination or be examined due to a mistake by the institution for higher education. For instance, this would apply to a student whose written examination has been lost or a student who has received false information about day or time for an examination if it can be demonstrated that the institution for higher education carries the responsibility for the occurrence. Such an examination opportunity shall be offered

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<sup>1</sup> Note that this does not apply if an examiner has cancelled a student's Placement due to the student demonstrating such serious inadequacies in knowledge, skills, or approach that patient safety or patient trust for the health care organisation is put at risk.

within a month from the time when the mistake was discovered unless something else has been decided on with the involved students.

### ***Reading list for re-examinations***

If major changes are made to the reading list for a course, the students should be able to participate in a re-examination building on the previous reading list. The student should be guaranteed at least three examination opportunities (including the original examination) during a time of one year after the change. It is important that the students are informed about the change when the decision is made.

### ***Re-examination for discontinued courses***

After a course has been discontinued or undergone major changes the students should be guaranteed at least three examination opportunities according to the previous system during a time of at least one year after the change. It is important that the students are informed about the change when the decision is made.

### ***Renewed examination for a higher grade***

To redo an examination assignment in order to raise a passed grade is not allowed at KI.

### ***Grading time***

Examination assignments shall be evaluated as quickly as possible. The time period for grading can only exceed 10 days in exceptional cases.

### ***Examination briefing***

An examination briefing with a present examiner gives the students an opportunity to immediately receive answers from the decision maker. A written example of solutions with the opportunity to contact the examiner for supplemental information is also a satisfactory solution. Dates and forms for an examination briefing shall be communicated at the latest at the time of the examination. The timing shall give a good margin for a potential re-examination. The examiner should notify the student of the reasons for the grading decision if the student asks for them.

### ***Time aspects for examination and re-examination***

Normally the dates for examination and re-examination are reported at the time of course start. The time for re-examination should be reported at the time of the original examination at latest. The time between the reporting of the grade decision and the re-examination opportunity should be between 2-6 weeks (semester time).

### ***Set-up of examination assignments***

Both examination format and grading scale shall be reported in the course syllabus. The examination criteria for different grade levels shall be clarified before the examination.

***Handing out the examination assignments***

If the evaluation has been made the student's written examination assignment is a public document when the grade has been set. The rule is that the student has the right to receive and keep their original examination assignment after it has been evaluated and graded.

Examination assignments that have not been collected are allowed to be destroyed two years after the grading day, assumed that the result was recorded in Ladok and that a copy of the examination form is kept. Essays or similar assignments written for courses on first cycle class G1 as well as projects of less than 7.5 ECTS credits for courses on first cycle, class G2 or advanced level can be destroyed five years after the grading date. This counts under the assumption that the grade has been recorded in Ladok. However, essays or similar assignments of 7.5 ECTS credits or more written for courses on first cycle class G2 or advanced level shall be kept.

Essays determined to have a value for the needs of research, within or outside of the own discipline, or determined to be of common interest shall also be kept. The examination form is not a public document until the examination assignment has been completed and at that point does not need to be handed out. However, afterwards a copy of the examination form shall be handed out to anyone who asks for it.

***Review and correction of grades***

In order for the examination to be considered legally secure it is of crucial importance that the examiners judge equal cases equally. First and foremost this requirement should be satisfied through reviewing the examination assignments as thoroughly as possible before the results are reported.

***Review of grades***

Grade decisions cannot be appealed. However, a student can demand to have their grade reviewed.

If an examiner finds that a decision on a grade is obviously incorrect owing to new circumstances or for some other reason, he or she shall change the decision if this can be done quickly and easily and if it does not mean lowering the grade. (The Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 24).

There is no temporal limit on the right for a student to demand a grade reassessment. However, it becomes increasingly difficult to make a new assessment the more time passes, for instance if the examination assignment has been handed out to the student or if it has been destroyed. A student who has received at least a passed grade cannot themselves decide to be failed.

***Correction of grades***

Obvious writing mistakes, miscalculation, or similar oversights may be corrected when examination assignments are marked. Great caution should be taken when it comes to changes that are a disadvantage for the student. That a decision is incorrect must be evident to the student and the student must always receive the opportunity to make a statement (Section 26 of the Administrative Procedure Act (1986:223) and The Higher Education Ordinance, Chapter 6, Section 23).

***Information the examiner shall give to students before examination***

- Date, time, and form for ordinary examination opportunities as well as rules and regulations applying for re-examination shall be reported to students at the start of the semester. If this is impossible in practice the information shall be communicated to the students at the latest at the time of the course start.
- If examination is done continuously throughout the course it must be communicated which seminars etc. that make up the base for grading as well as the consequences for grading due to absence – the department decides if and how absence can be made up for.
- How (and if possible when) grades will be reported, shall be communicated to students at latest at the time of the examination assignment handout.
- Deadline for submitting a take-home assignment/essay shall be communicated to students at the latest when the examination assignment is handed out. The student shall also be informed about how a late submission affects the assessment. If a late submission affects the evaluation this shall be stated in the course syllabus.