

THE RECTOR'S DECISION

18 February, 2011

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DIRECTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE BASIC DEGREES AND ARRANGING EXAMINATIONS

The Rector gives practical directions and guidelines for assessing the study attainments of the basic degrees and arranging examinations.

A common set of guidelines at university level are needed for the equal treatment of students and for the functionality of the university's operations. The Degree Ordinance (sections 11 -18) which is confirmed by the University Board and based on the Universities' Act as well as decrees regarding degrees contains directives regarding the completion and assessment of studies.

This common set of guidelines shall be applied from 1 March, 2011. The Faculties will give more detailed directives regarding studies and study attainments for example in connection with confirming the study plans. The Faculties are requested to verify that the possible directives of each unit are not contradictory to the guidelines given here.

Director of Academic Affairs Anja Britschgi has been in charge of preparing the matter. Experts representing the administration of all the disciplines have taken part in the preparation work.

Matti Jakobsson
Rector

ENCLOSURE

Directions for the assessment of study attainments and the arranging of examinations.

DISTRIBUTION

The Faculties: the Deans and Heads of Administration

University Services: Heads of Study Affairs, The Head of International Affairs, The Head of Student Services

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DIRECTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE BASIC DEGREES AND ARRANGING EXAMINATIONS

Sections 11 -18 of the Degree Ordinance of the University of Vaasa which is based on the Universities Act as well as the decrees by the Council of State and the ministries regarding degrees contains directives regarding the completion and assessment of studies.

The examination guidelines contain practical directions and common principles for arranging examinations and other types of study attainments.

1. Methods of completing studies

The requirements for the credit units can be found in the teaching plans. The teaching and the study attainments shall be arranged so that the students may progress in their studies in an appropriate order and complete their degree within the stipulated time.

A study period may be completed by an examination or it may be assessed on the basis of written work, an essay, a lecture journal, a learning journal, a portfolio presenting the learning outcome or in another way determined by the teaching plan.

In order to demonstrate the prerequisite level for certain studies, level tests and intermediate tests during a study period may be arranged.

2. Evaluation of study attainments

The teacher responsible for a study period is always mentioned in the teaching plan. In addition to compiling the examination questions for the teaching he/she has provided, the teacher also evaluates the learning outcome. The examination questions and the assignments which are part of the study attainments shall be designed so that they correspond to the aims, demand level and amount of work defined in the teaching plan.

Instead of evaluating a student's individual study attainment, the study attainments of a student group may be evaluated when this is appropriate considering the aim of a certain study period and the manner of arranging it.

If a study period is to be evaluated by an exam, a so-called period exam and two retakes shall be arranged after the teaching is completed. The exam dates are confirmed simultaneously with the teaching plan. The period exams and other forms of evaluation may be arranged also on the last lecture.

Exam retakes are arranged on the university's common exam days. Information and schedules regarding the common retakes can be seen in the WebOodi student information

system. Exam dates may be only postponed to take place on a later date, not set before the originally set date.

3. Arranging examinations

The University Services manages all the practical arrangements in relation to the common examinations, for example drafting examination lists, maintaining these, providing information, reserving examination rooms and informing the exam supervisors of the procedures.

Supervision of the exams

The teaching and research staff except the professors, supervises the common examinations. The supervision turns are agreed on together with the heads of the units.

Registering for exams

Registration for the common exams is done through the WebOodi student information system 45 days in advance at the earliest and 7 days in advance at the latest. Late exam registrations are rejected. Exam registrations may be canceled 3 days prior to the exam at the latest. For the exams arranged between 1, June and 31, August (so-called summer exams) registration can be expected to be done even earlier. The registration time is found in the newsletter regarding summer exams.

Should a student without a valid reason not participate in two consecutive exams for the same study period or abstain from writing the exam when it is held, he /she shall with the teacher responsible for the study period discuss possible additional studies or guidance required for completing the study period.

Maturity exam

The student and the thesis supervisor agree on the completion of the maturity exam. Registration for the maturity exam is done using an exam envelope which is submitted to the Academic Affairs Office at least 7 days prior to the examination.

Arrangements for common exams

The room information for the commonly held exams shall be available one day before the exam at the latest on the student Academic Affairs notice board in the Tervahovi building as well as on newsletters by the information desk and in electronic form in the student portal.

As a rule, retakes and exams which have not been arranged during the study period take place on Fridays and Saturdays as well as during exam weeks. Retakes are also arranged during the summer.

The duration of the commonly exams last is three hours. For a particular reason students may be granted additional time in order to complete the exam.

Exams usually begin at 12 o'clock on the notified day. Students have to be present 15 minutes after the notified time at the latest.

Only the usual writing equipment may be used during the exam unless the examiner separately has announced that other aids may be used such as a calculator, a dictionary, a copy of the law book. This is noted on the exam paper. If there is no notification of additional equipment on the exam paper, the supervisor of the exam keeps the equipment during the exam.

Food may be brought to the exam only for health reasons when this proven by a medical certificate.

The exam supervisor's instructions on the seating order in the exam room should be followed. Telephones, bags and other equivalent items should be left in the front part of the room or by the walls. Only the writing equipment and the permitted aids may be taken to the seating places. Students take the seats in the order that the exam supervisor allocates them.

Talking is not permitted after the time that the supervisor begins handing out the questions. Students may not look at the questions until the exam supervisor gives permission to do this and the actual exam time (3 h) is counted from this time onwards.

Students may leave the exam room at the earliest 45 minutes after the exam has begun, if the exam time has been announced to begin at 12.00, the earliest possible time to leave is 12.45.

When leaving the exam room, students must submit at least one answer sheet which has the student's name written on it. A student who abstains from writing the exam must submit an answer sheet on which he or she has written "I abstain".

When submitting the answer sheets students must show their student identification card or an identification card with a photograph. If a student is unable to prove his/her identity, the supervisor and the student shall agree on how the student shall confirm it after the exam. If the student neglects this verification in the manner agreed on, this may result in a disqualification of the exam.

Special arrangements

The university supports unimpeded studies in compliance with the law of equality. During the examinations it is possible to agree on special arrangements such as additional time because of dyslexia, a special room and required aids or to have the exam questions printed

with a larger font size. This should be discussed well in advance with the contact person responsible for unimpeded studies at the university who, if needed, contacts the faculty.

Written permission from the faculty's study counseling staff must be applied for in case a student wishes to take two exams during the same exam day.

Other types of discretionary special arrangements e.g. an extra exam or an exam which is to be completed elsewhere must be agreed upon together with the teacher responsible for the study period. The Academic Affairs Office should also be contacted if extra exams are to be arranged. Possible costs arising from arranging an extra exam elsewhere are paid by the student.

4. Language of the study attainment

The university's language of instruction and the awarded degrees is Finnish. (Universities Act 558/2009, 11 §). Certain study periods and their respective study attainments may also be taught and completed in another language as defined by the teaching plan (e.g. in foreign language studies, the language in question is used).

5. Assessment, registration and publishing of study attainments

The assessment of study attainments is based on the aims and expected learning outcomes defined in the teaching plan and it should measure the attainment of these aims.

Study attainments

Study attainments are assessed as passed or failed. Study attainments which are passed may in addition be graded on a scale from 1 to 5 and the grades are the following 5 =excellent, 4 = very good, 3 = good, 2 = satisfactory and 1 = sufficient.

An attained grade can be raised and in this case the better grade is valid. If a study period is assessed using other methods than an exam, students shall be notified whether it is possible to raise the grades.

Assessment of a thesis

A Bachelor's thesis is in all disciplines graded on the 1-5 scale as follows 5 =excellent, 4 = very good, 3 = good, 2 = satisfactory and 1 = sufficient. An assessed Bachelor's thesis is included in the grade that the student receives for his/her major.

The assessment for a Master's thesis is described in the teaching plans for the degrees.

The grade of a thesis which has been assessed or passed cannot be raised.

Registration and publication of the study attainments

Exam results and the assessments of study attainments and public and they must be announced as soon as possible, at least within 30 days of the submission or completion date. If the exam results cannot be announced within this time frame, this as well as the reasons for the delay must be announced within these 30 days. The announcement of results of exams arranged between 1, June and 30, August may however, deviate from this time frame.

The exam results announcement shall include the name of the study attainment/ period, its code, date and examiner as well as the names and student identification number of the students who have passed the exam, the assessment and the number of students who have failed the exam. A student's personal identification number cannot be shown when the assessment of study attainments is made public. Student identification numbers may not be announced together with the students' names. If the names or student id numbers are not published on the student notice board, a summary of the exam information is announced either on the notice board or in electronic form on the university's student services web pages.

Accredited study attainments which the student has passed at another domestic university or at a foreign university are visible in the student's transcript of the university record.

Study attainments are immediately registered in the student data system. Attainments may only be recorded for students who have registered themselves as attending for the semester and who have been granted the right to study in a particular degree program. The study attainments are registered as completed on the day of the exam.

The assessment criteria of the study attainments are public. Students have the right to be informed of the assessment grounds for their study attainments and have the possibility of viewing their assessed written study attainment. Students may review their graded submitted answers and request a copy of these at their own expense. Teachers may give students feedback after completing a study period for example by reviewing the exam questions and the model answers after the exam.

Exam answers or equivalent study attainments must not be given or shown to persons who are not part of the unit's staff and the answers may not be published without the student's permission.

Written or in any other way saved study attainments shall be kept at least six months after the results have been published.

Entire study attainments do not become old or invalid unless this is specified differently in the teaching plan or unless the Faculty Council decides otherwise.

Exercises done as part of the course work for a study period or partial study attainments are course-specific and are valid for a year as a rule unless the teacher responsible announces something else.

The supervisor of a Bachelor's thesis must give his/her statement within 30 days of when the work has been submitted for assessment. The supervisors of a Master's thesis must submit a statement which includes a suggested grade to the Dean for approval within 30 days after the thesis has been submitted in its final form.

Bachelor's and Master's theses are public immediately after they have gained approval.

6. Rectification of the assessment of study attainments

A student who is dissatisfied with the assessment of his/her Master's thesis or equivalent thesis may appeal to the Degree Committee of the University for rectification of the assessment within 14 days of having been notified of the assessment. A student who is dissatisfied with another type of study attainment may in written or oral form request rectification from the teacher who has assessed it. This request shall be presented within 14 days of the time when the student has had the opportunity to receive both the assessment and how the assessment criteria have been applied to his/her study attainment.

Section 13 of the Degree Ordinance of the University of Vaasa contains more detailed directives on the rectification of the assessment of study attainments.

7. Academic fraud

Cheating in exams

Cheating in exams include for example the following actions: bringing additional material to the examination room, looking at another student's answers or acquiring the answers in another way or having a connection outside the examination room. A student who provides another student with his/her own exam answers or information which helps the other student to answer the questions is also guilty of cheating. Presenting another person's text, image, graph, table, computer program or an equivalent piece of work or a part of it as one's own achievement is also classified as cheating.

If a student is suspected of cheating during an exam, the exam supervisor interrupts the writing of the exam, ascertains the identity of the student, confiscates all the material related to the exam and escorts the student out of the examination room. The supervisor notes the reason for the interruption on the student's answer sheet and in the supervision report. The exam answers of a student suspected of cheating may be failed. The study attainment may also be failed if cheating is discovered after the exam day.

Other types of study attainments may also be failed if it is revealed later on that a student is guilty of cheating. A decision of failing a study attainment must also be made within a month of the submission date. (The Degree Ordinance, section 19).

If a student is found guilty of cheating in his/her study attainment (an exam, written course work, etc.) the procedure is the following:

1. The teacher does not assess the answer or the piece work and notifies a representative of the faculty administration of this.
2. The teacher and the representative of the faculty administration arrange an opportunity for the student to be heard on the matter.
3. The teacher fails the exam if the alleged cheating is revealed to be factual.
4. The teacher may together with the representative of the faculty administration forward the matter in order for disciplinary measures to be taken. According to the Universities' Act and the University's Degree Ordinance the Rector decides on whether a warning shall be issued and the University Board decides on a suspension of the student for a fixed time period.

If the matter is forwarded to the rector, the student shall have the possibility to pursue his/her studies normally while the matter is being processed.

Plagiarism

If a student is suspected of cheating, i.e. plagiarizing in his/her thesis the procedure is the following:

1. The supervisor/examiner of the thesis or the person who raises the suspicions notifies the superior of the discipline.
2. The superior of the discipline starts an investigation during which the student will be heard. The superior of the discipline invites the teacher who reported the alleged plagiarism, the student and a representative of the administration to be present at the hearing.
3. If the results of this pre-investigation is that:
 - The suspicions are unfounded, the thesis is examined in a regular manner
 - The issue is recklessness, the student is asked to correct and review his/her work in accordance with the teacher's instructions
 - The student is suspected of intentional plagiarism, the matter is forwarded to the rector for disciplinary measures. The thesis is failed.

A consequence of cheating may be a disciplinary action as stipulated in the Universities Act, Section 45. According to the Universities Act a student who has committed an offence against the university's teaching or research or otherwise breached the university order may

be cautioned or suspended for maximum one year as a disciplinary measure depending on the seriousness of the offence. The decision in regard to caution is made by the rector of the university and in regard of suspension by the university board. Before the resolution of this matter the student must be verifiably noticed of the offence he or she is accused of and must be given an opportunity to be heard in the matter.

8. Coming into force

These rules come into force 1 March, 2011. The faculties may give more detailed information regarding the studies and the study attainments.