

# Completion and assessment of studies

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Sections 16–21 of the Degree Regulations of the University of Vaasa, based on the Universities Act and the decrees by the Council of State and the ministries regarding degrees, contain directives regarding the completion and assessment of studies.

These guidelines include further instructions and policies to the degree regulations concerning the completion and assessment of studies.

## **1 Methods of completing studies**

The requirements for the credit units can be found in the curriculum. The course unit details describe the methods to complete the study unit during the academic year. More detailed descriptions of the assessment of the study unit and possible retake opportunities or options to raise the grade are described in the syllabus. The education and completion of the studies shall be arranged so that students can proceed with their studies in a practical order and graduate within the decreed target time.

The achievement of a study unit's learning outcomes may be assessed based on a written work, an essay, a lecture journal, a learning journal, a portfolio presenting the learning outcomes or in another way determined in the curriculum. The achievement of a study unit's learning outcomes may also be assessed based on a lecture exam, a centralised exam, an electronic EXAM examination or a Moodle exam. The exam will be organised electronic whenever it is appropriate.

Level tests may be arranged to demonstrate the prerequisite level for certain studies. -Intermediate tests may be arranged during a study unit.

## **2 Assessment of a study attainment**

The assessment of learning and competence aims to give students feedback on the progress of their studies and the learning outcomes achieved. The assessment of a study attainment must be in line with the learning outcomes approved for the study unit in the curriculum.

Instead of assessing a student's individual study attainment, the study attainments of a student group may be assessed, where appropriate, considering the aim of a certain study period and the manner of arranging it. Assessment under the curriculum may be replaced by another form of assessment where a student is found with an obstacle to learning justifying it.

Study units to be completed by an exam or equivalent assessment method must be arranged three times with identical requirements.

Students have the right to take an exam (e.g. centralised exam, EXAM examination, Moodle exam or exam organised by a teacher) related to a specific study unit up to a maximum of three times, regardless of whether the previous exams were assessed passed or failed.

The dates of the exams and equivalent assessments shall be indicated in the course unit details or, at the latest, when the course unit begins. The students must have enough time to register and prepare for a retake or equivalent assessment between the different assessments. There must be at least 6

weeks between retakes and equivalent assessments. Examinations may only be postponed to a later date, not set before the originally set date.

Remotely invigilated exams are recommended only in exceptional cases, and an alternative method must always be arranged for the remotely invigilated exam (University of Vaasa guidelines for remotely invigilated exams 2020).

### **3 Arranging examinations**

#### **3.1 Centralised exams**

The University Services is responsible for all the practical arrangements, communication, examination room reservations and informing the invigilators of the procedures related to centralised examinations.

##### **3.1.1 Exam invigilators**

The teaching and research staff and other staff from Study and Education Services invigilate centralised examinations. Professors, assistant professors and teachers whose study units do not include centralised exams are not obliged to invigilate exams.

##### **3.1.2 Registering for centralised exams**

Registration for the centralised exams must take place at least five days before the exam using the provided registering system. Late exam registrations will not be accepted. If a student takes an exam without prior registration, the exam will not be assessed (Rector's decision of 2 December 2016).

Students must cancel their registration for the exam at least one day before the exam. If a student fails to attend an exam without prior cancellation, the exam will be recorded as failed.

Students who wish to take two exams during the same examination must notify the organiser of the examination in advance.

##### **3.1.3 Arrangements for centralised exams**

The exam rooms shall be announced at the latest one day before the exam in the student information channels and systems.

Exams usually begin at 14:00 on the notified day and last three hours. Exceptional starting times will be notified separately. For a particular reason, students may be granted additional time to complete the exam. Students must arrive at the exam room 15 minutes after the notified start time at the latest.

While in the exam room, any instructions by the exam invigilator shall be followed. When entering the exam room, mobile devices and bags are left at the location indicated by the exam invigilator. Only writing equipment, identification card, drinks bottle and any assistive devices permitted by the examiner may be taken to the seating places. Food may only be brought in for health reasons and must be notified to the examiner.

Students take the seats in the order allocated by the exam invigilator. After that, talking is prohibited. Students may not look at the questions until the exam invigilator gives permission to do so, after which the actual exam time (3 h) starts to run.

The exam invigilator has the right to remove any student who does not observe the instructions from the exam room.

Students may leave the exam room at the earliest 45 minutes after the exam has begun. For example, if the exam time has been announced to begin at 14:00, the earliest possible time to leave is 14:45. When leaving the exam room, students must submit at least one answer sheet with the student's name written on it.

When submitting the answer sheets, students must present a photo ID (identity card, passport or driver's licence) or electronic student card.

## **3.2 Electronic exams**

### **3.2.1 EXAM-examinations**

The electronic examination system, EXAM, is in use at the University of Vaasa. It allows the students to take exams prepared in advance by the teachers flexibly at various times. The examination takes place in a separate exam room with a computer and recording real-time video and audio monitoring. On-the-spot checks are also carried out in the room. The EXAM service is open to all University of Vaasa students who have a valid user account at the University.

The exams that can be taken as electronic EXAM examinations include general exams of the study units, maturity tests, literature exams and personal exams with restrictions on the utilities and materials allowed during the exam.

In case of an EXAM examination carried out as an exam visit on the premises of another higher education institute, the student shall observe the supervision principles and instructions valid at that institute.

#### **3.2.1.1 Registering for an EXAM examination**

In EXAM examinations, the teacher defines the exam period during which the exam can be taken. The exams will be available for registering in the EXAM system's booking calendar no earlier than 30 days before the start of the exam period. After booking, the student will receive an email with a booking confirmation. The registration can be cancelled or changed without any restrictions until the start of the exam.

#### **3.2.1.2 Arrangements for an EXAM examination**

Logging into the EXAM system requires a University user ID. Students must make sure that they have valid user IDs. Students from other higher education institutes register through the HAKA login system.

Only a photo ID (student ID, driver's licence, ID card or passport) and the locker key are allowed into the exam room. Bringing writing implements or other assistive or mobile devices into the exam room is forbidden. Food and/or medicines are allowed only for health reasons. In such cases, students must contact the body responsible for the electronic examinations in advance.

The exams start on the hour. You may arrive late for an exam, but being late reduces your overall exam time. Failure to attend and cancel an examination means that you have used one opportunity to take the exam, which is recorded as failed.

The teacher determines the duration of the exam in advance. The duration of an electronic exam can be 55, 115 or 175 minutes. You can submit the exam before the end of the exam time. The exam will end automatically when the exam time expires.

Talking in the exam room is prohibited. Students are not allowed to leave the exam room until they have submitted their exam answers. The examination rooms have a recording real-time camera monitoring. If the student has not followed the given instructions, the exam will be deemed failed.

### **3.2.1.3 Maturity test**

The maturity test shall be taken in the EXAM system. The maturity test can only be taken as a centralised exam under special circumstances.

Students must register for the maturity test by sending the instructor a registration form for the maturity test. The instructor creates the exam and checks the content before the language checking according to the maturity test process.

Instructions for the maturity test process for the students and teachers are available on the electronic examination help pages on the University's website.

### **3.2.2 Moodle exam**

A Moodle exam is taken in the Moodle online learning environment. The exam has specific opening and closing times. Typically a so-called home or book exam, the students take the Moodle exam at a place of their choice using their personal computers and with access to the internet and course literature, for example.

A Moodle exam may consist of multiple choice questions or essay questions. Moodle also allows the submission of various data files, like images or videos. The teacher can use the Turnitin software to check the students' written work.

Registration for a Moodle exam takes place in accordance with the teacher's instructions.

## **3.3 Other exams organised by a teacher**

Teachers can organise other exams related to teaching, including intermediate and level exams. If a student has registered for a course, they are usually not required to register separately for the exams organised by the teacher. However, if registration is required, the teacher shall provide the student with clear instructions.

The responsibility for organising and supervising other exams lies with the teacher, who shall also ensure that the exam is conducted properly and take action in case of any disturbance or cheating. The dates of the exams shall be indicated in the course details or, at the latest, at the beginning of the course. The teacher shall provide students with sufficient information and instructions on how to prepare for and take the exam and the allowed materials or assistive devices. Students must be provided with two opportunities to retake the exam. The teacher can organise these themselves, or they can be arranged as centralised exams.

## **3.4 Personal arrangements (special arrangements) for exams**

The university supports accessible studies in compliance with the Non-Discrimination Act. For example, it is possible to get additional exam time to complete the exam due to difficulties with reading and writing. A student may also be allowed access to a computer or other assistive device in the exam, a separate exam room or an alternative method of examination. Students who need personal exam arrangements should contact the study psychologist. If required, the study psychologist will provide a recommendation on personal arrangements. The student must also contact the organiser of the exam no later than 5 days before the exam and present them with the study psychologist's recommendation.

#### **4 Grading of study attainments**

The grading of study attainments is based on the learning outcomes defined in the curriculum, and it should measure the achievement of these outcomes.

Study attainments are assessed as passed or failed. A passed study attainment can also be marked according to a five-grade scale, where 5 = excellent, 4 = very good, 3 = good, 2 = satisfactory and 1 = sufficient.

The written and oral skills in the second national language are assessed with the grades 'good' – 'satisfactory' – 'fail'.

Bachelor's and Master's theses assessed as passed are graded using a five-grade scale. Licentiate theses are assessed with the grades 'pass' – 'fail'.

Dissertations are assessed with the grades 'pass with distinction' – 'pass' – 'fail'.

To be eligible for graduation with distinction, students must complete their Bachelor or Master of Science (Technology) degree with a minimum unrounded credit-weighted average of 4.00, receive a minimum grade of 5 for their thesis and complete the degree within the set normative time. The absences listed in the Universities Act (2009/558) or an exchange period of up to one year included in the studies are not counted towards the degree completion time. Students eligible for graduation with distinction must have completed at least 40 credits graded on a scale of 1–5 at the University of Vaasa.

#### **5 Raising a grade**

The grade of a passed study unit can be raised up to two times, after which the best grade shall remain valid.

Students who wish to raise the grade of a passed study unit completed by course work, essay or other written assignment must provide a significantly revised version of the original work or write a new one on a different topic. A failed written study attainment can only be rewritten a maximum of two times.

Partial study attainments cannot be raised unless otherwise stated in the curriculum. The assessment and raising of the grade of a study unit consisting of several partial study attainments are described in the syllabus.

It is not possible to raise the grade of a study unit included in a completed degree.

It is not possible to raise the grade of an approved thesis or dissertation included in a Bachelor's or Master's degree.

## **6 Grading of a study module**

Study modules are graded on a scale of 0–5 or their verbal equivalents or the grades 'pass' – 'fail'.

Study module grades are calculated as a weighted average of the numerical grades for the study units. Rounding is to the nearest whole number or the higher whole number if the average is exactly halfway between two whole numbers.

Study units without numerical grades are not considered when calculating the grade of a study module. If more than half of the study units in the study module have received the grade 'pass', the study module will be marked 'pass'.

According to the Government Decree on University Degrees (Sections 9 and 15), Bachelor's and Master's theses are considered study attainments equivalent to other study units. The grade awarded for the thesis is considered in the grading of the intermediate and advanced study modules in the same way as the grades for other study units.

## **7 Publishing and recording study attainments**

The results of the examinations and other study attainments are public. The results shall be made public and registered within 30 days of the exam date or the deadline by which the study attainment was due to be submitted for review. The supervisor of a Bachelor's thesis must give their statement and record the attainment within 30 days of the work being submitted for assessment. If the results are sent for recording, 7 days must be reserved for the recording process.

The exam date of a single electronic exam is the date on which the exam was completed. As a rule, the length of an electronic exam period shall not exceed 30 days, in which case the exam date shall be the end date of the period.

The supervisors of a Master's thesis must submit a statement including a suggested grade to the Dean for approval within 30 days after the thesis was submitted in its final form.

During the teaching break between the autumn and spring semesters, the results of examinations and other study attainments must be recorded within 45 days of the completion date. The results of examinations and other study attainments for study units arranged between 1 June and 31 July must be recorded by 31 August.

Studies completed at another domestic university or a foreign university, or another educational institute are recorded as credit transfer.

Attainments may only be recorded for students who have registered themselves as attending for the semester, and they are always recorded on the completion date.

The assessment criteria of the study attainments are public. Students have the right to know how the assessment criteria have been applied to their work and be allowed to examine the assessed study attainment.

Exam answers or equivalent study attainments must not be disclosed or shown to anyone outside the School's staff or published in any way without the student's permission.

Written or otherwise saved study attainments shall be retained at least six months after the results have been published. Bachelor's and master's theses, licentiate theses and dissertations shall be retained permanently.

Exercises or other partial study attainments completed as part of a study unit are study unit-specific and usually valid for a year unless otherwise stated in the curriculum.

A passed or failed study attainment cannot be deleted from the register.

## **8 Appealing against a grade**

Students may appeal to the Education Council in writing against the grading of a thesis within 14 days of the date the student was informed of the decision. Students who are dissatisfied with the grading of another type of study attainment may request rectification verbally or in writing to the reviewing teacher within 14 days of the time they have had access to the results of the assessment and assessment criteria applied in their case.

The Degree Regulations of the University of Vaasa contain more detailed provisions on rectifying the grading of study attainments.

## **9 Academic misconduct and disciplinary matters**

Cheating in exams and other academic misconduct matters are addressed in the University of Vaasa's procedures in cases of academic fraud. Suspected cheating in exams and academic misconduct shall be dealt with in accordance with the procedures. A study attainment can be deemed failed if the student is subsequently found guilty of cheating. Regulations on discipline matters are provided in the degree regulations.

## **10 Transitional provisions and entry into force**

These guidelines repeal the *Directions for assessment of the basic degrees and arranging examinations* guidelines upon entering into force on 1 August 2022, with the exception of the Chapter **Grading of a study module** with Sections 2 and 4 to enter into force on 1 August 2023.