

GUIDELINES FOR GRADING PROCESS

Approved by the University College Director 24.04.2019 pursuant to Regulations for admissions, studies and examinations at Volda University College (Forskrift om opptak, studium og eksamen ved Høgskulen i Volda) 01.01.2015

1. Background

Act of 1 April 2005 no.15 relating to Universities and University Colleges (UH-lova) § 3-9, with amendments of 1 July 2018:

“Universities and university colleges shall ensure that the candidates’ knowledge and skills are tested and assessed in an impartial and academically reassuring manner. The assessment shall also ensure the academic level of the course of study in question. There shall be external evaluation of the assessment or the assessment routines”.

and

“Written guidelines shall be drawn up for all examinations”.

2. Common to the grading process etc

The principle of anonymity shall apply to the grading of all written examinations/assessments and elsewhere where this is feasible, as long as the candidate him/herself has not revealed their identity.

At exams with anonymous grading, the name of the examiner can be revealed only after the announcement of the grades.

Examiners are bound by confidentiality in accordance with the *Public Administration Act § 13*.

In the case of each examiner involved in grading the students’ performances, the rule applies that he/she must not be disqualified in relation to any of the exam candidates.

The grading instructions are to be made available to the candidates after the grades have been set.

3. Requirement of two examiners in the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges (UH-lova)

There shall be at least two examiners, one of whom shall be external, in the following instances:

- “in the assessment of the candidates’ independent work for higher degrees” such as a master’s degree and the like.
- in the reassessment after an appeal against the original grade awarded, AUUC §§ 5-2 and 5-3, and § 3-9, subsection 5.
- where the grade awarded after a reassessment shows a discrepancy of two or more grades from the regular assessment, the normal procedure is that the internal examiner from the regular grading committee and the external examiner from the reassessment committee make a joint assessment, and agree on a final grade. Note that in the case of a new assessment, all available documentation must be accessible.
- in the reassessment after an appeal on the basis of formal errors at the exam, § 3-9, subsection 5, cf § 5-2 subsection 2.

Courses that employ external examiners every year must appoint (a) new grading committee(s) at least once every third year. This also means that examiners on all courses with a similar content, but with different codes, must be replaced.

4. Requirements regarding qualifications of external examiners

External examiners cannot have been employed by Volda University College or have taught on courses at the university college during the last two years. Guest lectures etc of a very limited scope will not prevent an external person from being an examiner.

External examiners must possess academic qualifications that will allow appointment as a minimum of Assistant Professor (høgskulelektor/universitetslektor/amanuensis) at universities, university colleges or other research institutions, or by way of relevant work experience be specially qualified to act as an examiner in a particular subject area.

External examiners who are to assess a master's thesis must possess academic qualifications at least at the level of secondary education teacher with a master's degree (lektor), or have documented qualifications at a similar level. One of the examiners must have published a major research thesis.

In the case of assessment at doctoral degree level, the external examiner must possess qualifications at a similar level.

5. Contractual terms and conditions

Examiners must acquaint themselves with the current course plan or programme description, the grading instructions for the course in question and the current Regulations for admissions, studies and examinations at Volda University College.

The examiner's contract must stipulate the responsibilities of the external examiner during the grading process. In other words, the contract must contain the course code, course name, form of assessment and date of the exam. Furthermore, it must be agreed whether the individual concerned is also to be examiner at the ensuing re-sit examination, and possibly at the reassessment or assessment in accordance with AUUC §§ 5-3, (6). The contract must specify whether the examiner is to be paid the basic fee/ remuneration, information regarding the hourly rate per answer paper, as well as the planned number of papers to be assessed.

In the letter accompanying the contract the following points must be clarified:

- whether the external examiner is to evaluate the assessment procedure for the course in question
- whether the external examiner is to evaluate and approve the question papers for the exam(s) in question
- whether the external examiner is to participate in the drafting of the grading instructions
- whether the external examiner is to participate in establishing basic values for the result of the multiple choice test(s) before the publication of the grades
- who is to be responsible for explaining the grading if requested

The remuneration to which the external examiner is entitled is to be registered in Volda University College's digital salary system.

6. Re-sit and rescheduled examinations

An external examiner who accepts a grading assignment shall normally also be the examiner at any eventual rescheduled exam on the same course in the following semester. If there have been several external examiners, an agreement can be reached with just one of these to do the grading at the rescheduled exam.

7. Evaluation of the grading routines

In the case of an external assessment the external examiner shall draft a report to be sent to the person responsible for the course concerned after the grading process has been completed.

The report must cover at least the following points:

- comments regarding the criteria used in selecting the exam papers to be assessed, if he/she did not assess all the candidates' papers.
- comments regarding the grading instructions.
- an eventual evaluation of the assessment routines on the course.
- eventual comments on the question paper(s) at the exam(s).

8. On the practical implementation of the grading process

The examiners are obliged to study the information they receive from Volda University College in advance of the exam.

Volda University College uses electronic grading. Examiners are granted access to the electronic answer document on Inspira Assessment after the exam has been completed. The exam paper will not be printed out.

The assessors are responsible for grading the exam papers within 15 working days of the completion of the exam. Cf Regulations regarding extended grading deadline (in force from 01.01.2019) and Interim regulations regarding extended grading deadline on Norwegian courses at basic level.

If parts of the exam answer are handed in on rough paper, the examiners shall assess and grade them.

In exams on paper, original answer papers must be returned to the Academic Affairs Department. External assessors must retain copies of the answer papers until the deadline for appeals has expired, and may then destroy these, if no other agreement has been reached with the person responsible for the exam.

The grading results must be registered by the examiners on Inspira Assessment, at the latest by 12 noon on the day the grading deadline expires.

In the grading of master's theses, the person who has been supervisor shall not normally be a member of the grading committee. If the supervisor is a member, the committee should consist of at least three assessors, one of whom should be external.

Internal examiners are responsible for ensuring that an explanation of the grade is given when a candidate requests this. The explanation must normally be given within two weeks of the candidate making the request. The explanation shall outline the general principles on which the assessment is based and the reasons for the assessment of the particular candidate's performance.

On courses with an oral exam that is carried out via a video conference system, Skype, Lync, Adobe Connect or the like, the person with course responsibility is responsible for arranging the exam. That means that the internal examiner/course convenor is responsible for making sure that the technical facilities and room booking are in order well in advance of the start of the exam, and that fellow examiner(s) are familiar with and have access to similar technical equipment.

9. In the case of disagreement about the assessment/grade

If disagreement about determining the grade makes it impossible to agree on a joint assessment, the examiners must return the assessment work to the Academic Affairs Administration with a report

stating on which points there is disagreement. The assessment assignment will then be sent to a new grading committee with the aim of reaching a decision at the earliest possible opportunity.