

Grading Systems in First- and Second-Cycle Courses¹

These regulations were finalised by the Faculty Board on December 7th 2022 and take effect on the same day.

Dnr HS 2023/106

¹ This is a translation of the Swedish version (Föreskrifter för betygssystem inom utbildning på grundnivå och avancerad nivå vid Högskolan i Skövde, registration number HS 2022/855). In the event of any discrepancy, the Swedish version of this document shall prevail.

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1 Directions

Higher education institutions in Sweden decide what grading system to use themselves, excluding certain parts of teacher education. The following regulation can be found in the Higher Education Ordinance:

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.

Successful completion of courses in programmes leading to the award of a qualification as a pre-school teacher, primary teacher, secondary or upper-secondary school teacher, or vocational teacher that either entirely or to some extent include placement must, however, always be graded at more than one level. This only applies if the placement element in the course comprises more than three higher education credits.

The grade shall be determined by a teacher specifically nominated by the higher education institution (the examiner).

The Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF) has published recommendations for the reporting of grades at Swedish higher education institutions pursuant to ECTS (Rek 2009:4). The recommendation means that a higher education institution should compile a summary of how passing grades per grade within a grading system have been divided since the establishment of the course, and that the division should be clear from transcripts and certificates, see part 4 below.

Local directions for grading systems can be found in these regulations. Related guidelines can be found in “Guidelines for Examinations in First- and Second-Cycle Courses” [Riktlinjer för examination inom utbildning på grundnivå och avancerad nivå], “Description of Assignment for Examiner in First- and Second-Cycle Courses” [Uppdragsbeskrivning för examiner inom utbildning på grundnivå och avancerad nivå], and in “Guidelines for the Design of Course Syllabuses” [Riktlinjer för utformning av kursplan]. Grading systems and examinations in third-cycle studies are regulated in “Guidelines for Examinations in Third-Cycle Studies at the University of Skövde” [Riktlinjer för examination inom utbildning på forskarnivå].

On an international level, there are guidelines concerning grading criteria, in Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The quality reviews of higher education courses and study programmes performed by the Swedish Higher Education Authority are based on the Higher Education Act, the Higher Education Ordinance, and ESG.

At the University of Skövde (the University), grades are only given if the student has participated in the examination, and there is a performance to assess. What counts as participation and performance is outlined in “Guidelines for Examinations in First- and Second-Cycle Courses at the University of Skövde”.

2 Criterion-Referenced Grading and Grading Criteria

The Higher Education Act states what should characterise first-, second- and third-cycle education. The descriptions are of a general character, and state which abilities courses and study programmes in each cycle should develop in the students. The descriptions of the cycles are supplemented by the qualification descriptors in the Higher Education Ordinance, in which objectives for the different existing qualifications, both general and professional, are found. The objectives describe what students should know following completion of the course or study programme, with a separation into three forms of knowledge: Knowledge and understanding, Competence and skills, and Judgement and approach. The national objectives are then operationalised on a local level in the higher education institutions’ programme syllabuses and course syllabuses.

The objective-managed higher education of Sweden requires criterion-referenced grading. The system is based on there being clear objectives, examinations that test all objectives, and criteria that describe the requirements for the different grades within a grading system.

At the University of Skövde, there shall be grade criteria developed for all examination components of all courses. The grade criteria shall be available to students at the beginning of a course, as part of the course’s study instructions. The course coordinator shall, in an appropriate manner, actively communicate the grading criteria to the students.

3 Grading Scales

The University of Skövde uses the following grading scales:

- two-grade scale: G (Pass) or U (Fail)
- three-grade scale: VG (Pass with distinction), G (Pass) or U (Fail)
- six-grade scale: A (Excellent), B (Very good), C (Good), D (Satisfactory), E (Sufficient) and F (Fail)

All of these grading scales can be used in courses that are aimed at a Swedish as well as an international demographic.

How grading scales are used, related to subjects and study programmes, must be carefully considered. The grades given according to the grading scale used in the course plan must not be translated or reinterpreted into other grading scales.

In courses using a three- or six-grade scale, the two-grade scale can be used for certain summative assessment components. No more than two grading scales may be used in the same course, however.

4 ECTS Grading Table

In accordance with SUHF's recommendations (see part 1), the University shall use the ECTS Grading Table. This means that the division of passing grades per grade within a grading system since the establishment of the course shall be clear from transcripts and certificates. They shall only be presented, however, if details can be collected for a period of at least two years. Support for the collation is given by national student registry Ladok.

5 Taking Effect

These regulations take effect on 07-12-2022, and replace regulations from 27-03-2018 (registration number 2018/216). The implementation of the new regulations will take place successively, when course syllabuses are revised, and new course syllabuses are finalised.