

Assessment of studies

Guideline

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Education Development Services

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Keywords

Assessment, competence assessment, grade, approved, failed, public access to grades, grade improvement, request for reassessment, shared competences

1 Introduction

This guideline defines the unified principles for assessing the competence achieved by a student in their studies at Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK).

The guideline describes the assessment of studies, improvement of grades and the reassessment procedure. A course is the basic unit used in the assessment of studies, grade improvement and reassessment.

Recognition and accreditation of prior learning is described in the RPL guideline.

Demonstration-based competence is assessed in accordance with this guideline.

This guideline applies to bachelor's and master's degrees and open studies at HAMK. The guideline does not apply to the assessment of studies at the HAMK School of Professional Teacher Education.

2 Key concepts

EQF – European Qualifications Framework

The European Qualifications Framework is the European framework of qualifications and other competence. Each country joining the European education area prepares its own national framework of qualifications and competence based on the EQF. Read more:

<https://europa.eu/europass/en/europass-tools/european-qualifications-framework>

FiNQF – Finnish National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules

The Finnish national framework for qualifications and competence, which is based on the EQF. FiNQF describes the levels of qualifications and other competence in Finland. Bachelor's degree is at level 6 and master's degree at level 7. Provisions on the Finnish National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules are contained in the act 93/2017 and the Government decree 120/2017. Read more:
<https://www.oph.fi/en/education-and-qualifications/qualifications-frameworks>

Arene's recommendation on the shared competences of universities of applied sciences and their application

In the universities of applied sciences, the competence possessed by degree holders is defined on the basis of degree programmes and as shared competences. Competences mean extensive combinations of an individual's skills, knowledge and attitudes. Degree programme-specific competences serve as the basis for a student's professional expertise. Shared competences are competence areas shared by degree programmes that provide the basis for an individual's career, cooperation and the growth of their expertise.

The Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (Arene) has prepared a recommendation for applying the shared competences. Its aim is to promote a common view on how the competence level descriptions presented in the Finnish National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules (FiNQF) are applied in curriculum work, the preparation of competence profiles and competence assessment. Read more:
<https://arene.fi/julkaisut/suositus-ammattikorkeakoulujen-yhteisista-kompetensseista-ja-niiden-soveltamisesta-2022/>

Module

The curricula consist of modules and, as a rule, each module comprises 15 credits. Since 2021, the modules contained in the curricula have been defined as study entities consisting of courses. In the older curricula (2014–2020), modules were considered as courses and they could be implemented on the basis of the assessable parts of the implementation process.

Course

A course is the basic unit used student administration and planning. Implementations and implementation plans are prepared for courses. Students enrol on course implementations and they are assessed for each course.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are prepared for the courses contained in a module. The learning outcomes describe in an easy-to-understand manner what the students are expected to master at the end of a module and a course so that they can receive the grade 'approved'. The learning outcomes must support the achievement of the FINQF level, they must be achievable for the student and the achievement of the outcomes must be assessable.

Object of assessment

The objects of assessment are based on the learning outcomes. The assessment covers the knowledge, skills and working methods of the student described in the learning outcomes.

Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria describe how well and at which level the student achieves the learning outcomes. As a rule, the assessment criteria are defined at levels 1–2, 3 and 4–5. In exceptional cases, the assessment criteria are only specified at the level 'approved' (HYV). The assessment criteria are entered in the curriculum under each course.

Assessment methods

The assessment methods describe how the persons carrying out the assessments collect information on a student's competence. The assessment methods are described in the implementation plan. In addition to the teacher, the assessment process may also involve the student concerned, other students, and labour market partners.

Study register

The study register is an electronic data repository in which data on the student's studies and study history is kept. At HAMK, the student administration uses the basic register, which is part of the Peppi ecosystem. The studies completed by the student and their assessments can be viewed in the study register. Students can view the details of their own studies on the Pakki desktop or in the Tuudo mobile application.

3 Grounds for assessment

HAMK uses a competence-based curriculum and assessment approach and phenomenon-based learning based on them. The competence-based approach is based on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The learning outcomes are defined on the basis of the legislation on universities of applied sciences and the Finnish National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules (FiNQF). When the learning outcomes are defined, consideration is also given to the requirements at the workplace and degree-related foresight information.

The curriculum describes the learning outcomes for the degree, which are given concrete shape in the learning outcomes for the modules and courses. The student's competence is assessed in theoretical and practical knowledge and skills. In addition, the development of expertise and the strengthening of generic skills are also assessed and supported. In learning, the emphasis is on learner-centred approach, a communal approach and a research-oriented approach to recognising current and future phenomena at the workplace.

At HAMK, the assessment of studies is based on the following principles:

- Assess competence, not performance
- The assessment is based on the learning outcomes and assessment criteria stated in the curriculum.
- The level of degree (FiNQF 6 or 7) is taken into account in the assessment.
- In the assessment, consideration is given to the development of the shared competences specified in the Arene recommendation (learning to learn, ethics, internationality and multiculturalism, operating at the workplace,

sustainable development and proactive development) in accordance with degree-level objectives.

- Using the assessment criteria listed in the curriculum, teachers plan the competence assessment as part of the implementation and enter it in the implementation plans.
- The objects of assessment and the assessment methods are selected so that they can be used to produce a competence assessment based on the assessment criteria
- The assessment is carried out in a multi-form manner, reflecting the learning outcomes and based on a variety of different assessment methods.
- The student is graded according to their competence (meeting of the learning outcomes).
- As a rule, competence is assessed on the scale 5–HYL, and in exceptional cases the grading HYV–HYL is used (HYV = approved; HYL = failed).
- The modules of the students who started before autumn 2021 may have separately assessable competences, from the perspective of the world of work, further studies or qualifications, for example. These can be assessed on the scale HYV–HYL or 5–HYL. If necessary, the assessable competences are defined for the implementation plan as parts of the implementation for all students in the implementation process. The Head of Degree Programme is responsible for the implementation process as a whole.
- In the 2021 curricula, the modules are defined as study entities. In such cases, no separate grade is given for the module and only the courses included in the module are assessed.

4 Grading, entry of the grade in the study register and public access to grades

All studies completed by the student are assessed. The teachers give each student an individual grade even if the studies were carried out as group or project assignments. Each student has the right to know how the assessment criteria are applied in the assessment of their competence.

The grades must be given no later than one calendar month after the implementation completion date indicated in the implementation plan. The grades are entered in the study register. More detailed teacher's instructions on the technical entries of the course assessments and the entry of any observations in the study register intended for the student can be found in HAMK Intra (study assessment guidelines).

The material describing the assessment and used as a basis for grading saved as written documents or in any other manner must be retained by the degree programmes for one (1) year from the implementation completion date. The material must be returned and stored in HAMK's Learn environment. If the student fails to return the material to the Learn environment, the responsibility for keeping the material is transferred to the student.

The student must complete the studies concerned according to the timetable specified in the implementation plan. A student failing to do this must agree on the completion of the studies in question with the teacher(s).

Instructions for situations where students have prior learning that they wish to have recognised or demonstrate as part of their degree are contained in the RPL guideline.

The assessment of the module is carried out jointly by the teachers of the module. The teachers are responsible for the assessment and enter the assessments in the study register in Peppi on the teacher's desktop. The assessment records compiled during the module are produced in the Learn environment. Since 2021, in the curricula in which modules are considered as study entities, the modules are not separately graded as only the courses included in the modules are assessed.

In the modules introduced in 2020 or earlier, in which the module is considered a course, the teacher in charge of the module is responsible for the module assessment. This teacher enters the module grade and credits in the study register after all parts of the module have been approved. The information must be entered in the register by the end of the one-month assessment period. Students that have failed coursework in the module must agree on completing the work with the module teachers.

As a rule, the assessments are entered in Peppi on the date on which the teacher gives the assessment. The periods between semesters are an exception: The coursework of the previous calendar year assessed in January is dated 31 December. The coursework of the previous academic year assessed in August is dated 31 July. Entering the coursework in the correct calendar year is relevant to the accuracy of the statistics and entering it in the correct academic year is relevant to the monitoring of study progress carried out by Kela.

Legislation on the openness of government activities and data protection defines access to the grades. All numerical grades are publicly available. Written verbal assessments of studies completed by students may not be made publicly accessible or distributed generally in the information network. Students can view their own grades in the Pakki system.

5 Assessment scales

HAMK has two assessment scales: numerical 5–HYL (failed) and HYV–HYL (approved–failed). All students in the same degree programme are assessed using the same scale. Path studies of upper secondary level students are assessed on the scale 5–HYL.

The students are familiarised with the assessment of their studies (scale, criteria and methods) at the start of the implementation.

5.1 Scale 5–HYL

As a rule, studies are assessed using the numerical scale 5–HYL.

The meaning of the grades on the scale 5–HYL is as follows:

- 5 – excellent
- 4–3 – good
- 2–1 – satisfactory
- HYL – failed

In the selection of the assessment scale, it is important to take into account the significance of the assessment from the perspective of further studies, employment prospects or official regulations. The reason for the fail is entered in the study register in connection with the assessment.

5.2 Scale HYV–HYL

In specific cases, the assessment is carried out using the scale HYV–HYL.

The meaning of the grades on the scale HYV–HYL is as follows:

- HYV – approved
- HYL – failed

The reason for the fail is entered in the study register in connection with the assessment.

The scale HYV–HYL can be used in the following cases:

- Work placement as part of degree studies. Further instructions on the assessment of work placement can be found in the work placement guideline.
- In the assessment of other courses (if using a numerical scale is not practicable).

6 Thesis assessment

The Wihi plugin of the Peppi system is used to manage the thesis process. In Wihi, thesis assessments are generated on the basis of the thesis stages and they are automatically transferred to completed courses in Peppi. Final thesis assessment is carried out in Wihi. The thesis is given numerical assessments for assessment objects in accordance with the thesis type, and these are used as a basis for the final thesis grade. The thesis supervisor and examiners give their own assessments. At the end of the process, the thesis supervisor confirms the grade and finalises the thesis assessment statement.

The completed thesis is assessed on the scale 5–HYL. Further instructions for thesis assessment can be found in the thesis guide.

7 Assessment of the language skills required of public sector employees

Both written and oral language skills of public sector employees are assessed on the scale good/satisfactory (section 7 of the decree 1129/2014; and section 6 of the act 424/2003).

8 Replacing a failed grade and improving an approved grade

Replacing a failed grade and improving an approved grade are based on the learning outcomes. The implementation plan is used as the basis for the competence assessment. The teacher determines how a failed grade can be replaced or an approved grade improved.

8.1 Replacing a failed grade

Replacing a failed grade may concern the whole course or the failed part of the course. The student is entitled to two retakes to replace a failed grade. The retake should take place as soon as possible after the course so that the studies can proceed without problems.

The retake must take place within one year of the completion of the course. If the attempts to replace the failed grade are unsuccessful, the student must discuss the completion of the course with the teacher and, if necessary, retake the whole course.

After the student has successfully replaced a failed grade, the grade can no longer be improved.

8.2 Improving approved grades

Improvement of an approved grade concerns the whole course. The student is entitled to one retake to improve an approved grade and the retake must take place within one year of the completion of the course. The teacher must assess the improvement within one (1) month of the retake. If the parts of the implementation have been assessed on the scale 5–HYL, the student is entitled to one retake to improve them. A failed retake does not lower the existing grade.

9 Reassessment

A student may request reassessment of the grade of a bachelor's degree, master's degree or open studies at HAMK.

Students who are not satisfied with their grades may request reassessment from the teacher in question. The student must make the reassessment request orally or in writing within 14 days of receiving notification of the grade. The student is considered to have received notification of the grade one day after its entry in the study register.

Reassessment requests are processed without delay. Students who are not satisfied with the response to their request may appeal to the HAMK Examination Board. The appeal must be in writing and it must be submitted within 14 days of the day on which the student received notification of the response to the reassessment request.

For more detailed instructions on submitting an appeal to the Examination Board, see HAMK's degree regulations.

10 Dishonesty and misconduct in studies

Dishonesty in studies demonstrated by a student,

such as fraud or plagiarism, will always result in failure of the exam, assignment, thesis or other coursework concerned as well as disciplinary hearings where decisions on appropriate disciplinary action against the student are taken. The disciplinary measures are specified in HAMK's degree regulations.

11 Supplementary instructions and degree regulations

- Degree regulations (HAMK Intra – Ohjaan ja opetan and HAMK website)
- Study assessment guidelines for students (HAMK website)
- Study assessment guidelines (HAMK Intra – Ohjaan ja opetan)
- RPL guidelines (HAMK Intra – Ohjaan ja opetan)

- Work placement guidelines (HAMK Intra – Ohjaan ja opetan)
- Thesis guidelines (HAMK Intra – Ohjaan ja opetan)
- Arene's recommendation on the shared competences of universities of applied sciences and their application (<https://arene.fi/julkaisut/suositus-ammattikorkeakoulujen-yhteisista-kompetensseista-ja-niiden-soveltamisesta-2022/>)