

Assessment of Studies

Guideline

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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-jarjestyksen-soveltamisesta-2022/>

Module

The curricula consist of modules and, as a rule, each module comprises 15 credits.

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 teacher gives an assessment for the implementation of an individual course. Modules are not 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, except during holiday periods (December and May–August). 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 teacher is not obligated to assess any tasks other than those submitted through the Learn environment.

The student must complete the studies concerned according to the timetable specified in the implementation plan. If the student does not follow this procedure, they must contact the teacher(s) before the course ends and negotiate a plan to complete the course on an alternative schedule.

Studies completed by the student at a domestic or foreign higher education institution may be recognized as part of their degree. Recognition can be done either by substitution or inclusion. When a study module is substituted, the original grade from the previous studies is transferred. For included studies, the original grade may be used if the study is accepted with the same details (name and scope) as the original completion. In other cases, the grade approved (HYV) is given.

In a demonstration of skills, the student's skills are compared to the learning outcomes defined in the curriculum. Demonstrations are assessed according to the assessment criteria of the study module. A grade is given for the study module completed through a demonstration, just like for other completions.

Teachers are responsible for the assessment and record the grades in the study register (Peppi) via the teacher's desktop. During a module, assessment records are maintained in the Learn environment. For work placements, assessment records are maintained according to the work placement guidelines of each degree programme.

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 on the student's desktop (Pakki) or in the Tuudo mobile application.

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.

Pathway studies completed by secondary education students are assessed using a numerical scale (5–HYL). If a pathway study receives an approved (HYV) grade, it corresponds to grade 3 in secondary education.

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 system is used to manage the thesis process. As the thesis progresses, the supervising teacher approves the stages of the thesis in Wihi. The completed stages are automatically transferred from Wihi to the student's academic records in Peppi. Once the thesis is completed, numerical assessments are given separately for each assessment criterion, which vary depending on the type of thesis. The thesis examiner(s) and the communication teacher provide their own numerical assessments in Wihi, and the supervising teacher, acting as the responsible assessor, approves the final numerical assessments and writes the assessment statement. The numerical grade is transferred from Wihi to Peppi, and the student can view the assessment via the student desktop (Pakki) and in the Tuudo mobile application.

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).

If the language of school education of a student pursuing a bachelor's degree is Finnish, the student shall complete:

- Swedish language studies (5 ECTS credits)
- Oral proficiency in Swedish, assessed on a scale: Satisfactory (2) / Good (4)
- Written proficiency in Swedish, assessed on a scale: Satisfactory (2) / Good (4)

If the language of school education of a student pursuing a bachelor's degree is Swedish, the student shall complete a demonstration of oral and written proficiency in Finnish, based on which the following will be recorded:

- Finnish language studies (5 ECTS credits), assessed on a HYV/HYL scale
- Oral proficiency in Finnish, assessed on a scale: Satisfactory (2) / Good (4)

- Written proficiency in Finnish, assessed on a scale: Satisfactory (2) / Good (4)

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.

If a student registers for a course but does not participate, the teacher will reject the registration and record the reason for the rejection.

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 six months 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 six months of the completion of the course. The teacher must assess the improvement within one (1) month of the retake. 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

If a student acts dishonestly in course completions, such as committing fraud (AI use in breach of guidelines is also interpreted as fraud) or plagiarism (copying content produced by another person and presenting it as their own output), this always leads to a fail in the exam, exercise, thesis or other completed course as well as a disciplinary procedure in which a decision on penalising the student is made. The student is also denied the possibility of resitting the exam, and they must retake the entire course the next time it is offered. If a student cheats in an exam, the supervisor will remove them from the room, and the student will be failed in the exam.

11 Supplementary instructions and degree regulations

- Degree regulations (HAMK Intra – Ohjaan ja opetan and HAMK website)

- <https://hameenamk.sharepoint.com/sites/ohjaan-ja-opetan/SitePages/en/tutkintosaanto.aspx>
- Study assessment guidelines (HAMK Intra – Ohjaan ja opetan)
 - <https://hameenamk.sharepoint.com/sites/ohjaan-ja-opetan/SitePages/en/opintojen-arviointi-ohjeet.aspx>
- Study assessment guidelines for students (HAMK website)
 - <https://www.hamk.fi/en/student-pages/planning-your-studies/assessment/>
- RPL guidelines (HAMK Intra – Ohjaan ja opetan)
 - <https://hameenamk.sharepoint.com/sites/ohjaan-ja-opetan/SitePages/en/ahot-ohjeet.aspx>
- Work placement guidelines (HAMK Intra – Ohjaan ja opetan)
 - <https://hameenamk.sharepoint.com/sites/ohjaan-ja-opetan/SitePages/en/harjoittelu.aspx>
- Thesis guidelines (HAMK Intra – Ohjaan ja opetan)
 - <https://hameenamk.sharepoint.com/sites/ohjaan-ja-opetan/SitePages/en/opinnaytetyo.aspx>
- 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/>