

# Exam complaints

## Guidance for students who want to complain about an exam

We recommend that you read this guide before you submit an exam complaint. If you are still in doubt about something, you are always welcome to contact your student counsellor.



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## Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to help you get an overview of how to submit an exam complaint. You need to know what the deadlines are, how you can substantiate an exam complaint, and what you should consider before submitting a complaint.

We therefore recommend that you read the complaint guide before submitting an exam complaint, and you are also welcome to contact your student counsellor for sparring.

### Please note:

- An exam complaint must be submitted no later than 2 weeks after publication of your mark
- It can take 6-8 weeks for a decision concerning your complaint and up to 8-10 weeks during the summer holiday period.
- If you have failed the exam you are complaining about, you are still recommended to participate in any re-exam during the complaint period, and any failure to appear for a re-exam counts as one used exam attempt
- An oral examination is usually substantiated by an oral statement from the examiners. If you are not sure about the content of your substantiated complaint, or you want to have it elaborated on, you can contact the examiner a few days after your exam to hear if they would elaborate on your mark. The examiner is not obliged to elaborate on your assessment and mark, but they are usually happy to give you a substantiated reason.
- For written exams where there is a correction guide, you can also request the correction guide from the examiner who is typically your lecturer.

## 1. Before you complain

An exam complaint must always be in writing, it must be individual (several students cannot submit identical complaints) and the complaint must be substantiated. Exam complaints must also be submitted via the complaint system on the Academy's website [www.baaa.dk](http://www.baaa.dk) or on Study Update, and an exam complaint must be submitted no later than 2 weeks after the assessment (i.e. your mark) has been provided. For oral exams this means on the day that you took the exam, and for written exams this means the day the mark was published on WISEflow.

If you just want an explanation of why you received the mark you did, you can contact your examiner and ask if they will substantiate your mark – they often will.

## 2. How to substantiate an exam complaint?

The better substantiated and precise your complaint is, the better basis you provide for the processing of your exam complaint. You should therefore be careful about the reasons for your complaint, and preferably relate it to the learning objectives of the curriculum as well as any formality sheets or correction guidelines for the exam in question.

You must justify your exam complaint based on academic circumstances: for example, whether your assessment is correct based on an academic assessment? Were you examined in learning objectives for the exam? Are there parts of your assignment that the examiner and co-examiner have not assessed or that they misunderstood? Are there any shortcomings in the circumstances of your exam?

In your arguments you can, for example, refer to the curriculum for descriptions of learning objectives or the exam description. Your student counsellor can also help you with how to substantiate your complaint and which arguments you can emphasise. You will find the opening hours and contact information for our student counsellors on our website: <https://www.baaa.dk/contact/student-and-career-counselling/>.

## 2.1 Reasons for assessment and mark

The purpose of an exam is to document to what extent you as a student meet the academic goals set out in the programme's curriculum. Therefore the individual student's performance is assessed in relation to the set learning objectives. This means that matters relating to teaching and supervision are generally not given weight in connection with the processing of an exam complaint, just as a reference to any fellow students' marks cannot be used as a reason for your exam complaint.

### *Getting correction guides*

If there are correction guides for your exam, it's a good idea to start reading them before you complain. This will allow you to evaluate your own answers, and it can help you to substantiate your complaint, e.g. by stating which questions you think you have answered particularly well and why, as well as how you think you have met the curriculum's learning objectives.

### *Possible dialogue with examiner*

Before you complain about an exam assessment, it might be a good idea to contact your examiner and ask for an explanation of your assessment *and what specifically was important for your assessment*.

You do not have any right to get an explanation, but many examiners will give you feedback on your exam if you ask. In your dialogue with the examiner, you cannot expect them to go through your answers in relation to the mark you received, but you can get an overall reason for the mark you received.

Please note:

- that contacting your examiner does not have any effect in relation to the complaint deadline of 2 weeks.
- that the examiner alone cannot change your assessment or mark.

## 2.2 Reasons concerning the basis of the examination

The basis for the examination is what you will be examined in for the exam. You must always be examined in the learning objectives for the exam in question - the learning objectives are stated in your curriculum. If you believe that the exam assignment or the questions you are asked in the exam do not match the curriculum's learning objectives, you

can complain about it. In this case, you must describe and substantiate in your complaint where you believe there are discrepancies, and how this was expressed at your particular exam.

### 2.3 Reasons concerning the exam procedure

The exam procedure is the way your exam is conducted. For example, if the curriculum states that your written exam must last 2 hours and for some reason the exam only lasted 90 minutes. Or if you find that an examiner does not comply with the guidelines for conducting your exam prescribed in the curriculum, or if you are interrupted in your exam, for example because the fire alarm goes off and you are not automatically offered extended time or a re-examination, then you can complain about the exam process.

## 3. Process and deadlines

Below is an overview of what happens when you submit an exam complaint, as well as how long the different steps in the process take.

As a general rule, it takes a maximum of 8 weeks (max 10 weeks during the summer holiday period) from the time you have submitted your complaint until a decision has been made concerning your exam complaint. You can see how long each step can take below. This example is for an assessment complaint, but the timeframe will be the same for other types of complaints. However, the processing time will be longer during the holidays (particularly the summer holiday in July) and other public holidays and the festive season.

Steps in the complaints process	Schedule
1. You submit your complaint via the complaint system on baaa.dk.	-
<p>2. Once we have received your complaint, we need to obtain some factual information about your exam: including the date and which examiners/co-examiners participated. We will determine whether your complaint has been submitted on time, i.e. no later than 14 days after your mark has been published, and we look at whether your complaint is substantiated. After that, the procedure is as follows:</p> <p><i>Either</i></p> <p>a) If the complaint has been submitted in a timely manner and is academically substantiated, the processing of your complaint will start.</p> <p><i>Or:</i></p> <p>b) If your complaint was submitted in a timely manner, but it is not academically substantiated, we will usually contact you to ask you to elaborate and justify your complaint within a time limit.</p> <p><i>Or:</i></p>	About 1 week

<p>c) If your complaint is not submitted in a timely manner, your complaint will, generally, be rejected and you will be notified accordingly.</p>	
<p>3. If your complaint was received in a timely manner and is academically substantiated, we will send your complaint to the examiner(s) and co-examiner who adjudicated at your exam.</p> <p><i>According to the Ministerial Order for Examinations, examiners have two full weeks to submit their statements concerning your exam complaint, and it takes a few days for administrative processing.</i></p>	<p>Maximum 3 weeks – extended processing time in connection with holidays.</p>
<p>4. Once we have received replies from the examiner(s) and the co-examiner, we will send their statements to you. After that, you have one week to comment on the statements and send your comments to the academy.</p> <p><i>According to the Ministerial Order for Examinations, you have one week to submit your comments on the examiner and examiner's statements, and it may take a few days for administrative processing.</i></p>	<p>No more than 2 weeks.</p>
<p>5. When you have sent your comments to the examiner's statements or the deadline for the submission of your comments has passed, all documents regarding your complaint will be sent to the head of department from your programme.</p> <p>The head of department makes a decision on your case on the basis of the existing documentation i.e your complaint, the examiner(s) and co-examiner's statements and any possible reply you have to them.</p> <p><i>This takes about a week and a few days for administrative processing.</i></p>	<p>No more than 2 weeks.</p>
<p>6. The decision will then be sent to you, together with any appeal and complaint options if your complaint is unsuccessful.</p>	<p>-</p>

#### 4. What can a decision on an exam appeal entail?

You will receive a written decision concerning your exam appeal. The decision concerning your exam complaint may (cf. the Ministerial Order for Examinations) be as follows:

- 1) a new assessment (reassessment) - only for written exams
- 2) a new exam (re-examination) or
- 3) that your complaint has been rejected.

The written decision will state whether your complaint has been successful or whether your complaint has been unsuccessful.

If your complaint was successful, you will probably need to confirm the offer of a reassessment or re-exam in writing before a certain date. You should also know that any reassessment or re-examination may result in a lower mark than the one you received for the exam you are complaining about, cf. the Danish Examination Board, Ministerial Order for Examinations §48(3).

If your complaint is unsuccessful, you will retain the mark you received at the original exam. You will be informed of your appeal and complaint options together with the decision (see also section 5).

#### **4.1 Must you participate in a re-examination whilst your complaint is being dealt with?**

If you have not passed the exam that you are complaining about, we recommend that if you have an exam attempt left that you take the re-exam even though this may occur before you receive the ruling on your complaint.

## **5. Appeals against decisions and legal complaints about decisions**

If your appeal is unsuccessful, you have the opportunity to appeal against the decision of your examination complaint regarding academic issues. For example, if you believe that the examiner and co-examiner have missed a part of your assignment that has therefore not been assessed, or if you believe that you have been examined in incorrect learning objectives according to the curriculum. An appeal concerning academic issues is handled by an appeal board, but the appeal must be sent to the Academy.

You also have the opportunity to appeal against any legal matters of the decision if you believe that the decision was made based on an incorrect legal basis. Legal issues and shortcomings are, for example, if there is suspicion of incapacity in connection with the processing of your examination complaint, that the legal rules have been applied incorrectly or that the wrong rules have been applied, or if no consultation of the parties has taken place (e.g. if you have not received the examiners' opinions in the consultation procedure). Legal matters are dealt with by the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science, but the legal complaint must be sent to the Academy.

If your appeal has not been successful, you will receive guidance on the process of appeals and legal complaints at the same time as you receive the decision on your exam complaint. In addition, you are always welcome to contact your student counsellor for sparring if you are in doubt whether you should file a complaint, a legal complaint or an appeal.

## **6. What about complaints about supervision or teaching?**

Criticism of and complaints against a supervisor, or a lecturer, or the teaching cannot be dealt with through our complaints system. If you are dissatisfied with your supervisor or your teaching, you should generally go to the head of programme or the head of department at your degree programme who will deal with the criticism. You are also always welcome to contact your student counsellor to discuss how you can best approach this type of criticism or complaint.

## 7. For more information

If you want more information about exam complaints, you can find more information in the following places:

- Ministerial Order No. 863 from 14/06/2022 on [www.retsinfo.dk](http://www.retsinfo.dk) (in Danish only)
- You can also read more about the organisation of exams and exam complaints in the document 'Worth knowing about exams' on Study Update
- Read the exam complaints section in your curriculum
- Contact your student counsellor to get sparring about your situation and about a possible exam complaint, appeal or if you have criticism concerning supervision or teaching.