
How to complain about exams 2020

Complaints about exams will be handled in accordance with the rules set out in Chapter 10 of the Ministerial Order on Examinations on Professionally Oriented Higher Education Programmes (the Examination Order).

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Introduction

As a student at KEA, you have a right to complain about an exam if you believe the examination process to be flawed or the assessment to be incorrect. These guidelines offer some good advice on what to consider before lodging a complaint, how to complain, what you can complain about and what should not be included in your complaint.

The guidelines also provide an overview of the procedure and an estimate of the time it takes to process a complaint.

To save time and energy, always read the guidelines carefully before lodging a complaint. This way, you may also avoid complaining incorrectly or avert a decision (the outcome of the complaint) you do not want to accept or which does not help you.

Happy reading.

Copenhagen School of Design and Technology

Before complaining

Please note! It may take 6-8 weeks before KEA reaches a decision on your complaint.

Lodging a complaint does not delay the time of your re-examination, and any re-examinations that you do not take will therefore count as exam attempts.

When an exam has been passed, it cannot be retaken. Therefore, any ongoing processing by KEA of a complaint lodged by you will automatically end once you have passed the relevant re-exam.

What do you want to complain about?

Before you decide to lodge a complaint, always consider what you want to complain about.

You can complain about:¹

- the assessment (the grade),
- the basis of the exam (exam questions, assignments and similar), and
- the organising of the exam (the stipulated exam time was not observed, there was no access to permitted materials and aids and similar).

You cannot complain about guidance, teaching or similar in accordance with the rules of the examination order.

Read the goals for the learning objectives before you complain

If you complain about your grade, you should find out about the learning objectives for the exam before lodging a complaint. Your complaint will stand a better chance of a positive outcome if you can come up with some substantive arguments for why your exam was assessed incorrectly. In addition, you will also have the opportunity to assess whether your performance at the exam meets the learning objectives, and whether you have a legitimate reason to lodge a complaint.

Ask the examiner(s) for an explanation

When you are given a grade after an oral exam, it is usually accompanied by a short oral explanation. If you do not understand the explanation, or if you want the examiner to elaborate, you may contact the examiner (usually your teacher) a few days after you have received the grade.

Please note! You are not entitled to have your grade justified or further elaborated on by the examiner.

¹ Section 46, subsection 1, paragraphs 1-3 of the Executive Order on Examinations

Even if you are waiting for an explanation from your examiner(s), you must still meet the 2-week deadline for lodging a complaint.

The outcome of a complaint

There are three possible outcomes of a complaint:²

- You are offered a new assessment (only for written assignments)
- You are offered a new exam
- Your complaint was not successful

You should be aware that **a new assessment or exam may result in a lower grade**, which is then the valid grade.

Deadlines and the complaint process

Deadline for lodging a complaint

You must submit your complaint to kvalitet@kea.dk within 2 weeks of having received your grade.

Processing of the complaint

Complaints are handled by KEA Kvalitet.

The processing time is usually 6-8 weeks.

However, it may be up to 8-10 weeks during the summer holiday period.

Withdrawal of a complaint

You have the opportunity to withdraw your complaint before a decision has been reached.

You withdraw your complaint by writing to kvalitet@kea.dk.

It may make sense to withdraw your complaint:

- If your grade has been elaborated on and you agree
- If you have passed a re-exam in the meantime
- If you have reconsidered your complaints.

The complaint process

1. Send your complaint to kvalitet@kea.dk within 2 weeks of having received your grade.
2. KEA will acknowledge receipt of your email.
3. KEA Kvalitet sends your complaint to the examiners for their opinion.
 - a. Your examiners usually have 2 weeks to send their opinions to KEA Kvalitet.
4. KEA will send you the examiners' opinion normally within 3 weeks of having received your complaint.

² Section 48, paragraph 1 of the Executive Order on Examinations

- a. You have the opportunity to send any comments to KEA Kvalitet within a week.
5. KEA makes a decision and sends it to you.
6. Then you will have 2 weeks to accept the offer of a new assessment / re-examination provided that this is the outcome of your complaint.
7. If your complaint proves unsuccessful, you will have 2 weeks to appeal the decision.
 - a. The appeal must be sent to kvalitet@kea.dk

How to complain

Having considered what to complain about and whether it can be justified, you must send your complaint to kvalitet@kea.dk within 2 weeks of having received your grade³.

Your complaint must be individual, in writing and substantiated⁴.

Content of the complaint

In your complaint, you must state the following:

- The reasons for your complaint
- Your full name
- Your KEA mail
- Your private mail if you do not have access to a KEA mail
- Your civil registration number
- Which programme and semester the exam relates to
- Which subject you were examined in
- Your grade
- When you received the grade
- Form of examination
 - o Written or oral exam
- Whether you complain about the assessment, the examination basis and / or the organising of the examination.

Correct complaining

At the exam, a student (the examinee) is assessed on whether or not they meet the set learning objectives. This means that matters concerning guidance and teaching are not relevant to an

³ Section 44, paragraph 2 of the Executive Order on Examinations.

⁴ Section 44, paragraph 1 of the Executive Order on Examinations.

examination, and a description of such matters in the complaint will be disregarded in the assessment of the complaint.

Grades are given individually and absolutely. Therefore, only the individual examinee's presentation is assessed in relation to the set learning objectives. As a consequence, it is not a legitimate claim that other students have received a higher or lower grade than you. A description of other students' grades will be disregarded in the assessment of the complaint.

Only your performance on the day of the exam and the grade will be considered. Your work effort during the semester has no influence on the grade, and a description of such will be disregarded in the assessment of the complaint.

Your life situation will not be compensated for and it is your own responsibility to plan your preparation for an exam. Any descriptions in the complaint about you not having had time to prepare for the exam due to personal circumstances will be disregarded in the assessment of the complaint.

Decision and appeal

Receipt of decision

You can expect to receive your decision within 6-8 weeks.

The decision will be sent to your electronic mailbox (E-Boks). If you do not have access to E-boks, the decision will be sent by email.

Possible outcomes

There are three possible outcomes of your complaint⁵ :

- You are offered a new assessment (only for written assignments)
- You are offered a new exam
- Your complaint was not successful

⁵ Section 48, paragraph 1 of the Executive Order on Examinations

If you are offered a new assessment or exam, you must accept the offer within 2 weeks. You do so by sending your acceptance to your study administration and cc to kvalitet@kea.dk. The offer lapses if you do not accept it within 2 weeks.

Please note! A new exam or assessment may result in a lower grade, which becomes the final grade. New examiners will be appointed for a new exam or assessment.

If you are offered a new assessment or exam, it must take place as soon as possible. It is KEA that determines the time of the new assessment or exam.

Appeal of a decision

You can appeal a decision within 2 weeks of receiving the decision.

You can appeal a decision based on two factors:

- You can complain about legal flaws in the decision.
- You can appeal the decision on the basis of formal, academic grounds.

Appeal on formal, academic grounds

If a complaint based on formal, academic grounds is unsuccessful—and you disagree—you can lodge an appeal with the Board of Appeal appointed by KEA. The appeal must be in writing and substantiated. You must send the appeal to kvalitet@kea.dk no later than 2 weeks after having received the decision.

If the appeal is based on formal, academic grounds, the decision by the Board of Appeal will be final. This means that if you do not succeed, there are no more administrative appeal options for the formal, academic assessment.

Complaint about legal flaws

If you believe the decision reached by KEA to have legal flaws, you can lodge a complaint with the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science. Complaints about legal flaws must be addressed to the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science but must be sent to KEA at kvalitet@kea.dk within a period of 2 weeks from the day you received the decision. KEA gives their opinion about the complaint, which you are allowed to comment on before it is sent to the Agency for a final decision.

What are formal, academic grounds?

Is the assessment correct based on a formal, academic assessment of your performance? Have you been examined in the correct syllabus? Are there parts of the assignment which the examiner and external co-examiner have not assessed or understood? Are there any shortcomings in the way the exam was held?

What are legal flaws?

During the exam or case processing, in the event of:

- Disqualification/incompetence
- incorrect application of the rules of law
- no consultation of the party/parties involved
- no provision of information on the case
- incorrect procedure, or
- a decision was not accompanied by guidelines for how to appeal, etc.