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The Danish external examiner system, a short introduction for Physics and Astronomy.

At Danish Universities, some exams must involve a so-called external examiner (in Danish: Ekstern censor). This is the case for all Master's thesis exams and the final Bachelor's degree written report, but also for several other written and oral exams. These other exams are chosen by the various institutions. By Ministerial order, 1/3 of all ECTS for courses in a given subject area must involve an external examiner.

This system is made to ensure:

- that the requirements of the exam agree with the goals which are stated for the course.
- that the exam takes place according to the current rules.
- that the students get a fair and uniform judgement, with grades in accordance with the Danish grading system.

The external examiner and the examiner must agree on the grade given. In case of disagreement, instructions are given in the Ministerial Order on the Danish grading system (see below).

After the exam, the external examiner will report on the general course of the exam as well as on the fulfillment of the three points listed above to the chairman of the external examiners. The external examiner is in general expected to give advice about the exam, not least about the content and formulation of exam questions. In cases of formal complaints from students after the exam (format, grade, etc.) the external examiner will be asked to respond to these complaints, and he is therefore obliged for example during oral examinations to record notes about the exam.

For this system to work, it is imperative that an external examiner from the list of approved external examiners is appointed to the exam *well in advance* of the examination. In general, "the chairman of the corps of external examiners delegates the task to an external examiner, after consultation with the institution". In the case of Physics and Astronomy, we interpret this in such a way that the examiner is asked to suggest an external examiner to the chairman, who may approve the choice, or delegate another external examiner. The external examiner must be a member of the corps of approved external examiners, and cannot be a member of the staff of the institution which holds the exam.

The corps of external examiners is specified in the list given below. The members have been approved by the Danish Ministry of education, and it is administered by the chairman of the corps, who is also charged with other functions concerning the exams, such as complaints, appointment of *ad hoc* external examiners, etc.

For Physics and Astronomy, you can find the list of approved external examiners, as well as other supportive material at:

<http://phys.medarbejdere.au.dk/formandskabet-for-censorkorpset-i-fysik/>

There you can also find the “Bekendtgørelse number 1062”, the Ministerial Order specifying the rules for exams and external examiners, as well as the Ministerial Order on the Danish grading system. These two documents are authoritative, and the above is given only as a quick (and incomplete) guide.

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