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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 designed 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 such as a note on the Danish grading system, at:

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

There you can also find “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.

Note to non-EU/EEA Citizens:

If you are a non-EU/EEA Citizen holding a residence- and work permit *to work at a specific university, company etc.* in Denmark, then you cannot work as an external examiner before having obtained a permit for sideline employment for this specific job. If you work as an external examiner without holding a permit for sideline employment for this position, it is considered as illegal work, and both you and the educational institution can be subject to a fine.

Note the application for a permit for sideline employment has to be submitted for every job as an external examiner. Applications are submitted to the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI). The processing time can be up to one month from the date SIRI receives a fully completed application, so you have to apply in due time. There is no fee for submitting the application for sideline employment.

Please be aware that you need to contact the institution, where you are to work as an external examiner before submitting the application for sideline employment to SIRI, as the institution is part of the application process, so you need to contact them for further details.

You can find more information on permit to sideline employment on New to Denmark https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk/work/Sideline_employment.htm

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