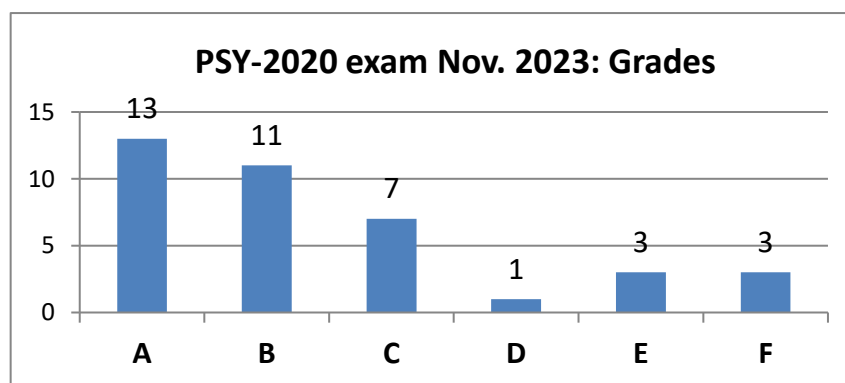


PSY-2020 “The Psychology of Attitudes” (Autumn 2023)

Course evaluation

“PSY-2020 The psychology of attitudes” is an English-taught course for second- and third-year Bachelor students in psychology. The course is open to students from other study programs, and to international exchange students. Its 12 two-hour lectures are based on a course textbook, research articles, and classroom exercises.

The lectures were held live in a lecture hall; in addition they were video-taped and the recordings were made available to the students. Around 48 students were registered during the semester; 44 students signed up for the final exam; 38 students actually took the exam. The grades for submitted exams covered the full range of the grading scale. Most exams received an A, B, or C:



More details on the exam are available from a document that was sent to the class after the grading was finished (see the Appendix).

The course teacher announced during the semester that the students would be invited to evaluate the course after the grades are known to them. An invitation email with a link to the online evaluation survey was sent to the class on December 15th 2023 (that is the week after the grades were published), a reminder email was sent on December 20th, 2023. The complete survey is shown on the next page.



Course evaluation for "PSY-2020 The psychology of attitudes" (Autumn 2023)

Thank you for participating. The evaluation is run by the course teacher (Assoc. Prof. Frank Siebler, frank.siebler@uit.no). Your answers are anonymous.

Here is a reminder of the course objectives:

"The course introduces core concepts, research methods, and theories in the domain of attitude formation and change. Students acquire a thorough understanding of both classic approaches and recent developments. The course aims to provide students with the methods and theoretical tools required to design studies and interventions that deal with the measurement or change of attitudes. Students will use this knowledge to design an empirical study."

PART 1: LEARNING & TEACHING

How useful was each of the following elements for your own work with the course contents?
(If you don't remember an element or have not used it, then please leave that line unanswered)

	not useful					very useful
The course readings (textbook and articles) were ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The lectures (the course teacher's live presentations) were ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The classroom activity (designing research materials) was ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The downloadable lecture slides on Canvas ("Powerpoint") were ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The downloadable notes for the exam preparation on Canvas ("exam hints") were ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART 2: EXAMINATION & EVALUATION

How much do you personally agree with the following statements?
(If you have absolutely no opinion on a statement, then please leave that line unanswered)

	completely disagree					completely agree
"The four-hour exam was an excellent match to the course contents."	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
"It was very clear for me how to prepare myself for the four-hour exam."	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
"At the end of the course I could easily have passed a much longer and more difficult exam about the course contents."	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
"It was no problem for me that the lectures and lecture slides were in English language."	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Summary evaluations

(If you do not want to answer a question, then please leave that line unanswered)

	A	B	C	D	E	F
What grade did the course give you?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
What grade do you give the course?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART 3: For the statistics

What is your student status in this course? (Please select the best-matching answer)

- ☐ Regular student at the University of Tromsø, BA Psychology
☐ Regular student at the University of Tromsø, but "not" BA Psychology
☐ International exchange student
☐ Other

PART 4: OPEN-ENDED FEEDBACK

If you want to make comments or suggestions, then here is the place to do so. It can be on anything: the general course organization, the materials, the lectures, the exam, things that you missed, and so on. You can list things that you liked, and things that you did not like about the course.

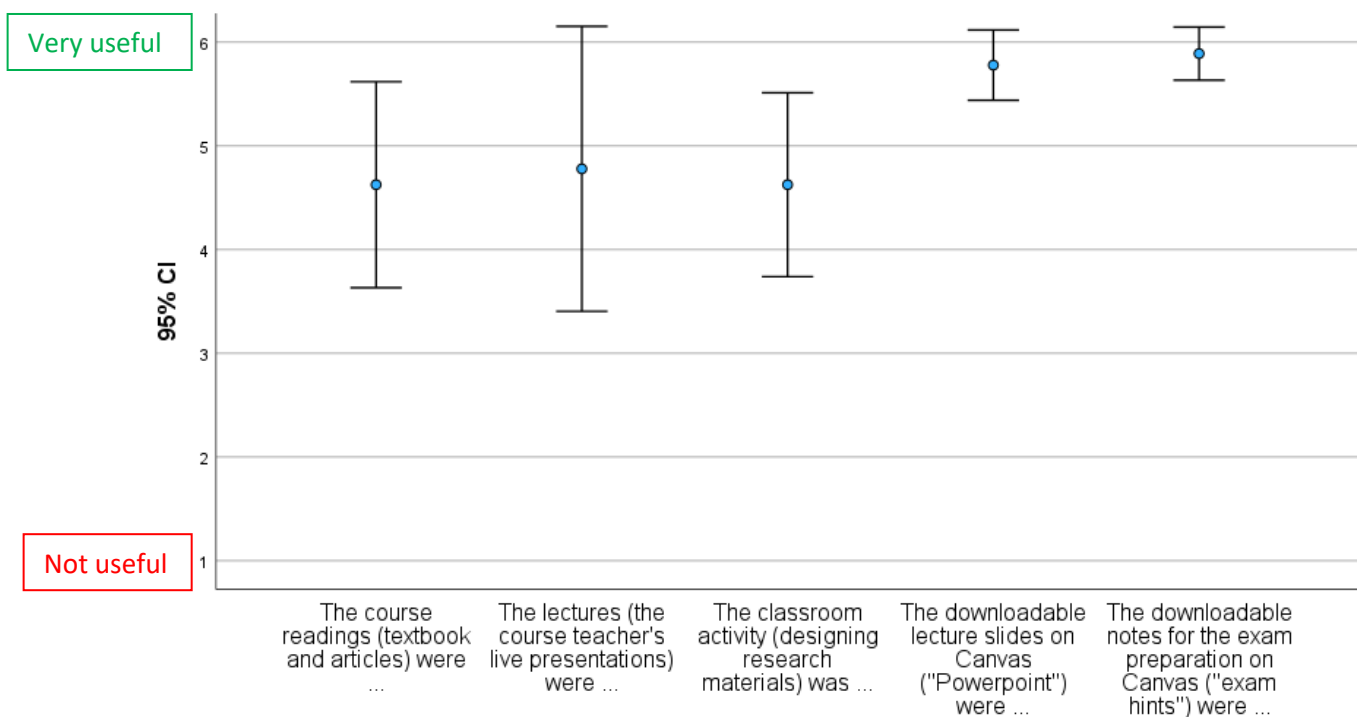
PART 5: SENDING YOUR ANSWERS

That was all, thank you. **Please click on the button below to send your answers.**

Continue

The student participation in the evaluation was low: Only nine students (23.7% relative to the 38 taken exams; 18.8% relative to the 48 students registered for the course) filled in the questionnaire. Seven of the respondents were regular students in the BA Psychology program at the UiT, one respondent was an international exchange student, and one respondent selected the answer option “Other”. Five respondents reported to have received an “A” in the exam; one respondent reported to have received a “B”; three respondents did not answer that question. The following survey results need to be interpreted with caution: First, because of the overall low participation rate, and second, because the distribution of self-reported grades suggests that the survey participants may not be a representative subset of the class as a whole.

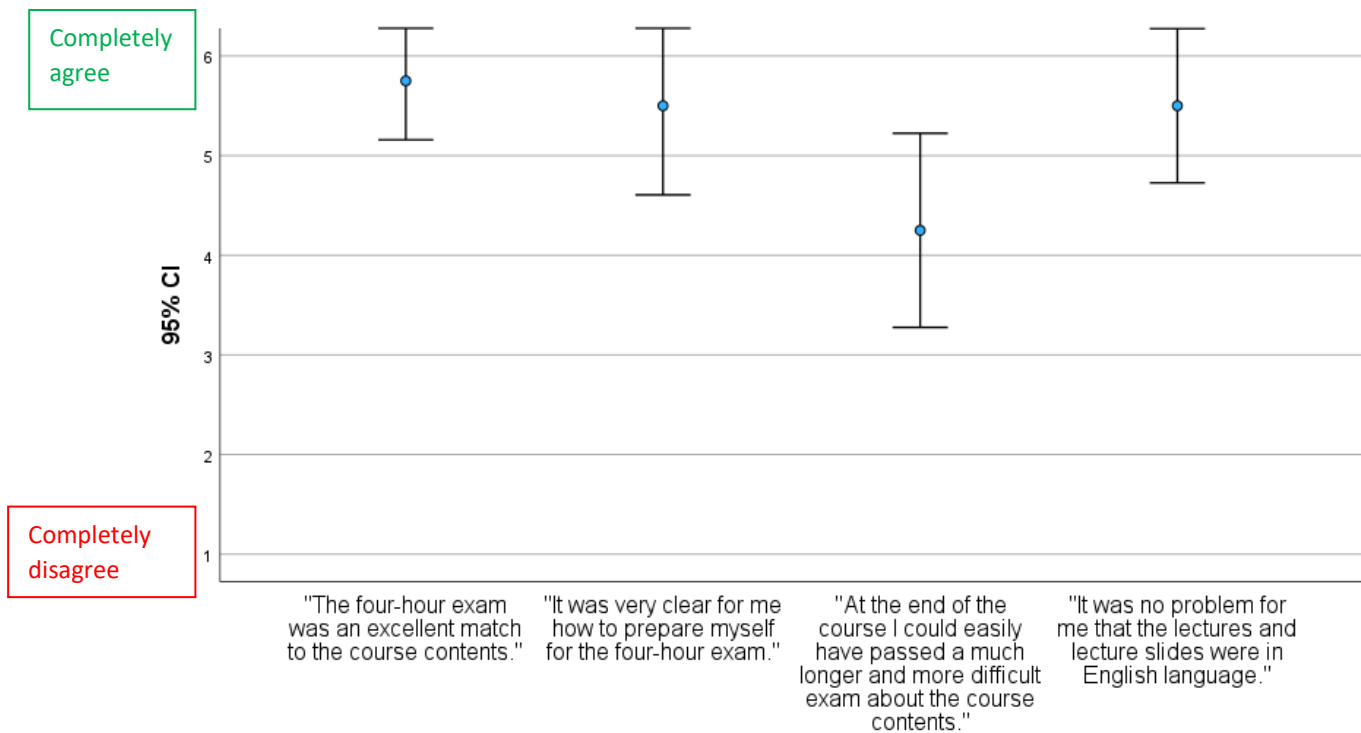
Part 1: Learning and teaching



Note. All $n = 8-9$.

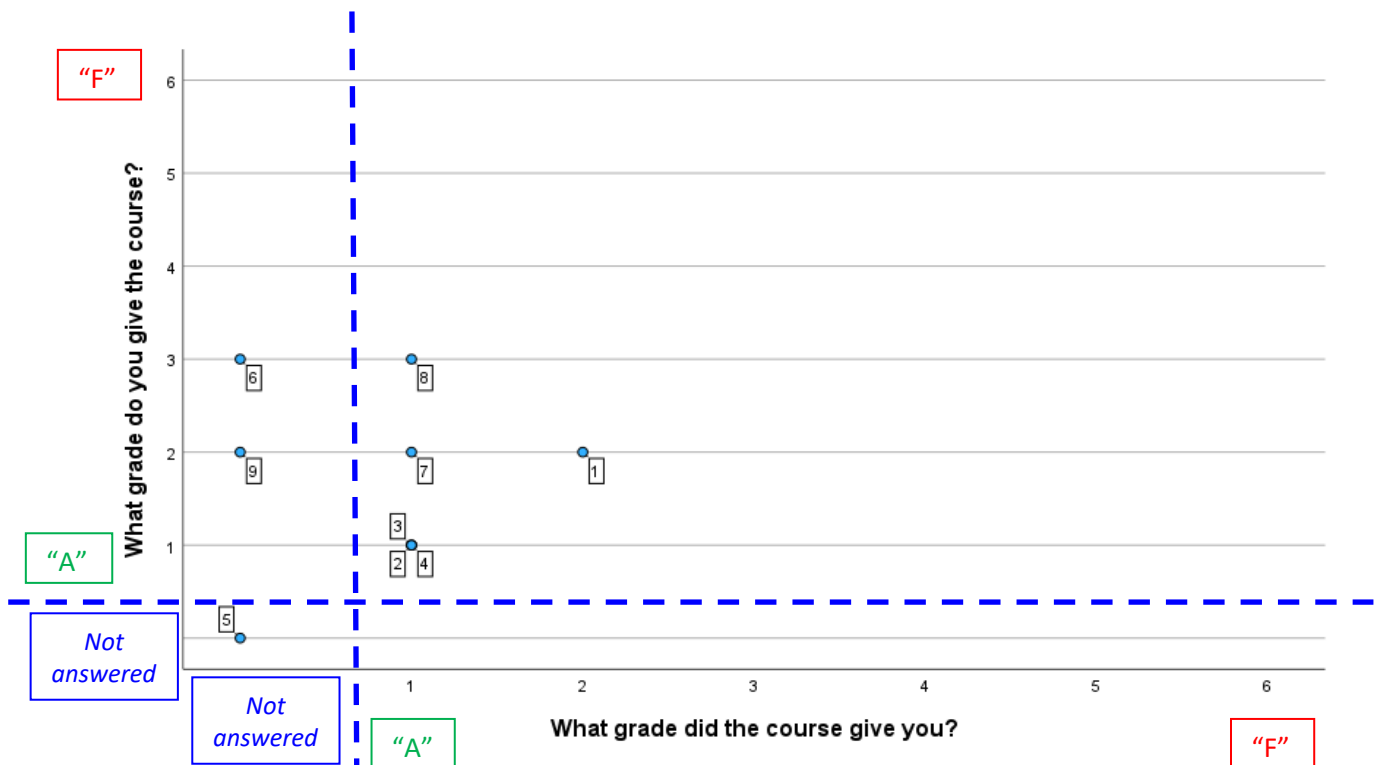
On the answer scale from 1 (“not useful”) to 6 (“very useful”), the neutral scale midpoint is 3.5. The average answers (blue circles) are all well above that midpoint. Thus they indicate a positive to very positive evaluation of the lectures and the written materials in terms of their usefulness for the students’ work with the course contents.

Part 2: Examination and evaluation



Note. All $n = 8-9$.

On the answer scale from 1 ("completely disagree") to 6 ("completely agree"), the neutral scale midpoint is again 3.5. The average answers (blue circles) are all well above that midpoint. Thus, the students found the exam to be an excellent match to the course contents, it was clear to them how to prepare for the exam, and the use of the English language was no problem for them. Given that most of the respondents received an "A", it is not surprising that most of them assume they could have passed a longer and more difficult exam as well. Interestingly, however, the answers to this question have a noticeably lower mean than the others – suggesting that the exam was not "too easy."



Eight respondents gave the course a letter grade (1 = “A”, ..., 6 = “F”), six respondents also reported their own letter grade from the exam. The letter grades fell between “A” and “B” on average ($M_{\text{course}} = 1.88$, $M_{\text{self}} = 1.17$). The grade for the course was not simply a reflection of the grade that the respondent had achieved her-/himself in the exam: Pearson’s $r(4) = .20$, $p > .70$.

Part 4: Open-ended feedback

Five respondents filled in the survey’s open-text field:

- 1) Likte veldig godt hvordan et stort pensum ikke ble totalt overveldende ved hjelp av forelesningene og eksamenshintene. Det var mye pensum, men emnets oppsett gjorde det motiverende å lære likevel. Synes forelesningene var kjempebra. Under eksamen var det noen spørsmål som forklarte en del av hvordan oppgaven skulle besvares, noe jeg på forhånd tenkte ikke ville være der (jeg hadde da forberedt meg på å også besvare det som allerede var oppgitt i oppgaven, spesifikt studieoppgavene). Et av de bedre emnene jeg har tatt mtp både et interessant tema og særlig hvordan emnet ble lagt opp.

- 2) I liked the course very much! Thought it was a bit hard to have lectures between 14-16, and think a lot of students did not show because of that. Great lectures, a lot of relevant and interesting information, smart way to introduce us so we first see lesson and read afterwards. Very grateful for the exam hints!
- 3) I really enjoyed the course!
- 4) The exam preparation was good to have, but maybe have all in one page. The lectures was fine but the room was very cold and made it very hard to focus. Having an assignment would be much better and then have a follow up in one of the lectures by having a discussion.
- 5) Emnet inneholder mye repetisjon fra sosialpsykologi, så vi opplevde ikke alltid at vi lærte så veldig mye nytt. Den gøyeste delen var hvordan man kan endre holdninger, og den interaktive timen på slutten. Kanskje legge opp til flere aktiviteter i forelesningen?

In line with the quantitative (numerical) feedback, the qualitative feedback is also very positive. Most respondents give positive evaluations of the course as a whole (**1, 2, 3**) and/or of specific course elements (**1, 2, 4, 5**). Points of critique concern the scheduled time of the lecture (**2**), the temperature in the lecture hall (**4**), and the partial overlap with topics covered in a typical introductory social psychology lecture (**5**). Two respondents suggest teaching forms that are less lecture-style but more seminar-style instead (**4**, suggesting “flipped classroom” methods, and **5**, suggesting more student activities during the lectures). These are all informative and valuable suggestions for specific details of the course. It should however be taken into account that they were made by one or two students each and may not represent the majority opinion. On the teaching method: “PSY-2020 Attitudes” is designed as a classic lecture because that is the most efficient method with a single teacher and potentially large student numbers (the course has had up to 90 BA students in past years). I also offer “PSY-3005 Attitudes” as a seminar in the MA program; this course is considerably more interactive (including weekly homework assignments that are later discussed in class) because the class size here rarely exceeds 20 MA students. Unless the student numbers in these two courses change considerably in the future, I expect their teaching approaches to stay the same, for purely practical reasons.

Summary and discussion

With only nine responses to the email invitation (23.7% of the students who had taken the exam), student interest in the course evaluation was rather low. Those who did participate, gave the course good to very good ratings in all categories. The results need to be interpreted with caution, first because of the low response rate, and second, because the sample of respondents may not be representative of the class as a whole. With that said, the course evaluation did not reveal points of critique or aspects of the course that need to be changed the next time the course takes place. I wish to thank everyone who took the time to participate in the evaluation.

Appendix

- The document that informed the students about the grading process and the exam results for the class as a whole

PSY-2020 Autumn 2023, Grading and results

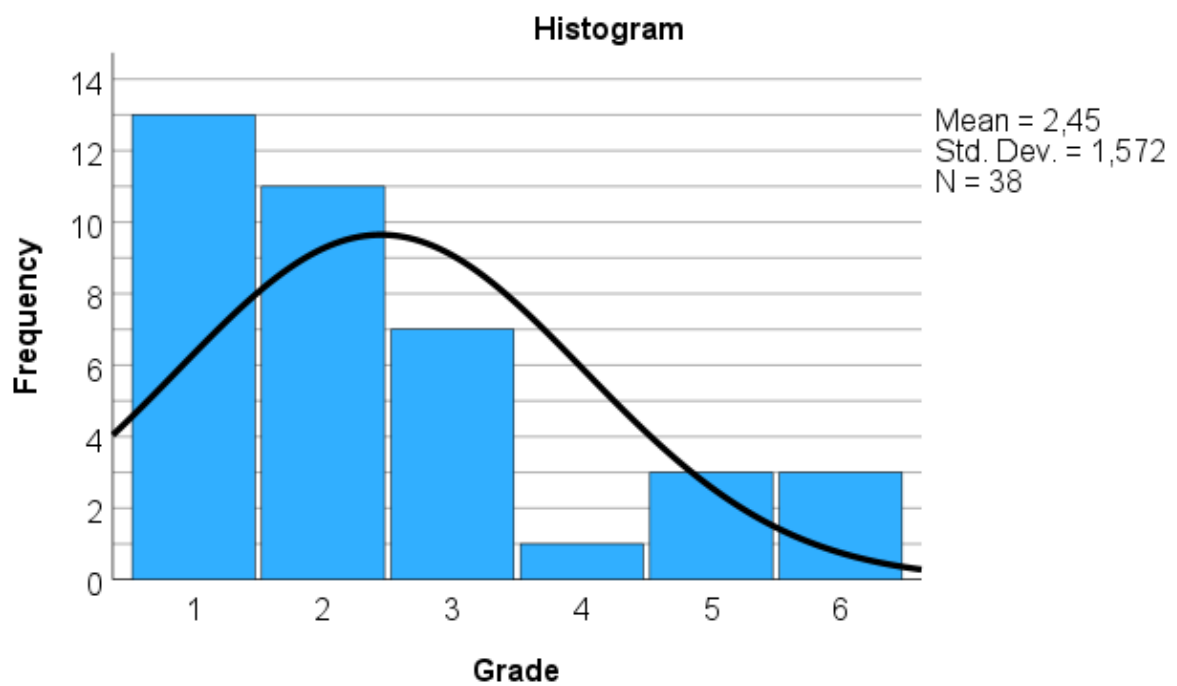
The four-hour school-type exam had 15 questions. The required answers differed in length from a few words as the minimum, to circa one page as the maximum. Together, the questions covered all sessions of the course. All questions had to be answered.

Each question had a certain number of maximum points that could be achieved, from 3 points (for simple definitions plus an example) over 4-6 points (for questions that required more thought) to 10 points (for the detailed description of a full study or program of research). The maximum number of points for each question was listed in the exam; partial points were given for partly correct answers. The maximum number of points for the whole exam was 90 points. 75 points or more counted as an A. For each 15 points less, one grade was subtracted (B = 60-74, C = 45-59, and so on).

The evaluation committee comprised one internal examiner (actually: the course teacher) and three external examiners (psychologists who are not members of this Department; all three are native speakers of Norwegian). The examination committee received the exam papers in an anonymous form, namely with candidate numbers instead of the student names. Detailed, written examiner guidelines listed the normatively correct answer to each question, together with answer variants that should also count as correct. The internal examiner graded all 38 exam papers, using the written guidelines for this exam plus the university's general grading system ("karakterskala") that defines the meaning of each grade verbally. The external examiners then controlled the internal grading for a randomly selected subset of 21 exam papers ($21 / 38 = 55\%$ of the submitted papers).

The result for the class as a whole is shown on the next page.

Grade			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	A	13	34,2
	B	11	28,9
	C	7	18,4
	D	1	2,6
	E	3	7,9
	F	3	7,9
	Total	38	100,0



Note. 1 = A, 2 = B, ..., 6 = F

Where do the differences in the grades come from?

The exam started with (among others) the following instructions for the students:

“Writing style: Please do not just produce the correct keywords. Instead, write such that an outsider who has not taken this course can follow and understand your answer.”

For each question where that was applicable, the examiners gave some points if the answer was correct in the sense that it listed the correct keywords. They gave more points if the answer showed insight and understanding (f. ex., by giving a short but understandable explanation to the reader, and/or by illustrating a keyword with a short example). Of course this schema did not apply to all questions: some were of the “correct or wrong” type, “all points or none.” But it applied to most of them.

All exam papers missed at least a few points underway, for answers that were incomplete, that were unclear to one or both examiners, or that were wrong. That, by itself, was not necessarily a problem: Missing up to 15 points across all 15 answers still allowed an “A.” However, missing even more points then started to impact the grade.

Reliability I: Consistency of the grading process

Detailed examiner guidelines had been written beforehand to standardize the grading process. The internal examiner graded all 38 exam papers first, using the written guidelines for this exam plus the university's general grading scheme ("karakterskala") that defines the meaning of each grade verbally. The external examiners then controlled the internal grading for a randomly selected subset of 21 exam papers.

Consistency between examiners

For 19 of the 21 exam papers with external control (90.5%), internal and external examiner arrived at the same grade immediately. For the remaining 2 exam papers (9.5%), their point sums were very similar to each other (the difference corresponding to half a grade or less), but ended up on different sides of a grade boundary. Here the final grade was determined by discussion.

Consistency within examiner

The table below shows the average grades for exam papers with versus without external control of the internal examiners' grading (coded such that 1.00 = "A", 2.00 = "B", and so on). The two means are very similar ($M = 2.35$ and $M = 2.52$, respectively). The difference is tiny (corresponding to less than one fifth of a grade) and not statistically significant ($|t| < 1$, two-sided $p = .74$).

	External control of internal grade	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Grade	no	17	2,35	1,50
	yes	21	2,52	1,66

In sum, the grading process showed high reliability: its results were replicable both between internal and external examiners (for the same exam papers), and within the internal examiner (for different subsets of exam papers).

Reliability II: The exam questions' internal consistency

The following analysis of the exam's internal consistency is based on the question-by-question points from all submitted exams ($N = 38$).

The left-hand table shows that Cronbach's Alpha is .92 – no matter whether we give equal weight to each of the 15 exam questions, or take into account that different questions had different numbers of maximum points. That is a very good reliability score.

The right-hand table shows, separately for each exam question, what Cronbach's Alpha would be if that question had not been asked. If a question differs from the others, then removing that question would increase Cronbach's Alpha noticeably. However, as the table shows, we can remove any question, and Cronbach's Alpha would stay practically unchanged.

Reliability Statistics			Item-Total Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items		Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
.92	.92	15	q1	.921
			q2	.917
			q3	.916
			q4	.910
			q5	.926
			q6	.918
			q7	.917
			q8	.909
			q9	.911
			q10	.909
			q11	.907
			q12	.919
			q13	.915
			q14	.928
			q15	.912

In sum, all questions contributed in the same way to the total grade.