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**Abstract**

Although grades are still considered important signifiers of graduates' quality, greater attention has been paid to other measures of learning outcomes in higher education. This shift in attention is attributed to an increased focus on study quality, employability, quality development and accountability. This article examines how grades relate to different measures of self-reported learning outcomes in engineering, health programmes and education programmes. Longitudinal data from national surveys in Norway are analysed in combination with data from public registers. Self-reported learning outcomes are related to student engagement and factors indicative of effective educational practices, while grades are related more to student background characteristics. Self-reported learning outcomes therefore measure individual gain or value added, using the personal starting point as a reference. In this regard, this paper argues that it is important to critically discuss what kind of measures should be used as learning outcomes. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)