

Procedure for systematic course evaluation and follow-up at the Faculty of Science - SCIENCE



15 JULY 2014

REV. MARCH 2016

This procedure is valid from the academic year 2014/2015.

The procedure falls within the frameworks of the University of Copenhagen's procedure for course evaluations and publication, as announced to the faculties on 31 March 2009 (Appendix 1).

It is therefore compatible with both the University's and the faculty's quality-assurance policies and meets the legal requirements for the publication of course evaluations.

Background

The procedure for course evaluations and follow-up at SCIENCE is a key element in assuring and enhancing the quality of the study programmes run by the faculty's departments.

At *faculty level*, this procedure contributes to the ongoing evaluation of study programmes as a whole and the annual work on drawing up strategic action plans in the education area. At *department level*, it contributes to the basis for performance and development reviews, educational skills development for lecturers and the quality enhancement of courses and counselling.

A range of *external requirements* are also placed on SCIENCE to ensure that a procedure for the systematic evaluation of teaching is set up as well as a procedure for following up on the evaluation by the relevant management. In this context, the procedure for course evaluations and follow-up helps ensure that SCIENCE lives up to:

- The UCPH development contract.
- UCPH's and SCIENCE's strategy 2016.
- UCPH procedure for course evaluations and publication, as announced to the faculties on 31 March 2009 (Appendix 1).

- The Danish Accreditation Institution's criteria.
- The Act on Transparency and Openness on Study Programmes, etc.

The key elements of course evaluations in SCIENCE are:

- That lecturers and students view the evaluations as a tool that adds value to the teaching.
- That a documented and empirical basis is built up in order to ensure that management prioritises quality assurance of teaching at department and faculty level.
- That procedures and responsibilities are allocated at department and faculty level for the planning, implementation and follow-up of evaluations, including communication about evaluations to staff and students.

Purpose and quality objectives

The purpose of the evaluations is to assure the quality of the courses and supervision. The quality of the faculty's courses and counselling is mainly developed in dialogue between lecturers and students. In order to promote this dialogue, regular evaluations are conducted of courses, projects and theses.

The evaluations take stock of the following key factors:

- Achieving competency goals.
- The students' learning and interaction between lecturers and students.
- Course structure and lecturers' facilitation of the learning process.
- Evaluation of the teaching activities, including highlighting particularly good elements that can serve to inspire others and suggestions for improvements.

The above goals support the faculty's *quality objectives*, so that the courses:

- Are at a high academic level and based on strong research environments.
- Challenge the students academically and enable them to achieve high academic outcomes.
- Ensure consistency between the courses' academic targets, form of teaching and exams.
- Ensure consistency between the nominal and actual workload.
- Ensure a clear alignment and progression between the individual course's content, the neighbouring courses and the overall programme.
- Ensure continuous development of the objectives and forms of the teaching.
- Ensure that students and lecturers believe that the teaching is of high quality.
- Ensure a modern infrastructure and working environment.

Allocation of responsibilities

Responsibility for decision-making and overseeing the procedure for course evaluations at *faculty level* in SCIENCE lies with the dean, who refers to the Rector. Formally, the dean delegates this responsibility to the associate deans for education.

Responsibility for a number of duties is located at *department level*. Formal responsibility for decision-making and implementation lies with the head of department, who refers to the dean. The head of department delegates this responsibility to the deputy head of department for education (VILU).

Overall responsibility lies with the head of department (delegated to the deputy head of department for education (VILU)):

The departmental management is responsible for the development of courses and counselling, including highlighting particularly positive elements that can benefit others, and ensuring that improvements are made if any negative trends are identified. This is done on the basis of reports from the teaching committee in the light of the evaluations, with additional comments from the heads of studies and study boards. The departmental management is responsible for making decisions about and implementing follow-up work, including skills development of the department's employees.

After each block, *the department's teaching committee* – with the deputy head of department for education (VILU) as the principal driving force – discusses the results of the evaluations in relation to the courses and study activities for which the department has the main responsibility. The committee, which also includes student representatives, provides feedback to the course organisers and supervisors. The discussions are based on evaluation forms and evaluation memos drawn up by the course organiser. Report on the results of the evaluations is then submitted to the head of studies and study boards. If there is a need for follow-up in relation to the teaching on courses affiliated to multiple departments, the VILU from the given department contacts his or her counterpart(s) in the other department(s). All VILUs can access all of the departments' course evaluation results.

The course organiser is responsible for reconciling expectations, and for preparation, implementation and follow-up in relation to course evaluations. This involves conducting the evaluation, providing feedback to students and preparing draft evaluation memos for the teaching committee in the department responsible, in which the course organiser responds to any negative critique from the students. In the evaluation memo, the course organiser outlines the planned measures and changes that will be implemented before the course is run again.

The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the provisions in the common parts of the curricula for projects and theses are observed when drawing up specific assignments.

Students are encouraged to evaluate all of the courses and projects in which they take part. The evaluation is expected to be well thought-out and constructive.

The head of studies is invited to participate in discussions about courses and projects in teaching committees that have links to study programme(s) for which he or she is responsible. The head of studies can obtain information about course evaluations from the course organiser and the deputy head of department for education (VILU). The head of studies can also contact the VILU in the event of major problems arising during a course.

Once a year, *the study board* discusses the quality of the course on the basis of reports submitted by the departments' teaching committees/managements. The study board comment on the departmental management's report and follow-up plan, and recommends any additional follow-up work. The study boards also include these evaluations in their annual processing of course descriptions and curricula. In addition, the study board can, on its own initiative, discuss the quality of a course at any time.

The Co-ordination Committee for Study Boards discusses the quality assurance of the course whenever the committee deems it relevant, but at least once a year as follow-up on the study boards' handling of the reports submitted by the departments.

Evaluation forms and tools

Online evaluations are conducted at the end of all courses including summer courses. Professional master's courses with a semester structure are evaluated on a semester basis. The evaluation consists of three forms:

- I. Form I, consisting of a series of questions regarding what the student gains from the course, as well as its content, form and organisation (Appendix 2)
- II. Form II, for individual evaluation of course lecturers. The course organiser decides which lecturers are to be evaluated (Appendix 3)
- III. Form III, consisting of a single question evaluating the exam (Appendix 4).

Course organisers may expand upon the standardised part of the evaluation by adding their own questions.

In addition to the online evaluation, the course organiser drafts an evaluation memo using a set template (see Appendix 5). Each individual department determines its own procedure for how and when the memo is sent to the teaching committee prior to consideration of the courses.

For all projects – including projects outside course scope, projects in practice, professional master’s projects, bachelor projects and theses – the evaluation is conducted according to a fixed template (Appendix 6).

Practical training is evaluated according to local evaluation forms prepared by the department offering study programmes with compulsory practical training. The evaluation is made at the end of the practical training. Based on the evaluation results the practical training organiser submits an evaluation memo to the department’s teaching committee with an overall conclusion. The teaching committee includes the evaluation memo in the general discussion of results of the course evaluations.

During their consideration of the courses, the departments’ teaching committee use statistics (for pass rates, etc.) provided by SCIENCE Education.

For inter-faculty courses involving HEALTH, the evaluation and gathering of evaluation results is subject to the faculty’s annual cycle for course evaluations. For inter-faculty or inter-institutional courses involving other faculties at UCPH or other universities, the evaluation is subject to the annual cycle for course evaluation at the institution concerned. SCIENCE Education is responsible of collecting these evaluation results to be used in the study board’s discussion of the quality of courses.

Frameworks for conducting evaluations

The deputy heads of department for education (VILU), on behalf of the departmental management, are responsible for ensuring that systematic course evaluations are conducted.

The minimum framework for the departments’ course evaluations is described below. Each department can choose to conduct further evaluations and, if appropriate, include them in the overall evaluation.

Evaluation of courses

The final online evaluation conducted for all courses (block 1-4) after each block consists of four phases:

1. Reconciliation of expectations: The course’s competency goals and choice of forms of teaching and exam are presented and discussed at the beginning of the course.
2. Preparation of evaluation (block weeks 4–6): The online evaluation forms are automatically generated via the course database (kurser.ku.dk). The course organiser registers the lecturers who are to be evaluated.
3. Implementation: *Forms I and II*: The students fill in the final online evaluation forms. The evaluation concludes at the end of block week 7 so that the lecturer can conduct an oral evaluation with the students

based on the forms by block week 8. *Form III*: The students fill in the online evaluation forms. The evaluation starts on the first day of the exam period, and ends one week after the end of the exam period.

4. Collating course evaluations: The course organiser presents the results of forms I and II and discusses them with the students before the end of the course. In this light, and together with the evaluations of the exam, the course organiser draws up a brief evaluation memo, which is sent to the department's teaching committee with a view to reaching an overall conclusion.

Due to the shorter duration than that of the ordinary courses, the online evaluations conducted at the end of block 5 (summer courses) consist, as far as possible, of the above mentioned phases 1-3. Phase 4 is conducted as above.

The objective is that at least 75% of students who sat the exam on a given course respond to the questionnaires.

Evaluation of projects and theses

Following a public defence of the project or thesis (where applicable), the students fill in an evaluation form, which forms part of the basis for the teaching committee's report.

Frameworks for follow-up and publication

The deputy head of department for education (VILU) is responsible for following up on course evaluations, including publishing the results. The follow-up is designed to help improve the quality of courses in relation to the quality objectives mentioned previously.

In this context, the VILU draws up two versions of the evaluation – one published, one internal – based on the teaching committee's deliberations. The requirements for content are outlined below.

Requirements for the published version of the evaluation report/follow-up plan

1. Response rates for the questionnaire, with comments
2. The number of courses in categories A, B and C (see definitions below)
3. Reflection on the number of courses in each category
4. Description of the overall experience/focus points for courses in each category, and the VILU's plans for follow-up work (specifically in relation to courses in category C)
5. The number of evaluations of projects and theses
6. Reflection on evaluations of projects and theses

7. Status of follow-up initiatives from the same period in the previous academic year

The report is a maximum of three pages.

The evaluation reports, including relevant data, are made available on www.science.ku.dk. They include a description of how the data was sourced. Data that can be traced back to individuals must not be published.

Requirements for the internal version of the evaluation report/follow-up plan

The internal version of the evaluation report/follow-up plan consists of the published part of the evaluation report/follow-up plan as well as the following:

1. Account of the results from the previous period's evaluations, including:
 - a. list of subject elements in categories A, B and C (see definitions below)
2. Plan for follow-up initiatives in the forthcoming period, including brief descriptions of the following:
 - a. Plans for follow-up in relation to specific courses (more detailed analysis, adjusting the content, organisation, etc.), particularly with regard to all courses in category C
 - b. Plan for general development projects in the department in relation to teaching (educational skills development, educational development projects, etc.)
3. VILU's summary of
 - a. initiatives launched during the past period

Process plan for public and internal evaluation report/follow-up plan

1. VILU, in collaboration with the department's teaching committee, draws up proposals for the evaluation report/follow-up plan.
2. VILU consults relevant heads of studies on the proposal for the evaluation report/follow-up plan.
3. VILU sends the whole evaluation report/follow-up plan to the study board for consideration and to the head of studies for information. The head of department decides how staff is informed about the evaluation report and follow-up.
4. The study board sends comments, supplements the departmental management's report and follow-up plan, and recommends any additional follow-up work.
5. The public part of the evaluation report/follow-up plan is published.

Reports are submitted to study boards once a year for study activities offered in the previous academic year. The deadline is 1 October.

The reports are included in the study boards' revision of curricula and course descriptions, with a view to the systematic incorporation of the evaluation results into curriculum work.

The published evaluation reports/follow-up plans for the previous academic year are published by SCIENCE Education by 1 December at the latest.

Definitions and categorisation of courses

- **Category A:**
Courses on which the teaching were particularly good and can serve as an inspiration to others.
- **Category B:**
Courses on which the teaching was satisfactory. The evaluation gives rise to no changes or only minor changes to the course.
- **Category C:**
Courses on which the evaluation leads to changes and improvement of the course and/or the form and/or content of the teaching.

The categorisation is based on quantitative data derived from responses to the eight questions in the evaluation form I. If just one of the criteria cited below is met, the course is allocated to category C.

Besides the above, results of the qualitative part of the evaluation of teaching, results of the evaluation of exam and results of the individual evaluation of course lecturers are included in the overall qualitative assessment of categorisation of a course. Further considerations by the department's teaching committee, taking into account this and supplementary information, may lead to the course being moved to category B.

Questions 3, 6 and 8 refer to the students' learning outcomes. As a result, the teaching committee pays particular attention to courses that stand out in relation to these three questions. If, following further consideration by the teaching committee, a course is no longer assigned to category C, the internal part of the evaluation report specifies the reason for this.

The written feedback to the lecturer also specifies why a given course is assigned to a specific category. If none of the criteria below are met, the course is placed in category A or B.

In principle, a course is assigned to category C if it meets just one of the following criteria:

Question	Criteria
Question a+b:	More than 30% respond in the lowest category, or more than 30% respond in the highest category.

Question 1:	More than 30% respond in the lowest category, or more than 30% respond in the highest category.
Question 2:	More than 30% respond in the lowest category, or more than 30% respond in the highest category.
Question 3:	More than 30% respond in the two lowest categories.
Question 4:	More than 30% respond in the two lowest categories.
Question 5:	More than 30% respond in the two lowest categories.
Question 6:	More than 30% respond in the two lowest categories.
Question 7:	More than 30% respond in the two lowest categories.
Question 8:	More than 30% respond in the two lowest categories.
Failure rate:	If more than 30% of those who sit the exam fail.

For courses on which fewer than 25% of the students who sit the course exam fill in the evaluation form, the teaching committee pays extra attention to the evaluation memo from the course organiser.

This memo includes an assessment of what might have caused the low response rate. It also includes an evaluation of whether the course lives up to the objectives set and whether the students' are generally satisfied with the course because the data generated on the basis of evaluations is insufficient to ascertain this on a quantitative basis.

Sensitive personal details

The course evaluations contain sensitive personal information, in the form of:

- Free text responses
- Evaluations of the individual lecturer/supervisor.

These items of sensitive personal information are only available to the following:

- Departmental management in the department that runs the course
- Members of the teaching committee in the department that runs the course
- Relevant heads of studies and deputy heads of department for education.
- Administrative worker with reference to head of department or head of administration.

Sensitive personal information in the internal evaluation report is accessible to all members of the relevant study board and SCIENCE Education. In all cases, the sensitive personal information is treated confidentially within the groups mentioned.