

# Procedure for the evaluation of Bachelor's and Master's degree programme courses at Aarhus BSS

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Approved by the faculty management team on 8 October 2015

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## Purpose of evaluation procedure

The purpose of the new procedure for the evaluation of courses at Aarhus BSS is to create a development tool for lecturers which increases our shared knowledge and awareness of what best supports student learning at Aarhus BSS.

The evaluation procedure must involve students, lecturers, programme coordinators, directors of studies and programme boards of studies etc. in an ongoing, institutionalised dialogue on student learning and the learning outcome of individual courses and provide an empirical basis for the quality assurance of courses by the programme boards of studies and the directors of studies. The evaluation procedure must be systematic and transparent, and there must be a clear division of responsibility for the quality assurance and continuous development of courses.

## Data collection

The following procedure for the collection of course evaluation data at Aarhus BSS is proposed:

### 1. Initial alignment of expectations

At the beginning of all courses, the lecturers present their thoughts to the students as regards the time that they will be spending together, including the choices made by the individual lecturer and the relevant board of studies as regards the intended learning outcome of the course, its contents, exams, teaching and learning activities and the use of media (including educational IT).

- The pedagogical choices are presented and form the basis for the subsequent interim and end-of-course evaluations.
- Any changes which may have resulted from previous experience gained and previous student evaluations may be mentioned.

## **2. Interim evaluation of all courses**

All courses should be subjected to an interim evaluation.

- It will be natural for the lecturer to discuss both intended and actual learning outcomes and the process with the students during the course. Four to five weeks into the course is the most rational time for the lecturer and students to discuss questions such as “Are we making the most of our time together?”, “Is the course progressing as desired and expected, considering the initial alignment of expectations?” and “Are adjustments/changes needed?”. This makes the evaluation meaningful for the students, first and foremost because it is a way of acknowledging their overall contribution and visualising how they contribute to developing the course.

The individual boards of studies decide their own principles for the interim evaluations. The interim evaluation is informal, decentralised and dialogue-based and is organised by the lecturers themselves, taking into account the principles adopted by the boards of studies.

- Data may be collected for immediate use or for subsequent review. On the website for common digital course evaluations, an ideas bank will be created as a shared resource on how to carry out interim evaluations, for example via a plenary feedback session, focus groups with student representatives, using simple digital tools such as Padlet or Poll Everywhere, via a questionnaire or discussion forum in Blackboard, or a simple paper-based solution.

## **3. End-of-course evaluation**

All courses must be evaluated.

The end-of-course evaluation is based on a common, digital questionnaire administered by the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) according to the guidelines adopted by the faculty management team. The evaluation may be conducted in Danish and/or English.

- The aim is to create an efficient pedagogical tool for developing the individual courses and to generate selected key figures for teaching quality.

### **Course evaluation process**

The aim is for data to be collected during the week leading up to the final lesson, where approx. 15 minutes of the teaching time is allocated for the students to complete the questionnaire.

During the final lesson, the lecturer and students discuss the course as a whole, based among other things on selected patterns identified in the evaluation report.

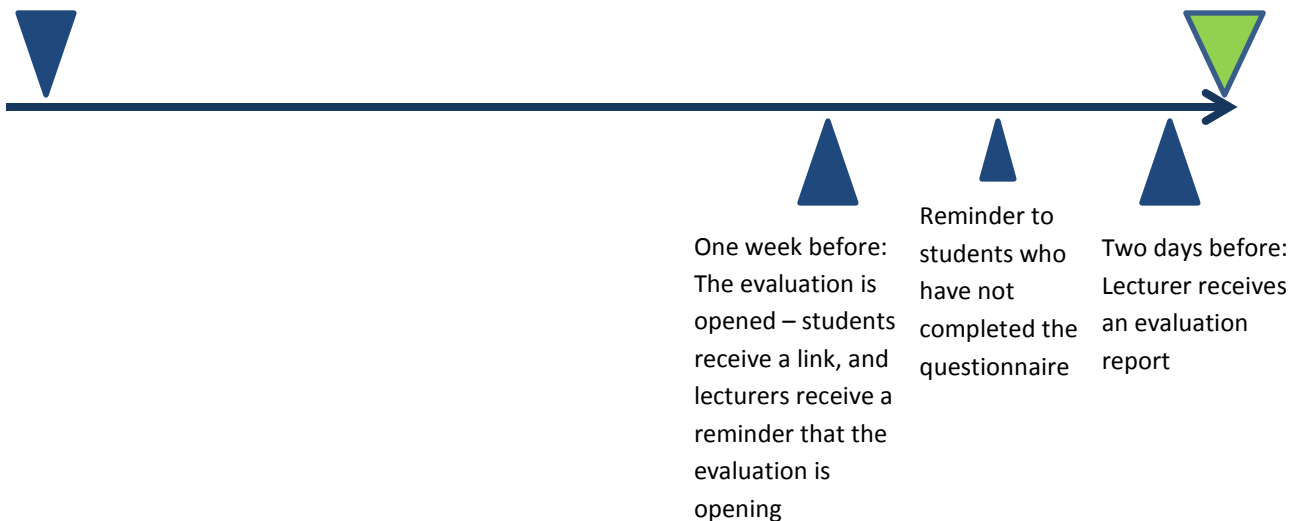
- ➔ It is important that the students feel that their evaluations actually make a difference if they are to keep taking part in course evaluations during their time at university. The timing of the data collection is important, both from the point of view of ensuring a high response rate, and from the point of view of using the data for a dialogue about the course.

### End-of-course evaluation process

Notification of lecturers of the upcoming evaluation:

The lecturers may like to pick supplementary questions or change the timing of the evaluation.

Final lesson:  
Discussion of the  
evaluation



### Questionnaire and question bank

The questionnaire for evaluating courses at Aarhus BSS contains a number of mandatory questions: Ten closed questions + two open questions + possibly three questions about lessons taught by student teachers.

In addition, the lecturer/board of studies/director of studies etc. may add supplementary questions from a question bank via a link in an email/Blackboard.

- ➔ From spring 2016, it will be possible to add evaluation questions to the bank by submitting suggestions to the Centre for Teaching and Learning, which is in charge of the administration of the question bank. Questions may be prepared by the lecturer and are then validated and entered in the bank by the Centre for Teaching and Learning. The supplementary questions can then be accessed by all lecturers via the question bank. A list of the questions in the question bank will be posted on the website for common digital course evaluations at Aarhus BSS together with a brief description of the theoretical or practical rationale for the individual questions.

- The common evaluation form is designed to provide information about the student learning experience and is not an evaluation of lecturer performance in a narrow sense. The form is based on existing practices at Aarhus BSS, experience from other universities and educational research into quality parameters in university teaching.

The common questions concern the following course elements:

alignment of expectations  
feedback  
loyalty among fellow students  
structure of the course  
use of educational IT  
the lecturer's commitment to subject matter and students  
the student's commitment and participation  
overall assessment of learning outcome

Anonymity is guaranteed for the students completing the questionnaire.

## Data processing

The aim is for some of the data processing to be automated so that all the lecturers involved very quickly (within a few hours after the collection of data) receives a report presenting clear and inviting graphics (figures, tables and text).

### 1. Reports for lecturers

The reports received by the lecturers will contain a front page, graphics, statistics, text (answers to open questions) from the students on their own courses. For courses taught by more than one lecturer, the reports will evaluate the lecturers as a team, unless the lecturers have asked to be evaluated individually (for technical reasons, only team evaluations will be possible in autumn 2015).

There is generally no screening of the student responses to the open questions. A screening procedure would delay the reporting on, at least, the student responses to the open questions and would thus interfere with the timing which is to ensure that the lecturers can use the final lesson so discuss the course with their students based on the data.

The programme board of studies decides the default language for the evaluation reports.

### 2. Reports for student teachers

In autumn 2015, the reports with specific key figures and comments for the lessons taught by the student teachers will be sent out to the student teachers one to two weeks after the evaluation is closed.

### 3. Reports/key figures for directors of studies and boards of studies

Reports with aggregate figures and statistics for the approx. 40 different degree programmes at Aarhus BSS will be sent to the relevant directors of studies and programme boards of studies.

### 4. Special reports with in-depth analyses:

Lecturers can order special reports for their own courses.

The directors of studies and boards of studies can order special reports with key figures for specific degree programmes falling within their area of responsibility.

The vice-dean for education can order special reports for any course at Aarhus BSS.

## Interpretation and assessment

The following procedure is proposed to ensure the desired level of transparency, a clear division of responsibilities and that action is taken based on the collected evaluation data.

1. Dialogue between students and lecturer(s) on the final day of teaching on the course. During this dialogue, the lecturers may choose to mention some of the results from the report which they have received.
2. The lecturer/teaching team discusses the evaluations with at least one other colleague/lecturer. The discussions may be organised as part of the routine meetings held by the various sections in connection with the planning of courses. External lecturers may discuss their evaluations with, e.g., a programme coordinator.
  - ➔ For reasons of principle, no lecturers should be left alone with their course evaluations as this may negatively impact employee satisfaction and well-being, and also hamper the deployment of best teaching practices. It is a goal that the evaluation procedures contribute to the greatest possible level of openness and institutionalisation of the sharing of good and bad course experiences.
3. Well in advance of the board of studies' planning of the course offerings for the next semester, the lecturer/teaching team sends a cover note ( $\frac{1}{3}$ -1 page) and the evaluation report to the course coordinator and the programme board of studies.
  - ➔ The programme boards of studies have different procedures and time limits for the planning of the course offerings for future semesters. Accordingly, the degree programme committees fix their own deadlines for the submission of reports and cover notes. If possible, the submission of reports and cover notes should be planned for after the holding of exams.

In the cover note, an account is given of:

- a) What worked well in relation to

- a. the intended learning outcomes of the course;
  - b. the course contents;
  - c. the type of examination and assessment strategy;
  - d. the teaching and learning activities;
  - e. the teaching media (including educational IT, where relevant)
- b) What did not work so well
  - c) What changes are planned if the course is to be offered again
  - d) What has been done to live up to any advice, wishes and requirements voiced earlier by the programme board of studies in connection with previous evaluations.
4. Reports with aggregate key figures are submitted to the programme board of studies by the Centre for Teaching and Learning.
  5. The programme board of studies discusses the support of student learning and the course learning outcomes for the various degree programmes each semester based on the reports submitted by the lecturers, key figures and any other material obtained from students, lecturers, course coordinators/heads of section etc.
    - ➔ In special circumstances, the programme board of studies may choose to delegate the discussion of selected courses based on the reports and cover notes submitted to other bodies (sections, subject-specific groups). The delegation procedure must be set out in writing.
    - ➔ The programme boards of studies may, to some extent, consider courses on the basis of a summary report of selected indicators for the various courses.
  6. The programme board of studies may issue advice, wishes, recommendations and requirements for individual courses and programmes. A separate report or separate minutes are prepared on the discussions by the programme board of studies of the course evaluations.
  7. The following three bodies are responsible for follow-up:

**Programme board of studies:** Ensures the organisation, realisation and development of educational and teaching activities; approves the organisation of teaching activities and assessments; assures and develops the quality of educational and teaching activities; *ensures follow-up on evaluations of educational and teaching activities*. Discusses evaluations, may issue advice, wishes, recommendations and requirements for individual courses and programmes.

**Director of studies:** In cooperation with the board of studies, the director of studies is responsible for the practical organisation of teaching activities and examinations, reporting to the board of studies. *Is responsible for following up on course evaluations*. Each semester, the director of studies informs the head of department about the main conclusions of the evaluation, and they discuss the need for follow-up.

**Head of department:** Is responsible for the department's teaching activities, including the development of the educational environment at the department; ensures the quality and coherence of the department's research and teaching activities; is responsible for evaluations of teaching activities; is responsible for following up on the evaluation of educational and teaching activities and for involving the boards of studies and directors of studies in these evaluations. *Is responsible for staff-related implications of course evaluations.*

**The vice-dean for education and school board of studies:** ensure uniform evaluation procedures across Aarhus BSS and may order special reports with aggregate key figures as a basis for discussing the quality of the faculty's teaching activities.

**The dean:** ensures coherence between research and education and the quality of educational and teaching activities as well as the cross-disciplinary development of the quality of the faculty's educational and research activities.

## Publication

Under the Danish act on transparency and openness in education (*lov om gennemsigtighed og åbenhed i uddannelsene m.v.*), the departments are obliged to publish certain information on teaching quality.

It is proposed that the departments publish:

1. The development in selected key figures at an aggregate level, e.g. the figure for 'self-assessed learning outcome' calculated as an average for all students on a degree programme, possibly specified for Bachelor's and Master's degree students.
2. The director of studies' brief comment based on the board of studies' discussion and decision.

## Evaluation of evaluation system

The evaluation system (technology, questions, procedures) is evaluated on an ongoing basis and will be discussed at least once a year at an ordinary meeting of the school board of studies.

- The discussion will usually take place at the school board of studies' first meeting after the summer holidays.