

Dear teaching staff at the Faculty of Arts

I wrote to you in April in connection with the launch of the new joint module for teaching evaluation on Blackboard. A new semester has started, so it's time to start the second round of the evaluation process. And there are just a couple of things which are worth knowing in this connection.

Systems improvements

I know that it has been a bit of a challenge to get the system to work perfectly. So a number of improvements have been made in preparation for the next round of evaluations, based among other things on all the feedback you have given us. These improvements should make it easier to use the evaluation module.

Niels Lehmann
Vice-dean for education

Some of the improvements are purely technical, but it may well be useful for you to know about the following changes:

Date: 3 October 2016

Page 1/3

- It is now possible to copy the evaluation questions from a previous course (or from another course) and use them in the new evaluation.
- The moment at which the evaluation “closes” on each course has also been made clearer.
- It is now possible to add several questions at the same time without having to jump to and fro between the course map and the question bank.
- The questionnaire can now be released from the course map.
- All our teachers will receive confirmation that the evaluation has been released.

Improvements have also been made for the students. In particular, the email which they receive when the evaluation starts now contains a direct link to the evaluation. The text of the email has also been improved. Hopefully, this will mean that the students ask you fewer questions.

Joint questions in addition to the joint AU questions

During this round it is in principle possible for the board of studies and the degree programme board to add three extra questions to the three compulsory AU questions. It is my understanding that our three schools use this option very differently, and I would like to emphasise that the boards of studies and degree programme boards are of course welcome to *deselect* the option if they want to.

Same question bank this time round

I have not forgotten that I have promised an evaluation of the procedure, including the opportunity to propose other questions. However, a proper evaluation will take a

certain amount of time. So we don't want to rush this through. As a result, the evaluation will take place during the autumn with a view to making further adjustments to the system and improving the question bank in preparation for the spring semester of 2017.

This means that we will be using the same set of questions in the autumn of 2016 as in the spring of 2016. Please remember that you can choose to borrow questions from the other faculties by clicking on them – just like last time. In this connection, please check that you use questions with the Likert scale facing the same way as the other questions you have chosen. Some people have discovered that a system in which 5 means “good” in most cases but “bad” in borrowed questions may lead to what could be called “reverse results”. In particular, this may be a challenge if you are using questions which are borrowed from the Faculty of Science and Technology; so if you want to be absolutely sure that you avoid this problem, you should probably avoid questions from this particular faculty.

Don't choose questions with the option of a comments field

Please note that free-text answers are not possible, just like last time. I know that many of you have reported that this particular function is crucial for a successful evaluation, so I just want to explain why it has not been included.

We are basically bound by an AU decision not to allow the direct submission of comments to teachers. The reason for this decision is that other universities have had unfortunate experiences, with comments fields generating conflicts. As a result, many universities have introduced various forms of censorship mechanism.

Not everyone agrees with this decision, of course, and I think we should have a thorough discussion of this issue in connection with the autumn evaluation. It's not entirely obvious what the right decision should be. For instance, I have received two diametrically opposite reports of discussions in the boards of studies at the Danish School of Education and the School of Culture and Society. The Danish School of Education has opposed the option of comments just as ardently as the School of Culture and Society has supported it. The School of Communication and Culture is generally in favour of comments which are sent directly to the teachers.

I would normally be inclined to allow the system to be used in different ways, but unfortunately this is not possible in this case. Due to the joint AU decision, the system does not allow individual teachers to view comments; and it is not humanly possible for the education consultants to release any potential comments between the penultimate lesson and the last lesson, when the final oral evaluation takes place.

Any comments entered into this system end up in cyberspace at the moment, so it is important that you deselect this option when you choose questions. If you want any

comments in addition to the oral comments you get in the final lesson, I must ask you to solve this problem outside the Blackboard module – at least for the time being.

Feedback is still possible

As you can see from the improvements that have already been made, the ongoing feedback you have given us has been very useful. So you are welcome to go on sending us any problems or good ideas for improvements via the mail addresses that have been set up for this purpose.

At the Danish School of Education you can write to evaluating@edu.au.dk

At the School of Culture and Society you can write to evaluating@cas.au.dk

And at the School of Communication and Culture you can write to evaluating@cc.au.dk.

Need any help?

Remember that an instructional video and an electronic guide are available. The video and guide will soon be upgraded to fit the interface in the new version of the evaluation module.

They can both be found here:

[Website about digital evaluation](#)

Support for Blackboard and the evaluation: bb.it@au.dk or on phone number 87152809.

I hope you enjoy the second round of digital evaluation at the Faculty of Arts, and I will be in touch again in connection with the evaluation.

Best wishes
Niels