SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
AARHUS UNIVERSITET

Procedure for the evaluation of courses on the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes at Aarhus BSS

Approved by the school management team at Aarhus BSS, 2 September 2016

Contents

Document history

Version	Date	Description	Status
1.1	8 October 2015	Procedures approved by the Aarhus BSS school management team	Approved
1.2	19 January 2016	Proposed changes from the consultation in the board of studies are included as comments in the margin. Submitted for discussion among the directors of studies at Aarhus BSS.	Draft
1.3	22 January 2016	Draft for the procedure adapted following the discussion among the directors of studies on 21 January 2016 - the most significant changes compared to the version of 8 October 2015 are marked in yellow	Draft
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1.4	25 January 2016	Revised procedure approved by the school management team at Aarhus BSS	Approved
1.5	1 September 2016	Revised draft for the procedure submitted to the school management team on behalf of the vice-dean for education	Draft
1.5	2 September 2016	Revised procedure approved by the school management team at Aarhus BSS	Approved

1   Purpose of the evaluation procedure

The purpose of the joint procedure for evaluation of courses at Aarhus BSS is partly to create a tool for the quality assurance of the teaching, and partly to create a development tool for lecturers that increases the shared knowledge and awareness of what best consolidates the students' learning at Aarhus BSS.

The goal is an evaluation procedure which involves the students, lecturers, course coordinators, directors of studies and boards of studies etc. in an ongoing, institutionalised dialogue on the students' learning and the learning outcome of the individual courses, and to provide an empirical basis for the course quality assurance carried out by the boards of studies and the directors of studies. In addition, the goal is to ensure that the evaluation procedure is systematic and transparent, and there must be a clear division of responsibility for the work on quality assurance and continual development of courses.

2   Data collection

The joint procedure for the collection of course evaluation data at Aarhus BSS is as follows:

2.1   Balancing expectations at the start of the course

At the beginning of every course, the lecturer presents his/her thoughts to the students about the time they will be spending together in class, including the choices made by the lecturer and the board of studies with regard to the intended learning outcome of the course, its contents, exam, teaching and learning activities and the use of media (including educational IT).

➔ The pedagogical choices are presented and form the basis for the subsequent (recommended) interim and end-of-course evaluations.

➔ Any changes resulting from previous experiences and student evaluations from previous courses may be mentioned.

2.2   Interim evaluation of the courses

All courses should be subjected to an interim evaluation.

➔ The lecturers are encouraged to discuss the course goals, outcome and process with the students during the course.

The individual boards of studies establish their own principles for the interim evaluations. The interim evaluation is informal, decentralised and dialogue-oriented, and it 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. The evaluation website includes an ideas bank that offers suggestions for how to conduct the interim evaluation. Examples include plenary feedback sessions, focus groups with student representatives, the use of simple digital tools such as Padlet or Poll Everywhere, a questionnaire or discussion forum in Blackboard or a simple paper-based solution.

2.3 End-of-course evaluation

All courses must be evaluated.

The end-of-course evaluation is based on a joint digital questionnaire administered by the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CUL) according to the guidelines adopted by the school management team and the boards of studies. The evaluation may be conducted in either Danish or English. The default evaluation language is selected according to the language of instruction registered in the study administrative systems.

➔ The aim is to create an effective pedagogical tool for the development of the individual courses and to generate selected key figures about the quality of the teaching.
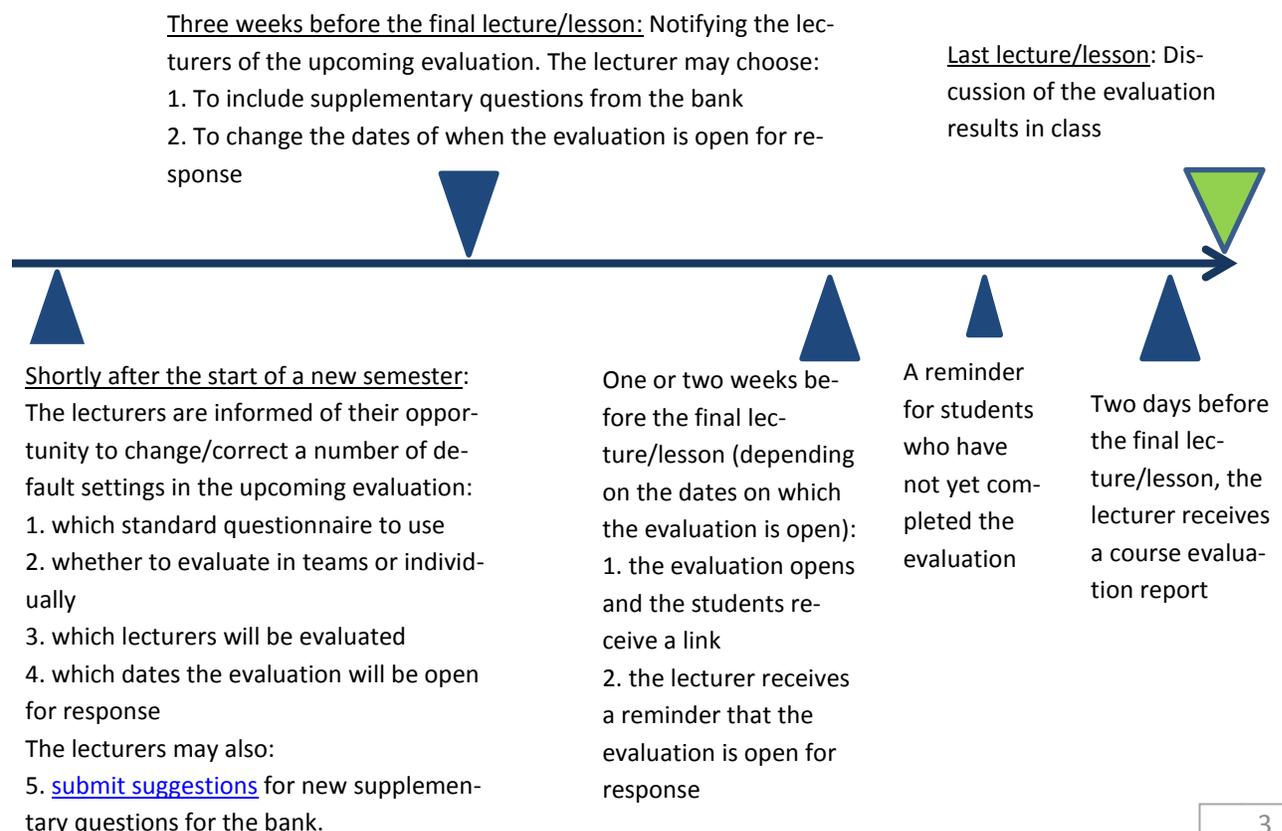
2.4 Course evaluation process

The aim is for the data collection to take place during the week leading up to the final lecture/lesson, where approx. 10-15 minutes of the teaching time are allocated for the students to complete the questionnaire.

During the final lecture/lesson, the lecturer and students discuss the course as a whole, taking point of departure in, among other things, 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 in order to achieve a high response rate, and in order for the data to form a basis for a dialogue about the course.

The end-of-course evaluation process:

Three weeks before the final lecture/lesson: Notifying the lecturers of the upcoming evaluation. The lecturer may choose:
1. To include supplementary questions from the bank
2. To change the dates of when the evaluation is open for response

Last lecture/lesson: Discussion of the evaluation results in class

Shortly after the start of a new semester: The lecturers are informed of their opportunity to change/correct a number of default settings in the upcoming evaluation:
1. which standard questionnaire to use
2. whether to evaluate in teams or individually
3. which lecturers will be evaluated
4. which dates the evaluation will be open for response
The lecturers may also:
5. submit suggestions for new supplementary questions for the bank.

One or two weeks before the final lecture/lesson (depending on the dates on which the evaluation is open):
1. the evaluation opens and the students receive a link
2. the lecturer receives a reminder that the evaluation is open for response

A reminder for students who have not yet completed the evaluation

Two days before the final lecture/lesson, the lecturer receives a course evaluation report

2.5   Questionnaire and question bank

The system comprises four questionnaires with joint questions:

i.   Standard questionnaire with 12 closed questions + two open questions:
For most courses: Series of lectures, seminar teaching, etc. taught by one or more permanent members of the academic staff

ii.   Standard questionnaire (12+2 questions) plus class/student teacher questions (4 closed questions + 1 open question):
For courses which consist of lectures supplemented by classroom teaching conducted by student teachers/PhD students/part-time academic staff/permanent academic staff

iii.   Standard questionnaire (12+2 questions) plus supervision (5 closed questions):
For courses that combine teaching with project supervision e.g. courses that are completed with an assessed take-home assignment or courses that are completed with a Bachelor's project

iv.   Supervision questionnaire for the evaluation of pure supervision processes (see also section 7):
For supervision processes (without teaching) which e.g. lead to a Bachelor's project

The joint questions collect information on the following course elements:
1.   balancing expectations
2.   feedback
3.   collegiality among the students
4.   syllabus
5.   the use of educational IT
6.   the lecturer's commitment to the subject matter and the students
7.   student involvement and workload
8.   the overall assessment of the learning outcome

Anonymity is guaranteed for the students completing the questionnaire.
➜ The joint questionnaire is designed to provide information about the students' overall learning experience on the course and is not an evaluation of the lecturer's performance in a narrow sense.
In addition to the joint questions, the lecturer/board of studies/directors of studies etc. may add supplementary questions to the questionnaire from a question bank via an email/Blackboard link.
➜ It is 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 into 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 questions in the question bank is posted on the evaluation website.

3 Data processing

The data processing is automated so that all lecturers involved can very quickly (within a few hours of the data collection) be sent a report presenting clear and inviting graphics with figures, tables and text.

3.1 Reports for lecturers

The reports received by the lecturers contain a front page, graphics, statistics, text (answers to open questions) from the students on the lecturers' own courses.

The individual boards of studies decide whether the default setting of the course evaluations should be team or individual course evaluations. The individual teaching teams may choose to change this setting.

All lecturers/teaching teams will receive a course evaluation report from their own courses. In accordance with the guidelines of the individual board of studies, the Centre for Teaching and Learning submits the course evaluation reports (figures + comments) to the special evaluation mailbox (evaluering.studienævn@au.dk) which has been created for each board of studies. At the same time, the evaluation reports will also be submitted to the individual lecturers (see sections 3.3, 4.3).

3.2 Reports for student teachers

Reports for the student teachers containing figures and comments specifically for the lessons taught by student teachers are sent to the student teachers within one week after the evaluation closes. A class report will be sent to the student teacher/class lecturer for their own teaching, while an overview of the class evaluation will be sent to the lecturer responsible for the whole course. If the reports are to be submitted to others (e.g. course coordinators, director of studies, department secretary, etc.), this must be decided locally in the individual boards of studies.

3.3. Reports/key figures for directors of studies and boards of studies

Reports containing figures and statistics on an aggregate level for the different degree programmes at Aarhus BSS will be submitted to a special email created for the individual boards of studies (evaluering.studienævn@au.dk). The local procedures specify who has access to this email: Heads of department, directors of studies, chairs of the boards of studies (when these do not overlap with the director of studies), deputy chairs of the boards of studies, members of the boards of studies, course coordinators, board of studies secretaries, department secretaries.

3.3 Special reports with in-depth analyses:

Lecturers can order special runs for their own courses by contacting the Centre for Teaching and Learning directly.

Lecturers, course coordinators, boards of studies, directors of studies, heads of department, the school board of studies and the school management team have access to the data and order special runs in accordance with the guidelines described in the memo; *Principles for handling evaluation data at Aarhus BSS.*

4   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 evaluation data collected.

4.1   Dialogue about the course between the students and the lecturer on the last day of teaching. During this dialogue, the lecturer may include some of the results from the evaluation report which he/she has received.

4.2   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 local departments in connection with the planning of courses. External lecturers may discuss their evaluations with e.g. a course coordinator.

➔ It should be a key principle that no instructor or lecturer should have to deal with their course evaluations on their own, as this may negatively impact employee well-being and the dissemination of best teaching practices. The evaluation procedures should contribute to the greatest possible level of openness and the institutionalisation of the sharing of good and bad course experiences.

   As such, local procedures for this collegial dialogue should be established.

4.3   In accordance with the guidelines of the individual board of studies, the Centre for Teaching and Learning submits the course evaluation report from each course (figures and comments) to the special evaluation mailbox (evaluering.studienævn@au.dk) created for each board of studies. At the same time, the evaluation reports will be sent to the individual lecturers.

4.4   In accordance with AU's quality assurance system, the mandatory course evaluation follow-up is grouped by whether the individual course has been assigned the green, yellow or red color in the indicator model:

-   If the indicator is green, no further action is required.
-   If the indicator is yellow, the director of studies discusses this with the lecturer/course co-ordinator and puts the course on an observation list, so that repeat yellow indicators will require further discussion, analysis and possible initiatives. The director of studies is responsible for the follow-up.
-   If the indicator is red, the lecturer must submit a covering letter of ⅓-one page in length to the course coordinator and the board of studies which accounts for:
   a)   What worked well in relation to
      a.   the intended learning outcomes of the course
      b.   content
      c.   the type of examination and assessment strategy
      d.   the teaching and learning activities
      e.   the media types used in the teaching (including educational IT when relevant)
      f.   the course organisation/form

    b)   What worked less 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 by the board of studies in connection with previous evaluations.
The director of studies is responsible for further follow-ups, including notifying the head of department.

4.5   In addition to the mandatory process, it is recommended that a local process be established that aims to increase the joint knowledge and awareness of what best consolidates the students' learning. This process may consist of each lecturer/teaching team submitting a covering letter (⅓-one page) to the course coordinator and the board of studies, preferably after the exams have taken place and well in advance of the board of studies' planning of the course offerings for the next semester. The documents may be submitted to the special evaluation mailbox (cf. section 4.3).
The covering letter must account for:

    e)   What worked well in relation to

        a.   the intended learning outcomes of the course

        b.   content

        c.   the type of examination and assessment strategy

        d.   the teaching and learning activities

        e.   the media types used in the teaching (including educational IT when relevant)

        f.   the course organisation/form

    f)   What worked less well

    g)   What changes are planned if the course is to be offered again

    h)   What has been done to live up to any advice, wishes and requirements voiced by the board of studies in connection with previous evaluations.

    Another possibility is to organise experience sharing workshops or the like at the department or within the framework of the individual degree programme.

4.6   Reports containing key figures at an aggregate level are submitted by the Centre for Teaching and Learning to the special evaluation mailbox (evaluering.studienævn@au.dk) created for each board of studies.

4.7   Each semester, the board of studies discusses the consolidation of the students' learning and the learning outcomes of the courses on the various degree programmes based on the reports submitted by lecturers, key figures and any other material obtained from students, lecturers, course coordinators etc.

    ➔   In special circumstances, the board of studies may choose to delegate the discussion of selected courses based on the submitted reports and covering letters to other bodies (sections, subject groups). The delegation procedure must be set out in writing.

➔ The boards of studies may, to some extent, handle courses on the basis of a summary report of selected indicators from each course.

4.8 The board of studies may issue advice, wishes, recommendations and requirements for individual courses and programmes. The discussions of the course evaluations by the board of studies will be issued in a separate report or separate minutes.

4.8 The overall responsibility for following up on the course evaluations is in accordance with the University Act and the Aarhus University By-laws and is as follows:

- The head of department is responsible for following up on the evaluations of degree programmes and teaching activities - involving the board of studies and the director of studies in this process.
- The board of studies and the director of studies are responsible for ensuring the follow-up on the degree programme and teaching evaluations.

More specifically, the following actors are responsible for following up on the evaluations:

Board of studies: Each semester, the board of studies discusses the evaluations, formulates advice, wishes, requests and requirements for individual courses and programmes. The board of studies is responsible for establishing local procedures.

Director of studies: Each semester, the director of studies informs the head of department of the main conclusions of the evaluation, and they discuss the need for a follow-up.

Head of department: Each semester, the head of department follows up on evaluations in cooperation with the director of studies and the board of studies (if necessary). The head of department is also responsible for any staff-related implications of the course evaluation.

Vice-dean for education/dean's office: Ensure a uniform evaluation procedure across Aarhus BSS. May also request analyses as a basis for assuring the quality of the school's degree programmes and teaching activities as well as the interdisciplinary quality development of the school's degree programmes.

The above-mentioned actors may order special runs and analyses as described in the *Principles for handling evaluation data at Aarhus BSS*.

5 Publication

In accordance with the Danish act on transparency and openness in education, the departments are obliged to publish certain information on the teaching quality. Currently there is a joint BSS standard for this (see section 5.1), however, the boards of studies may decide to elaborate on this by including comments from the director of studies (see section 5.2):

5.1   The development in selected key figures at an aggregate level in relation to the figure for 'self-assured learning outcome' calculated as an average for all students on a degree programme, sorted by Bachelor's and Master's students respectively.

5.2   The director of studies' brief accompanying comment based on the board of studies' discussion and decision.

6   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 in the BSS Forum for Education.

➜   The discussion will usually take place at the BSS Forum for Education's first meeting after the summer holidays.

7   Specific information about the evaluation of supervision processes

Supervision processes, e.g. Master's thesis supervision, are evaluated with a starting point in a joint questionnaire on supervision (23 questions and a question bank with supplementary questions).

The procedures for the evaluation of supervision processes can be found at the digital course evaluation website.

Appendix 1: Overview of local procedures and other practical initiatives

Below, please find an overview of the procedures and local initiatives which must be established by the individual boards of studies as a supplement to the joint course evaluation procedure at Aarhus BSS:

1.   Local principles for interim evaluation are established and communicated. (2.2)
2.   Local principles for whether team evaluation or individual evaluation should be the default setting for the course evaluation of the board of studies' degree programmes must be established and communicated. The individual teaching teams may change this setting at the start of the semester. (3.1)
3.   Specification of which reports must be submitted to the board of studies' evaluation mailbox: Reports for the individual courses, class evaluation reports, aggregated reports, the lecturers' covering letter (if relevant). (3.3 , 4.3 and 4.4)

4. Specification of who should have access to the board of studies' evaluation mailbox: Heads of department, directors of studies, chairs of the boards of studies (when these do not overlap with the director of studies), deputy chairs of the boards of studies, members of the boards of studies, course coordinators, board of studies secretaries, department secretaries. (3.3 and 4.3)

5. Local procedures for constructive dialogue with colleagues about the evaluation results are established and communicated according to the principle that no instructor or lecturer should have to deal with their evaluations on their own. (4.2)

6. Local deadlines and procedures for the lecturers' possible submission of the covering letter are established and communicated. (4.5)

7. Local procedures for the individual board of studies' discussion of and follow up on the course evaluations are formulated. (4.7 and 4.8)

8. Local principles for content and procedure for the publication of the evaluation results may be formulated. (5.2)