Guidelines for Course Evaluation and the Publication of Course Evaluation Results

The University of Copenhagen is introducing common guidelines for course evaluations and the publication of course evaluation results. The new procedure is designed to ensure that teaching is evaluated in a systematic, planned and efficient manner, and that the evaluations exert the greatest possible influence on teaching quality. Evaluations will be published in a manner that complies with current legislation, cf. the Transparency and Openness in Education Act and the Data Protection Act.

Course evaluations at the University are based on the following principles:

- they are conducted in order to enhance teaching
- they are conducted to make sure students enjoy adequate learning opportunities that will help them complete their studies
- they are an integral part of the teachers' commitment to enhancing teaching and positive examples will be publicised
- the evaluation process will not be too time consuming for the parties involved
- the data generated will be useful for follow-up purposes and suitable for publication.

The guidelines in brief
The common guidelines for the course evaluation consists of:

1) a minimum standard for evaluation frequency
2) a checklist stipulating the faculties' evaluation procedures
3) a checklist for drawing up specific evaluation plans for each level of education
4) a procedure for the publication of summarised course evaluation reports.

Within this common framework, the faculties will develop evaluation practices tailored to local conditions.

1) Minimum standard for the frequency of evaluation
The minimum standard stipulates the following requirements for the frequency of course evaluations at the University:

- Subject elements will be evaluated on a systematically recurring basis, cf. the Programme Order
- At a minimum, all fixed, recurring subject elements are evaluated every second time they are run, unless major changes have been made
- All new elements are evaluated the first time they are run
- Elements will be evaluated in a form the teacher or course leader is able to communicate to the programme management.

2) Checklist for the faculty's evaluation procedure
Each faculty will devise its own evaluation procedure. The checklist below is used to draw up this procedure. The work will be done in compliance with the University Act. The dean has over-arching responsibility for the faculty's evaluation work. Heads of department are responsible for the quality of the department's research and teaching. They also follow up on evaluations of the programme and its teaching along with the appropriate study board and head of studies. The study board assures and enhances the quality of the programme and its teaching, and verifies the follow-up work done on the evaluations.

The purpose of evaluation:
- What is the purpose of the evaluation?
- How often are evaluations conducted, and how does this reflect both purpose and need?
- How will the purpose be communicated to students and teachers?
- What is the target response rate for evaluations?

Choice of form of evaluation and the drawing up of evaluation plans:
- What requirements are placed on evaluation methods (e.g. validation of methods, degree of freedom of choice, methodological continuity, etc.)?
- What provision will be made to ensure that evaluations are conducted in accordance with the academic and educational objectives?

- Which perceptions of teaching quality will form the basis for the evaluations, and under whose auspices will they be debated?
- How will consistency be ensured between the purpose of the evaluation, perceptions of teaching quality and evaluation practice?
- How will students be involved in drawing up the evaluation procedure?
- Who is responsible for drawing up the evaluation plan?

Follow-up on evaluations

- Who will have management responsibility for the different parts of the follow-up work (i.e. follow-up concerning the planning of teaching, academic content, examinations, curriculum, staffing and staff training)?
- Who will ensure communication to and with students about the outcome of evaluations and the follow-up work?
- Who will ensure communication to and with teachers about the outcome of evaluations and follow-up work?
- Who will ensure communication with other stakeholders and interested parties?

Publication

- What model for publication of course evaluation results has the faculty chosen?
- What provision will be made to ensure that the definitions of the categories A, B and C (which must be outlined in the evaluation summary) reflect the purpose of the evaluation, the perception of teaching quality and the evaluation practice?

Teacher qualifications and skills enhancement

- What policies will govern skills enhancement for teachers?
- What provision will be made to ensure that the opportunities for skills enhancement reflect the faculty's needs?
- What options will teachers have to provide feedback on evaluations?
- How will the faculty's skills-enhancement work be documented?

Maintenance and communication of evaluation practice

- What provision will be made to ensure that an updated and publicly accessible description of the faculty's evaluation procedure is available?
- What provision will be made to ensure that this description is communicated to all teachers, students and other stakeholders?
- What provision will be made to ensure that the available evaluation tools are updated and maintained?

3) Checklist for drawing up specific evaluation plans for each level of education

Depending on the way in which the faculty is organised, the evaluation plan for each academic year will be drawn up at either faculty level, department level or head-of-studies level.

The evaluation plan determines the evaluation of the individual subject elements. The evaluation plan stipulates:

- which subject elements will be evaluated, and by which methods
- at what point during the semester the subject element will be evaluated
- which stakeholders will help to draw up the evaluation plan.

The evaluation plan will be updated once a year and published in a form that is accessible to all teachers and students.

4) Guidelines for the publication of course evaluation results

Publication requirements
The procedure adopted for the publication of course evaluations must ensure that the University complies with the publication requirements stipulated in the Transparency and Openness in Education Act.

The Transparency and Openness in Education Act stipulates that information about current evaluations of the quality of the University's teaching will be published on the institution's website. The University has decided that course evaluation results for at least the past year will be available on the faculty's website. However, information about individual teachers is exempted, as are evaluations conducted exclusively by employees of the institution itself.

Model for publication of course evaluation results
The faculties can choose between two models for the publication of the results of the course evaluations. Each faculty uses one model, and the chosen model is stipulated in the faculty's evaluation procedure. Regardless of the choice of model, the deadline for the publication of course evaluation results for the completed academic year (from September to September) is 1 December.

Model 1. Summarized course evaluations report

The faculties publish a qualitative, descriptive summary of course evaluations (known as an course evaluation report) at least once a year. The study year is defined as running from September to September, and evaluations for the previous year will be published before December. The relevant manager (head of department, head of studies or head of study board) will summarise the results of the annual evaluations of subject elements. Response rates will also be reported and commented upon.

Model 2: Course evaluation results reported in programme reports and programme evaluations

The faculties publish the results of the course evaluations for the completed academic year no later than 1 December combined with reporting on and follow-up on the course evaluation results in the first programme report or programme evaluation. Response rates will also be reported and commented upon.

Whether using model 1 or 2 evaluation material will be divided up into three categories: A, B and C. The individual faculties are responsible for the definition, development and application of these categories. The definition must relate to the purpose of the evaluation, the perception of teaching quality and actual evaluation practice, c.f. the checklist for faculty evaluation procedures. The definitions of A, B and C must be stipulated in the course evaluation report.

A consists of evaluations which, in relation to the definition of the category, show that the teaching/subject element functions particularly well and serves as an inspiration to others.

B consists of evaluations which, in relation to the definition of the category, show that the teaching/subject element functions satisfactorily.

C consists of evaluations which, in relation to the definition of the category, show that the teaching/subject element requires multiple changes.

The course evaluation report begins by outlining the number of evaluations in each category, complete with reflections upon the spread between the categories. Each category will then be discussed as follows. For category A, the focus will be on particularly positive experiences. Category B (the intermediate group, probably the largest of the three) will be commented on only in brief. For category C, a description will identify where attention needs to be paid, where changes and other follow-up initiatives are already in place or will be implemented in the future. The course evaluation report will also take stock of follow-up initiatives from the previous study year. Skills-enhancement initiatives will also be mentioned in conjunction with the follow-up work.

The underlying evaluation data will be listed at the end of the course evaluation report. The data material can be aggregated, and will include a description of how it was sourced. Data that can be traced back to individuals must

not be published. If links to underlying data are not provided, the material that formed the basis for the course evaluation report must be stipulated.

The report will be max. 3 pages.

(See template for course evaluation report and a real-life example from the Faculty of Theology below).

Publication
Course evaluation reports will be published on faculty websites. Links to faculty websites will be published on www.ku.dk.

Legality
The parties involved in the design of the course evaluation report and the assessment of the links to underlying data must take all due care to follow the rules stipulated in the Data Protection Act. Evaluation data that can be traced back to individual teachers must not be published. Particular care must be taken regarding evaluations that might be traced back to individual teachers and therefore identify them.

In cases where there is the slightest doubt, Education & Students will assess the legality of publishing specific material.

Finally, the parties involved should be aware that the legal framework does not require that all teaching is evaluated, merely that actual evaluations conducted must be made public, except for information about an individual teacher's teaching and evaluations conducted exclusively by employees of the institutions, c.f. the Order governing the Transparency and Openness in Education Act, etc.