



Guidelines for Course Evaluation at the School of Culture and Society

The two boards of studies at the School of Culture and Society have adopted the following evaluation policy for all bachelor's and master's degree programs within the school, as an implementation of [Aarhus University's quality assurance](#). Evaluation of professional master's programs shall adhere to the same fundamental principles, taking into account their unique structure and educational implementation.

The policy aligns with [assurance practices in the educational area at ARTS](#) and outlines the initiatives undertaken in connection with the evaluation of individual courses, entire programs, and potential supplementary activities in the educational domain.

This is a 'minimum document' containing recommendations, which each individual degree programme board and the boards of studies may supplement with additional forms of evaluation if desired. As part of daily personnel management, it is the responsibility of department heads to ensure that all teachers are familiar with the evaluation policy established by the boards of studies and that they take responsibility for evaluating their own courses. Following discussions in the degree programme board and board of studies, it is the responsibility of the head of studies to inform the head of school about the evaluations conducted for teaching at the school. The current revised joint evaluation policy for ARTS was approved by the faculty management in October 2023.

Background and Responsibility

The School of Culture and Society is responsible for a wide range of diverse programs, each with its own content, academic focus, and history. This academic diversity necessitates the development of a common evaluation policy that respects differences and preferences for local practices. At the same time, a shared policy can create common frameworks and standards that allow for the exchange of experiences and mutual inspiration across disciplines.

Moreover, a shared evaluation policy must ensure that the responsibility for various aspects of the evaluation is clearly assigned and resides at the appropriate level within the organizational structure of the programs. Specifically, this means that some elements should be conducted and followed up on by the degree programme board, while others are most advantageously carried out by the board of studies.

The department head is responsible for the subject- and course-specific aspects of the evaluation, while the chairperson of the board of studies is responsible for the board's tasks related to evaluation, including potential program comparisons, joint initiatives, sharing of experiences, and dissemination of "best practices."

Since the board of studies for Theology does not have an affiliated degree programme board, the described processes are conducted directly within the board of studies for Theology.

Purpose

The evaluation policy aims to:

1. Ensure and enhance the quality of individual teaching and supervision activities to promote student learning outcomes and guarantee research-based education through shared academic reflection between teachers and students.
2. Strengthen ongoing quality development: The evaluation policy seeks to foster continuous improvement in teaching and programs by using evaluations as a foundation for ongoing adjustments and enhancements.
3. Publish evaluations in accordance with AU's overarching quality assurance policy.



Furthermore, the specific evaluation practices are intended to increase students' awareness of and reflection on their own learning relative to the learning objectives for each course. The policy also aims to encourage both teachers and students to continuously consider which types of knowledge, skills, and competencies are promoted through different forms of learning activities.

Stakeholders

The evaluation policy is designed to address the needs of various parties with an interest in teaching and educational programs at the school. Specifically, the following stakeholders are considered:

1. Students, as they have a vested interest in ensuring that teaching and educational programs are structured to maximize their learning outcomes.
2. Teachers, as they are interested in developing teaching practices in a manner that is effective both collectively and individually.
3. Management, tasked with assessing quality and resource requirements in relation to overarching strategic and academic goals, as well as ensuring the research-based foundation of the educational programs.
4. Policymakers and other actors in the public education system, who are responsible for evaluating whether resources and quality are appropriately aligned.

1. Evaluation procedure

The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure and develop the quality of teaching, as well as to contribute to reflective learning among the students.

The concept of quality assurance calls for a summative evaluation and reporting, detailing the extent to which the desired learning objectives have been achieved. Therefore, quality assurance requires a clear and concise reporting format.

On the other hand, the concept of quality development invites a formative evaluation practice that focuses on development and decisions from a forward-looking perspective. Quality development emphasizes the teaching process and concrete adjustments for the future (either during the ongoing course or for the next time the course is offered), and should have a clear learning-oriented perspective.

Evaluation procedures for individual courses have been designed to address both aspects. The daily responsibility for ensuring and developing the quality of individual teaching sessions is placed with the department heads, who are tasked with ensuring that the following evaluation procedure is followed:

1. Expectation alignment during the first session of all courses
2. Oral mid-term evaluation for all courses
3. Written final evaluation and reporting for all courses to the degree programme board and the board of studies, and a verbal summary of the final evaluation with the students.

1.1 Ad 1. Expectation Alignment

All teaching sessions begin with an expectation alignment, where the teacher presents what the students can expect from the specific course, and outlines the expectations for the students' participation in the teaching, including when, how, and why evaluations will take place. The purpose of this is twofold: first, to clarify and discuss the premises for the course, and second, to lay the foundation for subsequent evaluation activities. The following points should therefore be included:

- Academic goals and competency objectives (as outlined in the academic regulations)
- Examination format and requirements (as outlined in the academic regulations)
- Teaching methods
- Expectations for student preparation and participation



- Students' expectations of the course
- Presentation of the syllabus and selection of texts
- Presentation and determination of when mid-term and final evaluations will take place, as well as presentation of any adjustments made following the latest evaluation

1.2 Ad 2. Oral Midterm Evaluation

Midterm evaluations play a central role in creating a constructive dialogue about teaching quality and student experience. A thorough evaluation halfway through a course provides an opportunity to identify particularly well-functioning elements and any challenges or areas that require improvement before the course is completed.

Recommendations:

- Midterm evaluations should adopt a dialogue-based approach, where both teachers and students actively participate in discussions about course content, teaching methods, and student engagement.
- The midterm evaluation should allow for broad and varied constructive feedback from students. Therefore, students should be given the opportunity to provide feedback collectively. The use of digital tools such as Menti and Padlet, as well as initial group discussions, can support this.
- Several programs have had positive experiences with midterm evaluations being led by the students themselves. First, the students have a discussion without the teacher, followed by a joint conversation with the teacher. This creates a space for open and honest discussion, where students feel comfortable expressing their views and concerns, while also helping each other to formulate potential criticisms constructively.
- The teacher takes the input into account and writes a brief summary, which is then shared with the students.

The midterm evaluation should be based on the themes addressed during the initial expectation alignment and should aim at creating a safe and inspiring learning environment. The following questions should be addressed:

- To what extent are the teaching and learning activities appropriate in relation to the academic and competence goals?
- How do students perceive their own engagement and effort?
- How is the curriculum evaluated, and what is the perceived academic level?
- How is the dynamic and dialogue in the classroom experienced?

The midterm evaluation is primarily an internal course process with the goal of formative quality development.

1.3 Ad 3. Final Evaluation

It has been decided by the faculty management that a final evaluation should be conducted for all offered courses at Arts. The written part of the final evaluation for the students will automatically be initiated with a fixed start and end date, which can later be modified by the teacher.

Currently, one mandatory question has been set at the university level, and the boards of studies may decide on additional common questions. These questions contribute to addressing themes in sub-policies 2 and 3 in the overall evaluation policy for ARTS. Furthermore, individual teachers may supplement with questions specific to the course level. The questions chosen by the boards of studies will be locked for



changes for a three-year period. The director of studies has the authority to grant exceptions for modifications to the questions.

The written evaluation should be discussed verbally with the class and result in a written summary that draws on both the written evaluation and the oral discussion. This summary should be signed by the teacher and at least one student. It is then sent to the chairperson of the educational board (or, for theology, to the chairperson of the boards of studies).

The final evaluation should, at a minimum, include the following:

1. The final written evaluation should present a summary of the evaluation's findings. It must address whether the course met the course description and the academic objectives, the course's academic level, the reading material, and the workload for the students.
2. This summary should be discussed verbally with the class. The discussion should focus on:
 - a. How have the agreements made during the mid-course evaluation been followed up?
 - b. Which aspects of the course particularly supported and inspired students' own learning?
 - c. What experiences can the teacher(s) carry forward in further developing the learning activities for future iterations of the course?
3. Finally, the teacher should provide a consolidated written feedback summary. A common framework will be established by the Boards of studies for both the Institute of Culture and Society (IKS) and the Boards of studies for Theology. The final written evaluation should be signed by both the teacher and one student. Therefore, students are encouraged to elect a representative who, together with the teacher, drafts and signs the final evaluative summary.

The overall final evaluation serves two purposes:

1. **Summative Quality Assurance**
This is achieved through written evaluation and reporting, discussion in degree programme boards and in the board of studies, and reporting from the director of studies to the head of school. The goal is to assess the course's performance and its alignment with the expected outcomes, providing a measure of the course's quality.
2. **Formative Quality Development**
This is facilitated by the teacher's discussion with the class and discussions within the degree programme boards and in the board of studies, focusing on sharing good examples and initiatives across courses and programs for continuous improvement.

The summaries of the evaluations are discussed in the specific educational boards relevant to the subject area. The department head is responsible for ensuring follow-up on discussions regarding specific courses and addressing those that generally receive negative evaluations. It is crucial that actions are taken to improve teaching quality and address any concerns raised by students.

Therefore, the department head should be actively involved in identifying weaknesses in these courses and facilitating dialogue to address them. This will help ensure that the Boards of studies's task of providing quality assurance is fulfilled, while also meeting the needs and concerns of our students. Through this process, continuous improvements can be made to enhance the overall learning experience.



Notat

Kirstine Helboe Johansen

Dato: 12. juni 2024

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Following this, the department head summarizes the evaluation in the form developed by CAS for this purpose and submits it to the board of studies by March 1st / September 1st (see appendix and the [boards of studies's website](#)). The aggregated summaries from all degree programme boards are discussed in the board of studies meetings in October/November and March/April. Based on the discussion in the board of studies and the summaries from the individual degree programme boards, the director of studies prepares an overall report on the evaluation of the school's teaching, which is published on the [study portal for students at Arts](#).

This version of the evaluation policy at the School of Culture and Society was approved by the board of studies for Culture and Society on May 15, 2024, and by the board of studies for Theology on May 8, 2024.

The evaluation guidelines have been adopted by the school management and the board of studies and signed on their behalf by:

Chairperson of the board of studies for Culture and Society, Peter Bugge

Chairperson of the board of studies for Theology, Jakob Egeris Thorsen

Director of Studies, Kirstine Helboe Johansen
