

Principles for Evaluation Development of Teaching, Study Programmes, and Teaching Competences

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Introduction

Evaluation of courses and programmes is central to SDU's work on quality policy. Quality assurance at SDU generally focuses less on retrospective control and more on forward-looking development initiatives. Accordingly, the purpose of evaluation, as addressed in this document, is to support *the development of teaching and study programmes*.

This document aims to establish a framework for an evaluation culture where everyone involved in teaching and education—students, teachers, heads of study, study boards, and management—work together to ensure the best possible learning, teaching, and study programmes. In other words, there is a shared responsibility to participate in and learn from evaluations.

This shared responsibility reflects an understanding that evaluation is more than student questionnaires at the end of a course. Other stakeholders may provide feedback, evaluations may take place at different times, and they may use different methods. Most importantly, evaluations can serve different purposes and aim to develop various aspects of teaching and education.

The core of the principles outlined below is that different evaluation purposes require specific content, stakeholders, timing, methods, follow-up, and regularity. For example, not all stakeholders have the necessary knowledge at a given time to provide feedback aligned with a specific evaluation purpose. Therefore, there must be alignment between the elements of an evaluation (purpose, stakeholders, method, etc.).

Another key point is follow-up. Evaluations themselves are just feedback; it is the follow-up that leads to actual development. Follow-up can take many forms: recognising good teaching practice, improving less effective practice, and communicating back to stakeholders how feedback leads to development.

Teaching evaluations also take place within a broader context of many other types of evaluations. Therefore, these various evaluations and surveys must be coordinated to avoid over-evaluation and instead create a coherent evaluation practice.

The principles below therefore emphasise:

- the purposes of evaluation that should be prioritised,
- the need for alignment between an evaluation's purpose and its other elements,
- the importance of follow-up, and
- the integration of teaching and programme evaluations with other surveys.

Following the principles are recommendations for good practice, and an appendix provides concrete examples of alignment practices for different evaluation purposes.

Principles

Evaluation of Teaching and Study Programmes at SDU

- **Three purposes: The evaluation of teaching and study programmes at SDU should primarily serve three purposes:**
 - Development of university pedagogical competencies
 - Development of teaching
 - Development of study programmes

These three purposes cannot, in principle, be achieved through a single method.

- **Alignment: There is alignment between the purpose, content, actor(s)/stakeholders, timing, method and regularity of the evaluation.**
- Within the framework set by the faculty, study boards make well-founded decisions regarding this alignment for all three objectives within their area of responsibility. (*See suggestions for good practice below.*)
- **Follow-up: For each evaluation activity, well-founded decisions must be made on how to follow up on its results.**

Follow-up is understood in two ways:

 - Follow-up as the subsequent work with the results, whether this involves disseminating effective practices or improving less effective ones
 - Follow-up as documentation and communication to stakeholders and management about both the results and the subsequent actions taken
- **Overall Perspective: Local evaluation activities must be coordinated with each other and with central/national evaluations.**

Coordination should prevent overlap in content, stakeholders, timing, and methods.

Good Practice Based on the Principles

There are many effective ways to put the principles into practice. The appendix to these principles provides inspiration and examples that faculties and study boards can use as a starting point for making well-founded decisions on how to achieve and follow up on each of the three evaluation objectives.

It is not essential to follow the suggested examples below of content, stakeholders, timing, methods, follow-up, or regularity precisely. What matters is:

1. that there is coherence between the elements of the evaluation activity,
2. that the activity contributes to the shared local effort to develop teaching and study programmes,
3. that it can be planned within the available resources.

To avoid evaluation fatigue, it is recommended to reduce the number of evaluation activities. This approach makes it particularly important to ensure that relevant information is not lost. Therefore, for all the examples below, there should also be a channel (e.g., via the study board, academic advisor, programme management, or similar) through which students and/or teachers can share experiences from teaching or study programmes outside routine evaluations.

Concretely, such a channel could take the form of an open opportunity after each course cycle, where students are informed that they can share experiences that would otherwise not reach teachers or the study board. The study board then considers whether any submitted comments warrant further information gathering (e.g., from lecturers or students) or other follow-up actions.

Appendix: Examples for Inspiration

Purpose: Developing University Pedagogical Competences

- **Example 1:** The intention is to assess the teachers' university pedagogical competence

What is the content?	Who are the stakeholders?	When should it take place?	Which method?	How often?	How is follow-up ensured?
Students' assessment of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active learning elements (to what extent the course is designed as active learning) • Alignment (how the course design is perceived in terms of alignment between objectives, activities, and assessment) • Learning outcomes (to what extent the course has provided the student with learning) 	Students	After the exam	Typically via questionnaire, but other methods are also possible	Recommended every fourth iteration of the course. Exceptions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses with a new teacher • Courses that the teacher, study board, or management wishes to evaluate 	The teacher responds to the evaluation in a report, which is discussed in the study board or equivalent. If needed, pedagogical consultants may be involved. The report and any development initiatives are discussed during the employee development interviews. Both the evaluation results and the teacher's suggestions for development actions are communicated to the students.

- **Example 2:** The intention is to assess the teacher's university pedagogical competence

What is the content?	Who are the stakeholders?	When should it take place?	Which method?	How often?	How is follow-up ensured?
University pedagogical assessment of the course's alignment	Pedagogical consultant and the teacher	Before the course begins	Review of course description and teaching plans, as well as discussions of didactic considerations	When the teacher requests it	The teacher reviews the consultant's evaluation report and implements any necessary changes in the course. The report and any development initiatives are discussed during the employee development interviews (MUS).

- **Example 3:** The intention is to develop university pedagogical competencies across, for example, a group of teachers.

What is the content?	Who are the stakeholders?	When should it take place?	Which method?	How often?	How is follow-up ensured?
Evaluation of a specific university pedagogical initiative, e.g., in connection with a teacher's participation in the Lecturer Training Programme	Primarily the teacher, but also students and teacher colleagues if relevant	During and/or after completion of the initiative	The teacher carries out a development project as part of the Lecturer Training Programme. The evaluation method depends on the project initiative	Adapted to assistant professors' participation in the Lecturer Training Programme.	The teacher shares and discusses teaching initiatives, evaluation, and reflections with colleagues, e.g., at a staff seminar

Purpose: To develop teaching

- **Example 4:** The intention is to provide feedback on the implementation of the teacher's intentions to adjust during the current course.

What is the content?	Who are the stakeholders?	When should it take place?	Which method?	How often?	How is follow-up ensured?
Students' experience of, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of teaching methods • Teaching pace • Workload 	Students	Midway through the course	Qualitative methods	In every course	The results of the evaluation are communicated, and any development is implemented directly in the teaching. If needed, pedagogical consultants may be involved. The results and subsequent implementation are documented in the teaching portfolio and discussed during the staff performance review (MUS).

- **Example 5:** The intention is to provide feedback on the implementation of the teacher's intention to adjust during a course.

What is the content?	Who are the stakeholders?	When should it take place?	Which method?	How often?	How is follow-up ensured?
Colleagues' experience of the implementation of the teacher's intention in all or parts of a course	Colleagues	Agreed upon based on which parts of the course the teacher wants feedback on. The approach can be used both formatively (within a course) and summatively (for a future course)	Peer observation and feedback	At least every second iteration	The evaluation results are incorporated into future course planning. Results and subsequent implementation are discussed within the colleague group and during the staff performance review (MUS).

- **Example 6:** The intention is to carry out ongoing checks of the teaching process as a shared responsibility.

What is the content?	Who are the stakeholders?	When should it take place?	Which method?	How often?	How is follow-up ensured?
Joint reflection by students and the teacher on, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working methods • Processes • Participation or similar efforts, status, and next steps 	Students and teacher	One or more times during the course. The approach can be used both formatively (within a course) and summatively (for a future course)	Qualitative methods with a particular focus on the learning environment and learning community	In every course	The evaluation results are communicated and incorporated directly into teaching and learning. If needed, pedagogical consultants may be involved. Results and subsequent implementation may also be discussed within the colleague group.

Purpose: To develop study programmes

- **Example 7:** The intention is to provide feedback on the perceived coherence between elements in a study programme.

What is the content?	Who are the stakeholders?	When should it take place?	Which method?	How often?	How is follow-up ensured?
Students' experience of coherence between elements within a semester/quarter or over longer periods, e.g., regarding academic progression, workload distribution, etc.	Students	At the end of a semester	Typically via questionnaire or focus group interviews with students, but other methods are also possible	Every second year in connection with quality policy follow-up (can alternate between spring and autumn semesters)	Head of studies initiates dialogues at subject group meetings based on results from student surveys. If needed, pedagogical consultants may be involved. Results and any development actions are reported to management and communicated to the student group at the start of the following semester.

- **Example 8:** The intention is to ensure coherence between programme elements.

What is the content?	Who are the stakeholders?	When should it take place?	Which method?	How often?	How is follow-up ensured?
Alignment of coherence between courses regarding academic prerequisites, teaching and examination formats, feedback activities, etc.	Group of teachers	Before the semester/quarter/time period	Mapping and discussions within the group, where teachers present objectives, methods, and content for their courses. Discussions may be facilitated by a pedagogical consultant	In connection with changes to courses, the sequence of course, programme profile, or altered admission patterns	Relevant changes to individual courses' prerequisites, teaching formats, etc., are implemented. Course descriptions are adjusted if necessary. Changes are communicated to the teacher group and to students

- **Example 9:** The intention is to evaluate and further develop the labour market relevance of the programme.

What is the content?	Who are the stakeholders?	When should it take place?	Which method?	How often?	How is follow-up ensured?
Alignment of the programme profile and graduates' competences with labour market needs	Advisory boards and external experts	Optional	Discussions at meetings between programme representatives and external stakeholders	At least every 6 years (as required by ministerial regulations) – See SDU's Principper for evaluering af hele uddannelser med inddragelse af eksterne eksperter (pdf) (SDU's Principles for Evaluation of Entire Programmes with Involvement of External Experts – only in Danish).	Relevant changes are implemented at both curriculum and teaching practice level. Support from SDU CTL or RIO may be involved if needed. Changes are communicated to management, teachers, students, and external stakeholders.