

MEMO

To DTU's study committees and all DTU lecturers

Re Course and exam evaluations

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Background

Since 2001, students have been able to evaluate all DTU courses electronically via CampusNet. The questions in the course evaluations were revised extensively in 2007. In 2010, project evaluations were introduced, but they were only used to a minor extent.

For several years, students, through PF etc., have called for the introduction of evaluations of exams which are an important part of the total course, and for a strengthening of the continuous forward-looking teaching evaluation which enables students to influence the content of ongoing courses. DTU Environment has been conducting exam evaluations for some years on its own initiative, and the experience gathered from these evaluations has been used in the preparation of the following proposals.

DTU's deans have agreed to introduce exam evaluations as well as continuous forward-looking course evaluations. Proposals for the process and evaluation questions have been presented at a meeting of the study committee chairmanship, followed by hearings by the study committees and PF.

In future, teaching and exam evaluations of DTU's courses will comprise three elements:

1. Continuous forward-looking evaluations

Evaluations conducted during a course can be used to adjust teaching at the course as needed. Lecturers can organize forward-looking feedback from students by using one or more methods (see more below). As a minimum, a mid-term evaluation should be conducted (written and/or oral) in semester week 5 (for 13-week courses) - already common practice at many courses. Continuous evaluations will be initiated as of the spring semester 2014.

2. Exam evaluations (in CampusNet)

A form is created in CampusNet for use in exam evaluations at all courses. Based on hearing responses from the study committees and PF, the questions are prepared during spring 2014 with a view to conducting pilot tests at the end of the autumn semester.

3. Course evaluations at semester end (in CampusNet)

The existing final evaluations of the individual courses will continue, but will be supplemented by a question of whether continuous forward-looking course evaluations have been conducted.

More on continuous forward-looking evaluations

There are several reasons why continuous forward-looking evaluations are an excellent pedagogical tool. They are a way for the teacher to receive feedback from students during the course, allowing the teacher to adjust his/her teaching forms etc. as needed. Continuous or mid-term evaluations could also lead to more openness about teaching and the students' learning outcome, thereby strengthening the students' understanding and ownership of their own learning process.

The individual teacher (or team of teachers) chooses the focus points and criteria for the evaluation, including how it should be conducted. LearningLab DTU has prepared 'Continuous evaluation – an idea catalogue' for teachers to use for inspiration. The catalogue describes a range of specific methods which can be combined or used on their own. The descriptions can be used as a basis for developing own versions of the methods and perhaps devise new methods which can be implemented in future versions of the document. The idea is to regularly update the catalogue with feedback from study committees and teachers.

The catalogue of ideas will be made available in Danish and English via the "Infosite om undervisning" (PDF format) and at LearningLab DTU's website (www.llab.dtu.dk).

Continuous evaluation is an internal process involving teachers and students, and the results are used solely to improve teaching. Consequently, the study committee will not be involved in the choice of method(s) and will not have access to the evaluation results. However, the study committee is responsible for ensuring that an evaluation is conducted during the semester using the following sources of information:

- New question in the CampusNet course evaluations on whether an evaluation was conducted during the course (*'During the course, have you been asked to evaluate the course and the teaching, for example through an oral or written mid-term evaluation?'*)
- In the reporting form used by the course manager to report the course's completion rate and other reflections about the course, a checkbox will be added (*'Has a forward-looking evaluation been conducted during the course? yes/no'*) as well as an open-ended question where the course manager can specify how the evaluation was conducted (*'How was the forward-looking evaluation conducted during the course?'*).