



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

Lunds Tekniska Högskola
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LG GU

Policy for Course Evaluation in First and Second Cycle Studies at LTH

Aim

This policy for the course evaluation in first and second cycle studies at the Faculty of Engineering (LTH) is to contribute to the deliberate and systematic improvement and development of teaching at the faculty.

The policy is structured as a framework document with general principles. This is complemented by a number of instructions which constitute a concretisation of the framework policy for various cases.

At LTH, we distinguish between operational and reporting evaluation. Operational (formative) evaluation [operativ utvärdering] aims to improve teaching and learning during an ongoing course. Reporting (summative) evaluation [rapporterande utvärdering] is an ex-post assessment of courses. LTH's overarching policy applies to both types, i.e. that the focus is to be on students' learning and not on the lecturer's teaching.

The university's responsibility

According to the Higher Education Ordinance [högskoleförordningen], the university is to provide students with the opportunity to put forward their views on a completed course through course evaluations. The university is to compile the course evaluations and provide information on the result and any decisions taken, as well as making the results available. This obligation is a natural part of the government's running of higher education institutions, which since 1993 has been characterised by comprehensive decentralisation within the framework of a system based on targets and outcomes.

The Higher Education Ordinance requirements are clarified in the Lund University "Regulations for Course Evaluations and Course Evaluation Reports" [Föreskrifter gällande kursvärdering och kursutvärdering] (PE 2010/341). In this regulation a difference is made between two aspects of course evaluation, one referring to the collection of students' views and opinions and the other to the compiling and analysis of the result. The regulation also clarifies that the course evaluation should focus on student learning and the educational process, and that feed-back must be given to the students that have completed the course as well as be available to future students taking the course.

In concordance with the *List of Rights for Students at Lund University*, students have the right to put forward their views and opinions anonymously in a course evaluation questionnaire.

Allocation of roles within LTH

LTH has a fully implemented matrix organisation for first and second cycle studies, with three agents: *the Education board* [Ledningsgruppen för grundutbildning] (LG GU), *the study programmes boards* and *the departments*. The LG GU decides on the range of courses as well as on the allocation of resources. The study programmes boards plan the activities by proposing the range of courses, course syllabi and programme syllabi to the LG GU. The departments propose a range of courses and carry out a mandate with resources allocated as a lump sum. In this system the study programmes boards, by delegation from the LG GU, are the commissioners while the departments have a clear executive role. The department indicates the course director for each course in the course syllabus. The course director thereby represents the department for a particular course.

With this policy, LTH intends to clarify responsibilities in such a way as to ensure that the various evaluation processes are attributed to the correct level within the organisation.

The students' role

Both the formative evaluation and the summative evaluation are to be based on information about the students' experiences and views of the courses. For the summative evaluation, the students provide information via survey responses, while the exchange of information for the formative evaluation can take place in countless different ways.

At LTH, the focus is to be on students' learning and not on lecturers' teaching. For both the formative and the summative evaluation, this means that it is the students' encounter with the subject which is to be evaluated, their understanding, their activities, their learning styles, etc. The process is to be oriented towards increasing students' responsibility and participation within the framework provided by the tuition. If the students' learning does not have the planned outcome, the teaching is to be systematically changed in such a way as to allow the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

For formative evaluation, this can be measured directly with methods that are adapted to the exact situation in which the students and lecturers find themselves. For the summative evaluation, we rely on the development of broad indicators of the factors that reflect the students' learning situation.

The students, mainly through the student councils [studieråd], also have a crucial role in interpreting and drawing conclusions from the information that emerges. However, the students are not to be burdened with the concrete work involved in the evaluation activities, such as collecting surveys, compiling reports, etc.

LTH's policy for course evaluations aims to reinforce the students' engagement in their own learning and influence in various bodies, through the systematic use of all students' experiences in the evaluation work.

Evaluations as a driving force within educational development and renewal

There is every reason to be proud of the development work that is conducted within LTH's first and second cycle study programmes.

Educational development builds on the lecturers taking deliberate and well-founded decisions on their teaching, on the basis of solid educational knowledge and reliable information. The course evaluation system that is being introduced aims to provide lecturers with an optimal range of information. It also aims to provide students and study programmes boards with a good basis for their actions, both during an ongoing course and for planning and decisions concerning courses and programmes.

With this policy, LTH wants to ensure that lecturers, students and various bodies within LTH have a substantial basis for their discussions and their decisions.

Operational (formative) and reporting (summative) evaluation

The responsibility for ensuring that formative evaluations are carried out rests with the department, and the responsibility for implementation rests with the course director.

It is the lecturers' task to organise teaching so as to support the students' learning in the best possible way. In order to be able to do this, it is of the utmost importance that the lecturers have a clear picture of what happens during a course. With the help of formative evaluation, the lecturer continuously gathers information on what the engineering students experience as being difficult, what they misunderstand or grasp, etc. All this is then immediately converted into the teaching, and the lecturers' decisions are thus well supported. Good lecturers have always, consciously or unconsciously, conducted formative evaluation and they have done so in a number of different ways.

The formative evaluation also aims to support the dialogue in the relationship that characterises good teaching. This improves the students' understanding of the content of the teaching, their planning and implementation of independent study and their assessments of how the teaching could be modified or maintained. In the other direction, the students gain insight into the lecturers' considerations regarding the choice of content, methodology and goals in their teaching.

Summative evaluation is an ex post assessment of courses. This form of evaluation has two main objectives:

1. To monitor, describe and document factors that constitute an indicator of quality in teaching
2. To provide documentation for a quality-enhancing dialogue between the study programmes boards, the departments and the students

The responsibility for ensuring that the summative evaluation is carried out rests with the study programmes boards. The summative evaluation is carried out in compliance with the instructions issued by the LG GU. The LTH faculty office has the necessary support functions for implementing summative evaluations.

All stakeholders, students, boards, management, other lecturers, business and industry, the government etc., have a legitimate interest in forming an immediate idea of the quality of the work. The aim is not to enable continuous adjustments in

order to improve learning, as in the formative evaluation, but rather to describe the quality indicators and thereby enable better overall decisions and deliberations. The organisation depends on this form of data to be able to state over time to what degree “we are doing a good job”. This means that the information made available must be general and not overloaded. It should also be presented in a consistent manner over large areas and long periods of time.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that summative evaluations only describe parts of the activities, and that more detailed judgements require more direct experiences of what actually happens in teaching. The summative evaluation is to measure factors that influence students' learning.

LTH's evaluation system is to direct the faculty towards teaching that is characterised by cooperation and dialogue in such a way that the individual student, within the framework of a reasonable workload, can work and be examined against clear learning outcomes and develop a diversity of skills.

Follow-up

The formative evaluation is the responsibility of the department and is to be implemented by the course director.

The responsibility for the summative evaluation rests with the study programmes boards. As the boards are the LG GU's preparatory body, the LG GU is to follow up that the summative evaluation is carried out in compliance with the stated terms. Feed-back from the results of the summative course evaluations must be given to the students that have completed the course as well as be made available to students attending the course the next time it is offered.