



AALBORG
UNIVERSITY

2.3.2 PRINCIPLES FOR STUDENT EVALUATION

AAU Quality System

Procedure



28-04-2023

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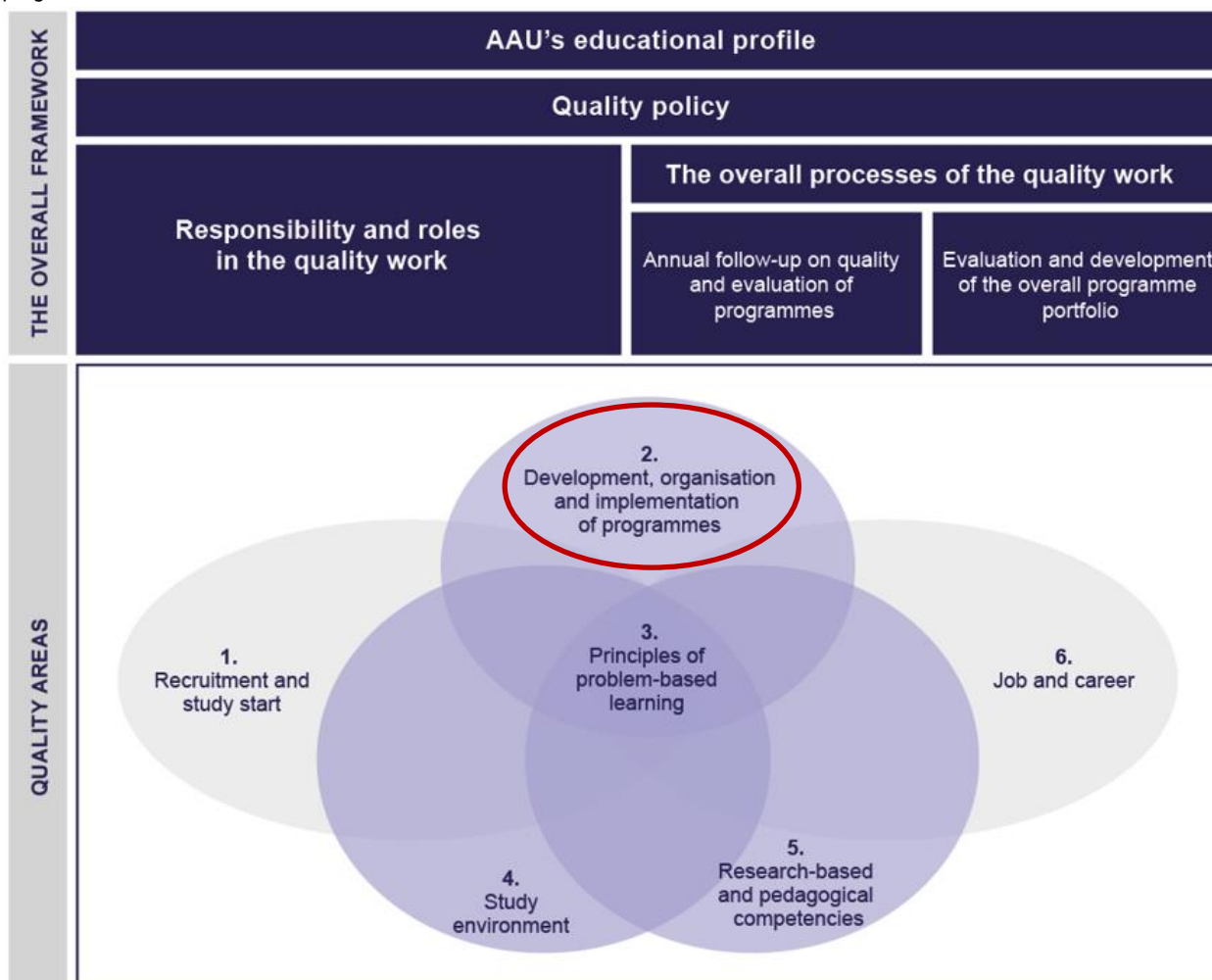
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1. OVERALL FRAMEWORK

This document is part of Aalborg University's (AAU) quality system within the field of education. The quality work described in the document is anchored in quality area 2. 'Development, organisation and operation of the study programmes' in the quality system.

Figure 1 shows the document's position in AAU's quality system. For further description of the structure of the quality system, please refer to "[Quality policy](#)".

Figure 1. The structure of the AAU quality system in relation to quality area 2. Development, organisation and operation of the study programmes



The framework for quality work under quality area 2 is described in the document '[2. Framework for development, organisation and implementation of programmes](#)' which establishes standards, indicators and procedures for the objectives of this quality area.

This document encompasses principles and minimum requirements for the implementation and follow-up on student evaluations. On the basis of this document, the departments themselves must establish the concrete decentralised plan for implementation and follow-up on the evaluations.

2.3.2 PRINCIPLES FOR STUDENT EVALUATION

For evaluation of the study environment, the implementation itself is contained in this document, but the follow-up on the study environment evaluations is described separately in the ['Procedure for the follow-up and development of the study environment'](#), which is part of quality area 4. 'Study environment'.

The principles encompassed in this document list the overall set of rules for the departments' student evaluation plans. The minimum requirements described in the section 'process description' as well as the requirements for the departments' plan in appendix 1 must be met and implemented in the departments' student evaluation plans.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The principles apply to ordinary study programmes (BA, PBA and KA) and continuing training (MA and¹DI).

The purpose of 'Principles for student evaluation' is to carry out systematic evaluations, which are organised so that they can be included in the work on quality development of the individual programmes.

The AAU quality system requires that the following is carried out:

- Evaluation of study start
- Evaluation of study activities
- Evaluation of study environment
- Evaluation of study programmes

The section 'Process description' sets out the principles, objectives and minimum requirements for the evaluations.

As the quality system's 'Principles for student evaluation' only includes principles and minimum requirements for the requested *systematic* evaluations, the ongoing and value-giving dialogue between lecturers and students is not included. Instead it is recognised here as an essential element of good quality culture at the departments.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The overall division of responsibilities and roles is established in the AAU quality system in the document ['Responsibilities and roles in the quality work'](#). The overall division of responsibilities and roles is translated below into specific responsibilities of the individual management levels regarding the student evaluation process. Additionally, expectations for the students' role in the process are included.

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

- Ensures implementation of and follow-up on evaluations, including feedback to students. In relation to the follow-up to the evaluation of the study environment, the responsibility of the Head of Department is described more specifically in ['Procedure for the follow-up and development of the study environment'](#).

¹ Bachelor (BA), Professional Bachelor (PBA), Master (KA), Diploma (DI) and Executive Master (MA).

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- Ensures that there is an evaluation plan for the department's study programmes. Requirements for the content of the departments' evaluation plans are included in the appendix ['Requirements for the departments' evaluation plans'](#) departments' evaluation plans'.

HEAD OF STUDIES

- To complete the student evaluation work in collaboration with the Head of Department and the Chair of the Study Board. The specific tasks of the Head of Studies are apparent from the department's organisation of quality work.

CHAIR OF THE STUDY BOARD

- Addresses the evaluation results in the Study Board in accordance with the department's evaluation plan. Based on the evaluations, the Study Board discusses how the study start, study activities, the study environment and the overall programme might be adjusted or developed.
- Ensures that specific challenges that require follow-up by the Head of Department are reported directly to him/her.
- Ensures implementation of initiatives based on the evaluations in cooperation with the Head of Department, including the ['Procedure for the follow-up and development of the study environment'](#).

STUDENTS

- Participate in evaluations and contribute constructively in relation to further work with the results of the evaluations in order to contribute to the development of study environment, teaching and study activities.
- Regularly report minor defects and minor requests for improvement of the physical study environment directly to Campus Service via the app AAU Building Support.

4. PRINCIPLES

The following principles apply to evaluations with students at AAU.

- 1) **All students are systematically involved in evaluations.** The study programmes must support a good evaluation culture by providing students with the best conditions for participating in evaluations².
- 2) **Evaluations are developed to provide constructive and useful answers to further development of the subject area of the evaluation.** The evaluation methods and the timing of the evaluations are adapted to each department in order to take account of its specific organisation, student population and culture.
- 3) **The results are documented and used systematically in the following quality and development work with the planning and development of study start, study activities, the study environment and study programmes.** Both qualitative and quantitative evaluation results are documented and passed on to the parties who will use the evaluation. These include relevant managers,

². In connection with the introduction of standardised study environment issues, the Strategic Council for Education (DSUR) has decided that the quantitative semester evaluation should as a starting point be carried out in connection with a teaching course.

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organisers of the programme's study activities, lecturers and students. The results must be anonymised before they are passed on to the parties who use the evaluations.

The processing and follow-up on the evaluations must be documented and efforts initiated. An example of documentation of processing and follow-up might be minutes from qualitative discussions (e.g. in Study Boards or from semester group meetings). In minutes it must be clear what has been discussed and decided in connection with the processing, whether there are forward-looking focus points, agreed form of follow-up and information about who is responsible for ensuring follow-up.

- 4) **As part of evaluations, lecturers/supervisors must deal with their teaching/guidance.** The lecturers and supervisors must continuously adjust and develop the pedagogical/didactic quality and academic content (the academic content is adjusted in collaboration with the module-responsible lecturer) based on evaluations of study activities.
- 5) **Students must receive feedback on evaluations.** Feedback must include information about the processing of the results as well as initiated follow-up efforts. Feedback to the students is essential in order to support a good evaluation culture, as well as to ensure the students' motivation to participate in the evaluations. The departments must therefore ensure systematic feedback, which is communicated in a way that provide students with an understanding of the fact that their evaluations are used for further development of the study programme. It is up to each department to decide how the feedback should be given³. The departments must document how the feedback has been given.

5. PROCESS DESCRIPTION

In the following sections it is specified when and how each type of evaluation in the AAU quality system is to be carried out, including minimum requirements for each type of evaluation.

- Evaluation of study start
- Evaluation of study activities
- Evaluation of study environment
- Evaluation of study programmes

Table 1 provides an overview of the four types of evaluations, their purpose and requirements for implementation.

³ Inspiration for student feedback methods can be accessed in the evaluation [guide](#) (this document is currently being revised).

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Table 1. Overview of the four evaluations, their fields of subject matter and implementation requirements

| Evaluation | | Objectives | Evaluation method and minimum requirements | Frequency | Include | Comments, if any |
|---|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Evaluation of study start | | New students' experience with the study start | <p>Quantitative method</p> <p>The evaluation method and the process are carried out according to a central AAU model. The evaluation consists of a questionnaire survey.. Studieservice initiates the process and supports the completion of the questionnaire survey via SurveyXact.</p> <p>Each department follows up on the results with the students using qualitative methods.</p> | Once a year in connection with study start in the 1st semester | PBA, BA | The Head of Department ensures that evaluation results on study start are followed up on, cf. 'Principles for study start' . |
| | | New students' experience with the study start | <p>Optional method</p> <p>As a minimum, the following information should be collected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether the students experience timely receipt of relevant information about the programme as well as information about where they might find further information. • whether the students experience that the study start focused on academic and social integration as well as activities that support a good study environment. • whether there has been a matching of expectations with them as students in relation to performance, introduction to PBL and possibly AAU's study activity model. | Once a year in connection with study start in the 1st semester | KA | <p>In order to reduce the number of questionnaires, a quantitative study of the study start might be published together with the quantitative evaluation of the 1st semester of the master programmes.</p> <p>The Head of Department ensures that evaluation results on study start are followed up on, cf. 'Principles for study start'.</p> |
| Evaluation of study activities⁴ | Teaching and problem-based project work as well as internships and project-oriented courses | Students' assessment of academic content and pedagogical/didactic quality | <p>Optional method</p> <p>Information should be collected on whether the academic content and pedagogical/didactic quality contribute to the students achieving the learning objectives described in the curriculum.</p> | Ongoing in connection with the completion of each activity | PBA, BA, KA, MA and DI | Evaluations may be carried out continuously at the end of each teaching activity and/or at the end of each semester. The department may choose to carry out the evaluations in full or in part together with the quantitative semester evaluation. |
| | The semester | Students' experience with the semester's context and organisation | <p>Both quantitative and qualitative methods</p> <p>Evaluations must contain systematic and comparable data in order to allow comparison of evaluations over a number of years.</p> <p>At a minimum, the evaluation must be carried out using quantitative methods, which are supplemented by qualitative methods (verbal dialogue). This can either be as a part of the actual evaluation of the semester or in connection with the follow-up on the evaluation results.</p> | Twice a year at the end of the semester | PBA, BA, KA, MA ⁵ and DI | The quantitative evaluation of study activities must, in accordance with the semester, as a rule, be part of a teaching course. |

⁴ Study activities are defined in AAU's study activity model and include problem-based project work, teaching and individual study work. It is the study activities that, in accordance with the study activity model, are organised by the lecturers (i.e. activities relating to teaching and problem-based project work), as well as project-oriented courses and internships that are to be evaluated. In addition, the individual semesters must be evaluated as a whole.

⁵ The requirement for evaluations of study activities in accordance with the semester can be waived for master's programs with a flexible organization of the semesters, if the program management deems it appropriate and has described and justified this decision in the department's plan for evaluations.

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| Evaluation | Objectives | Evaluation method and minimum requirements | Frequency | Include | Comments, if any |
|--|---|--|---|------------------------|---|
| Evaluation of the study environment | Students' experience with the physical, mental, aesthetic and digital study environment as well as abusive behaviour and/or discrimination ⁶ . | <p>Quantitative method</p> <p>The evaluation must be carried out through the quantitative evaluation of study activities in accordance with the spring semester, where centrally formulated questions will be included⁷.</p> | At least once a year in connection with the spring semester | PBA, BA and KA | Students must regularly be informed that they should report minor defects and minor requests for improvement of the physical study environment directly to Campus Service via the app AAU Building Support. It is up to each department to assess whether questions concerning the study environment should also be included in the autumn semester evaluation, and whether the standardised study environment questions should be supplemented with additional questions. |
| | | <p>Optional method</p> <p>In the department's evaluation plan the Head of Department must determine how the study environment should be evaluated. Evaluation must be carried out within the physical, psychological, aesthetic and digital study environment.</p> | At least once a year | MA and DI | Although the programme's modules/courses might be held at physical locations outside AAU, the study environment must still be evaluated on. |
| Evaluation of study programmes | Students'/graduates' experience with the coherence and progression of the programme throughout the study programme | <p>Optional method</p> <p>A questionnaire should be applied in which essential parts are identical for all programmes of a department. Evaluations should contain systematic and comparable data from year to year. As a minimum, the following information should be collected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students' experience with coherence and progression throughout the programme. <p>The evaluation must be carried out during the last activities of the last semester on PBA, BA, KA, MA and DI.</p> | Once at the end of the programme. | PBA, BA, KA, MA and DI | The departments decide whether the questionnaire is sent out in connection with the last study activity evaluation of the semester or as a separate study. |

⁶ The evaluation of students' experiences with abusive behaviour is intended to investigate whether students generally experience a poor study environment in this field. If the results indicate that there are challenges in this area, the Head of Department in cooperation with Study Boards and the Head of Studies must ensure that a discussion is held with the students about the perceived culture for the purpose of preventing abusive behaviour and discrimination. Specific issues are solely dealt with if the students' contact, for instance, an employee at the programme or the AAU Student Guidance.
6. Cf. 'Standardised questions relating to the study environment in evaluations of the semester'.

6. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Quantitative method

Quantitative methods can reach a large target group, and the method provides measurable data that indicates breadth and general points. The quantitative method denotes different survey methods, such as questionnaires that are sent to a group of respondents. It is possible to combine the quantitative questionnaires with open comment fields, thereby giving the survey a qualitative element. It is often rewarding to combine quantitative evaluations with qualitative methods in order to obtain answers that go both in breadth and depth. In this procedure, the term quantitative method is used about questionnaires answered by the students themselves, despite the fact that these may contain qualitative elements.

Qualitative method

Qualitative methods can provide a more detailed and in-depth insight into what is being investigated. The qualitative method denotes a number of different survey methods, such as semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, observations and analyses of written documents. Thus, the qualitative approach enables the opportunity to gain knowledge about conditions that are most often difficult to quantify and measure by numbers.

In relation to this procedure, a qualitative method might be the dialogue between lecturers and students at semester group meetings. It might also be the dialogue based on a semi-structured questionnaire, which follows up on the students' interpretations and qualification of the results of the quantitative evaluations.

7. ORIGIN, BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

| Date | Change | Cause | Executing (Initials) |
|------------|--|---|----------------------|
| 02-03-2021 | First version of the document has been approved by the Council for Quality Assurance and Development | Evaluation and development of the AAU quality system | IB |
| 31-08-2022 | The evaluation method for evaluating the study start for BA and PBA students has been changed from optional to follow a central AAU model. | Decision at RKU meeting 7 February 2022 on a central model based on the experiences from the pilot project at SAMF | HEVIV |
| 11-01-23 | Clarification regarding evaluations of study activities in accordance with the semester for master's programs with a flexible organization of the semesters. | Evaluation of entire semesters are not applicable to master's programs with a flexible organization of the semesters. | ELBA |
| 28-04-2023 | A few minor adjustments based on input from the departments at AAU. | Process of evaluation and development of the quality system at AAU. | ELBA |

8. CONTACT AND RESPONSIBILITY

REVISION

The Council for Quality Assurance and Development is be responsible for ensuring the evaluation and revision of this procedure.

CONTACT

If you have any questions relating to the policy/procedure, please contact “Kvalitet og Analyse” at kvalitet@adm.aau.dk.

9. QUALITY TOOLS

All tools are available at [AAU's kvalitetsplatform](#)