Regulations for the evaluation of teaching and studying in higher and further education programs at the South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences

The Senate of the South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences has passed the Regulations for the evaluation of teaching and studying in higher and further education programs at the South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences at its session on 15 April 2015.

The wording of the regulations is as follows:

Regulations for the evaluation of teaching and studying in higher and further education programs

at the South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences
Dated 16 April 2015

According to Section 2 Par. 4 and Section 7 Par. 2 of the German University and College Act (§58 HG) dated 16 September 2014(GV.NRW. S.547),

South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences has passed the following evaluation regulations:

Preamble

Evaluation is a cornerstone of quality management. It is at the heart of self-reflection and further development.

In the context of quality management, evaluation serves as a method for data gathering in addition to its survey aspect.

Different methods can then be applied to analyzing this data according to transparent criteria.

Amongst the methods and tools for the systematic survey and gathering of data can be used:

- Qualitative methods, such as description of observations of lectures by colleagues and interviews following suggested interview structures such as survey data or even a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods

- Document Analysis (Syllabi, Learning Objectives, Program and Examination Regulations)

- Statistical data on the University

- Data on university resources

I. General Regulations

Section 1
Area of application

These evaluation regulations are valid in all departments and all programs of all campuses of the South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences. These regulations govern evaluations in the area of teaching, studying and further education and are valid for all types of programs. These regulations govern the amount, the breadth and treatment of evaluation surveys conducted at the university, as well as data protection of the data of students and staff that have been collected. The evaluation is to follow the standards of evaluation set by the DeGEval[1] and has to fulfill the four general principles: Usefulness, feasibility, fairness, and accuracy.

With regard of the evaluation of other aspects of the university's work, such as research, further regulations may be issued, if deemed necessary, at a later date.

Section 2
Aims and objectives of the evaluation

(1) The South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences considers the evaluation as a key element in quality assurance and quality development and conducts evaluations in the areas of studying and teaching of further education and higher education programs. The university uses evaluation to assess the fulfillment of its legal obligations in teaching and learning in higher and further education programs. The results of the evaluation are used to develop appropriate measures for quality assurance and quality development of teaching and learning in our study programs. Furthermore, the evaluation is an indication of the fulfillment of the university's obligation as stipulated by the German University and College Acts and the German University and College Development Plan. Evaluation is furthermore an essential part of the accreditation and re-accreditation process for study programs. The evaluation results make a significant contribution to the university's and its departments' long-term strategic development planning and therefore also contribute to the university's profile.

(2) Aims and objectives of the evaluation are

General points

- Improved communication within and between departments, between departments and the university's executive board and further institutions of the university.

- To derive a reflection on and a strategy for quality assurance and development

- To allow a systematic reflection of the quality of teaching and the quality of study programs

- to help guarantee the quality of teaching and studying in higher and further education programs by ensuring transparency

At the level of study programs

- Assessment of study conditions (guided by aspects that are of key interest to the university)

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[1] DeGEval – German Association for Evaluation The complete guidelines can be found at: http://www.degeval.de (In German, last altered 22 January 2014).

- Identification of strengths and weaknesses of current study situation

At the level of the individual module

- Promoting dialogue between lecturer and student

- Identifying strengths and room for improvement of the module

- Ensuring module quality and helping to increase the quality of the module

Section 3
Responsibilities

(1) The responsibility for the evaluation process at the South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences lies with the executive board of the university. The board can transfer this responsibility to the vice-president for higher and further education. The board is responsible for all aspects of the evaluation process and also supports all evaluation activities as well as the coordination between the institute for quality development and management (IQEM) and the individual departments and other institutions of the university.

(2) In the individual departments, the overall evaluation responsibility lies with the dean. He or she together with the executive committee of the department will appoint an evaluation coordinator. This coordinator will organize the evaluation process, supported by the IQEM, and is the contact person for any questions about the evaluation in the department. The evaluation coordinator is supported by the quality manager of the department.

(3) Further development of the individual teaching quality is the responsibility of the lecturer based on feedback from the student and further reflection of the evaluation results, which may in some cases mean using further training opportunities as well as trying out new teaching methods based on evaluation feedback.

II.   Evaluation Tools

Section 4
Evaluation Process

The evaluation process is divided into the internal and the external evaluation. Every two years, the evaluation results have to be published in an evaluation report.

Section 5
Internal Evaluation

(1) The internal evaluation is conducted continuously under the direction of the departments and teaching institutions. In the context of the internal evaluation the individual study programs and modules are assessed.

The workload assessment can either be integrated into one of the evaluation processes stated in these regulations or it can be conducted separately. The aim of the workload assessment is to compare the actual effort reported by the student for each module with the planned effort and to ensure a better overlap between planned and actual effort.

The internal evaluation is used as a standardized means of quality assurance. The standardization includes the evaluation framework as stated in these regulations, the use of evaluation software allowing for both paper-based and online surveys and also includes the use of standardized or partly standardized questionnaires. The standardization of the questionnaires is ensured by using questions that are not specific to individual departments. These questions are regularly reassessed during meetings of the departmental evaluation coordinators.

The departments can add specific departmental questions, if they wish.

The evaluation coordinators are responsible for setting the intervals for evaluations, for tailoring the evaluation tools to the needs of the department and for passing on particular information factors to be included.

Participation in the surveys is voluntary. The participants have to be informed of the voluntary nature of their participation and have also to be informed of their right to appeal.

The internal evaluation includes the following aspects

- evaluation of study programs, this includes the program surveys and surveys of the students with regard to their study progress (included in the surveys from the second semester onwards)
- surveys of alumnae and alumni and former students and employees of the university
- evaluation of individual modules.

(2) Evaluation of study programs

The survey of students in their first semester focusses on support and advice given to the students and asks specifically about the introductory sessions. This survey is conducted centrally.

The surveys of students during their study focus on optimizing the program and the examination. They give information on the study surroundings, the modules offered, the support given to students and in whether study objectives have been reached and how satisfied the students are with their program. The findings are the basis of continuous work on improving the quality of teaching, of the modules and programs on offer and on the student support and advice.

(3) Surveys of alumnae and alumni and former students and employees of the university

The surveys of alumnae and alumni and former students and employees of the university are focussed on the assessment of program quality by alumni and alumnae and about employment prospects and preparation for the employment market.

In addition to surveys for alumni and alumnae, former students (students who did not complete the degree) are also surveyed.

(4) Module Evaluation

These can help lecturers recognize strengths and weaknesses of their modules and can help them take measures to improve on these.

The module evaluation is conducted via questionnaires.

In some cases, for example in the context of the introduction of new study methods or for very small groups of students other evaluation methods can be used if permission has been obtained from the dean.

When setting the date of the evaluation, departments must ensure that there will be time to discuss the findings and possible measures with the students in the module.

The feedback session is obligatory, but it can be tailored to the teaching situation of the individual module (it can be a conversation or an online chat).

Irrespective of the chosen survey and feedback method, the lecturer is obliged to pass on the evaluation survey results as well as the findings of the student feedback session to the evaluation coordinator. The structure of the feedback report is set by the executive committee of the department.

External and part-time lecturers are also surveyed, as long as they are responsible for teaching or theoretical or practical examinations of the students.

Each module has to be evaluated at least once in three years. Lecturers in their first year of teaching will be surveyed in each of their modules.

(5) Other Evaluation Surveys

In addition to the mandatory evaluation surveys stated here, other surveys of lecturers or other members of staff involved in teaching can be conducted as part of the university's quality assurance strategy.

Section 6
External Evaluation

The regular reaccreditation of study programs should be seen as external evaluation. The departments and institutions are further entitled to conduct external peer evaluations, if they so wish.

These external evaluations are to be commissioned by the executive board of the university.

Section 7
Further Development of Evaluation

Not all departmental objectives and not all desired information can be gathered by one evaluation method. That is why several different evaluation methods and tools are needed. To identify and create these tools is the responsibility of the individual departments. They are supported in this by the IQEM.

III.   Final Regulations

Section 8
Results, publication and data protection

(1) The internal evaluation results are illustrated by graphics. Examples of these can be found in the appendix.

(2) The organisation and analysis of the internal evaluation is run by the evaluation department. Care must be taken to ensure that individual persons surveyed cannot be identified. The results of the internal evaluation as well as the results of other university surveys will be published and passed on in anonymized and aggregated form.

(3) Study program evaluation

In the study program surveys, no lecturer specific data is collected. The evaluation coordinators analyze the surveys and pass them on to the department's executive committee as early as possible. The executive committee then formulates concrete suggestions for improvement and creates an action plan and nominates persons responsible for taking these actions.

The following persons are entitled to access survey results processed by the evaluation coordinator:

- All employees engaged in teaching at the surveyed department as well as the student counsellors

- The dean, the vice-deans and the executive committee of the department/ the director of the teaching institution

- Members of the executive committee of the department or committee of the teaching or research institution and the study committee

- For further education and combined study programs and franchise programs, the module coordinator as well as the members of the subject committee

- Members of the executive board of the university

The institute for combined study programs of North Rhine Westphalia (IfV NRW) is given access to anonymized and aggregated results of the questions that were agreed as key questions for combined study programs.

(4) Survey of former employees, students and lecturers of the university

The surveys of former employees, students and lecturers of the university are normally organized centrally via the IQEM and are also analyzed by the IQEM.

The following persons are entitled to see the evaluation results:

- employees of the IQEM

- members of the executive board

- the deans of the relevant departments

- the evaluation coordinator of the relevant departments

- further persons designated by the department's executive committee

(5) Module evaluations

The following persons are given access to the unaggregated results

- The evaluation coordinator and the quality coordinator as part of the analysis process

- The module lecturers as a basis for the evaluation feedback discussion with students

- further persons designated by the department's executive committee as part of their management remit

The following persons are given access to the aggregated results as stipulated in section 5, paragraph 4

- the dean of the director of the teaching or research institute

- for modules that concern more than one department, the deans of all concerned departments

- for professors in their probationary period the members of the commission charged with certifying the didactic competence

- the lecturer in charge of the module

The dean can discuss the results of the evaluation survey with the module leaders in an evaluation discussion meeting and may demand measures to improve the module quality while not infringing on the lecturer's freedom of teaching.

(6) The results of the internal evaluation of each semester are summarized and aggregated and submitted to the dean. They are then presented to the executive committee and the studying committee in aggregated and anonymized form.

Further contexts of publication can be granted if agreed by the executive committee.

(7) The evaluation report, having been discussed in the executive committee, will then be presented to the university's executive board and the university senate accompanied by the agreed catalogue of measures and in some cases a statement by the department's executive committee, the studying committee or the equal opportunities coordinator.

(8) The evaluation survey elicits gender specific data.

(9) Members of committees and executive boards as well as dean and all other persons concerned with the evaluation have to ensure the confidentiality of the results entrusted to them with regard to data specific to modules, student groups or lecturers.

All members of the university who will have access to confidential data as specified in these regulations are subject to the data protection regulations of the state of North Rhine Westphalia.

(10) The storage period for the survey data and the survey results depends on the type of survey conducted and the level of aggregation and anonymization. A difference is made between the actual questionnaires and the statistically aggregated results.

The questionnaires are normally paper-based and are aggregated electronically and analyzed. The actual questionnaires are normally destroyed within a year of the survey taking place. The raw data entered into the database are stored electronically and deleted within ten years. The raw data of the module evaluations are an exception hereof. They are deleted and/or destroyed within six years of the module evaluation, as they contain person specific data.

Section 9
Date of coming into effect

These evaluation regulations are published in the legal publications of the South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences. They come into effect one day after their publication.

Written according to Senate Resolution of the South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences on 15 April 2015.

Dated Iserlohn 16 April 2015

The president

Prof Dr C. Schuster

Appendix

Suggested Outline for the Evaluation Report

1. **The teaching institute/ the department/ the institutional structure**

2. **Description of modules and programs**

   Aims and objectives, university profile and specializations, specific historic and other structures, international cooperations, etc.

3. **Evaluation Methods and tools**

   Which types of and how many evaluations have been conducted in the period covered by the report? Which evaluation methods were used (paper-based questionnaires, online questionnaires, qualitative interviews etc.)? Do you operate a workload model? Have the evaluation tools and methods changed since the last evaluation report?

4. **Students, alumnae and alumni**

   4.1.　Students - numbers and profiles

   Development of student numbers, numbers of first year students, students who complete in the stipulated program time frame (Regelstudienzeit), gender, age, foreign students, retention rate, drop-out rate, staff to student ratio, transfer students, students with non-standard access qualifications, grade range, failure fates, attraction ratings of the university etc.

   4.2.　Alumnae and Alumni

   Number of alumnae and alumni per year and program, success rate per student cohort, age range, gender distribution, foreign student percentage, preparation period and length of final dissertations, specific qualifications obtained, job prospects etc.

5. **Study situation – Student experience**

   The students' view of their studying experience and the teaching provided by the university, aggregated results of the program surveys and the module feedback discussions

6. **Gender Mainstreaming and inclusion**

7. **Summary and conclusion, measures taken (including review of measures taken as a result of previous evaluation reports), future outlook.**