

Statutes for evaluating studies and teaching at the University of Kassel

On 14/01/2015, the Senate of the University of Kassel adopted the following statutes in accordance with section 36 para. 2 point 2 of the Higher Education Act for the State of Hesse (HHG) dated 14 December 2009 (German Law and Ordinance Gazette GVBl. I p. 666), last amended on 28 September 2014 (GVBl. I p. 218):

Section 1: Scope and objectives of statutes

(1) In accordance with section 12 para. 1 HHG, these statutes govern the procedures, consequences and responsibilities of centralised and localised evaluation procedures for studies and teaching at the University of Kassel. Regulations concerning the handling of personal data, compulsory under the Higher Education Act for the State of Hesse, are covered by the current version of the relevant statutes.

(2) The subject group quality standards required by section 1 para. 3 of the Act to Improve the Quality of Study Conditions and Teaching in Hesse Universities (HSchulQualVG HE, dated 18 June 2008) can be set out by the faculties in the form of specific evaluation provisions to be enacted by the responsible faculty board. Where relevant, these can also govern their own procedures. If faculty-specific regulations modify the procedures set out in section 7, these modifications require the consent of the university-wide evaluation committee in accordance with section 5.

(3) The objective of these statutes is to ensure minimum standards and increase the transparency and coherence of the procedures currently being used. The President may adopt implementing regulations for the individual evaluation procedures set out in section 7.

Section 2: Evaluation objectives

(1) The aim of regular evaluation is to guarantee and continually improve the quality of teaching. Other evaluation objectives include ensuring functional study structures and the needs-based development of student support services. The university's overall quality objectives are set out in its mission statement and development plan. Evaluation focuses in particular on the objectives and design of curricula and modules, forms of teaching and learning, checking whether qualification objectives are being achieved, study and examination organisation, and student counselling and support services.

(2) The results of study and teaching evaluations are to be used within the scope set out by the provisions below for the following purposes:

- a. Identify development potential in the university's individual departments and in the fulfilment of their tasks
- b. Design and further develop study courses and their learning environment
- c. Promote discussion and communication regarding quality of teaching
- d. Design and implement measures to guarantee and improve quality
- e. Provide a constantly updated database for quality development
- f. Present achievement of quality objectives, including in faculty teaching reports, the university teaching and study report, and accreditation procedures
- g. Create transparency regarding the quality of studies and teaching, both within the university and to the public

Section 3: Study attendance, obligation to cooperate

(1) Student attendance is on a voluntary basis. Their attendance is encouraged and ensured via suitable measures on a central and local level.

(2) All other members of the University of Kassel are obliged to participate in the implementation of evaluations in accordance with their stated mandate.

Section 4: Responsibilities

(1) The member of the Executive Board responsible for studies and teaching coordinates the university's evaluation procedures. The university administration assists them with preparation, implementation, analysis and transfer to faculties. Implementing and supporting institutions may participate in the procedure.

(2) Provisions to implement the procedures set out in section 7 are governed by Executive Board resolution where required. Prior to this, they will be referred to the evaluation committee in accordance with section 5 and the conference of deans of studies.

(3) Faculty heads are responsible for regular and proper implementation of course and module evaluations. They are in particular responsible for encouraging debate for the purposes of improving quality, in line with the objectives stated in section 2, based on evaluation results and in order to respond to structural development needs within study courses. Faculty heads are assisted in this by the Executive Board and the central administration. Suitable committee structures within the faculties should be used as a venue for discussion, with regular student involvement.

(4) Regular and proper implementation and analysis of the course and graduate surveys is the responsibility of the central university administration. The university management is responsible for responding to overall development needs, in conjunction with the faculties where relevant. Faculty heads are responsible for communicating and discussing evaluation results within the faculty, and for reacting to structural development needs on a course level in terms of quality development using a closed loop. They are assisted in this by the Executive Board and the central administration. Suitable committee structures within the faculties should be used as a venue for discussion, with regular student involvement. The key tools for the relevant closed loop analysis and action planning are the faculty teaching reports as described in section 8 para. 4 and the associated procedural steps.

(5) The relevant head is responsible for the aspects of the evaluation relevant to service facilities.

Section 5: Evaluation committee

(1) The Senate Committee for Study and Teaching Affairs serves as an evaluation committee. In particular, it advises on fundamental issues of evaluation procedures and their further development, as well as on the preparation of implementation provisions for the individual procedures and faculty-specific modifications as described in section 1 para. 2 to the procedures mentioned in section 7. To this end, the committee may consult other experts or commission working groups. The evaluation committee may also be called upon with regard to additional faculty-specific regulations as described in section 1 para. 2.

(2) The evaluation committee ensures the necessary transparency and cooperation between the stakeholders involved, makes recommendations and mediates in the event of disputes.

Section 6: Evaluation methods

(1) The University of Kassel uses both internal and external evaluation procedures.

(2) Internal evaluation procedures cover standardised, quantitative and/or qualitative methods controlled by the central university administration. Faculties may also use additional further measures to evaluate studies and teaching. Faculties can regulate these faculty-specific evaluation provisions in accordance with section 1 para. 2.

(3) External evaluation procedures in particular include peer reviews and audit and accreditation procedures, which are generally coordinated centrally and implemented within the faculty.

(4) Central academic controlling within the University of Kassel's central administration maintains statistical student data for indicator-based reports and develops it further as required. Further information can be generated at a faculty level, for example using examination administration data.

(5) Data protection regulations must be adhered to. The current version of the statutes regarding the protection of personal data during evaluation procedures at the University of Kassel shall apply.

Section 7: Levels and forms of study and teaching evaluation

(1) Studies and teaching at the University of Kassel are in particular evaluated at the following levels:

- a. Classes
- b. Tutorials
- c. Modules
- d. Courses of study
- e. Faculties
- f. Entire university including service and counselling facilities

(2) The following forms of internal evaluation are generally used:

a. Class evaluation

The objectives of a class evaluation particularly include:

- Guarantee and improve the quality of teaching
- Feed back to teachers in order to continually improve classes
- Ramp up discussions of the quality of teaching between students and teachers and within faculties
- Create a database for faculties to enable them to assess the methodological and didactic quality of teaching

Class evaluations are a rolling process organised in a three-semester cycle. Unless otherwise stated in the faculty's specific evaluation provisions, class evaluations are performed using a paper or online questionnaire. The survey tool used is a university-wide questionnaire which can be tailored to the specific faculties. Significant faculty-specific modifications require the consent of the evaluation committee in accordance with section 5. Individual evaluations are made available solely to the relevant teacher and to the office of the Dean.

b. Tutorial evaluation

The objectives of an evaluation of tutorials to accompany classes particularly include:

- Guarantee and improve the quality of tutorials
- Feed back to tutors in order to continually improve tutorials
- Ramp up discussions of the quality of teaching between students, tutors and teachers and within faculties
- Create a database for faculties to enable them to assess the methodological and didactic quality of tutorials
- Improve the quality of tutor training

Tutor evaluations are generally implemented together with class evaluations. A higher frequency may be set in the faculty-specific evaluation provisions. Faculties may supplement the class evaluation survey with tutorial evaluation questions or use a separate questionnaire (paper or online).

The survey tool must be approved by the evaluation committee in accordance with section 5.

c. Module evaluation

The objectives of a module evaluation particularly include:

- Review the study feasibility of full/partial courses at module level
- Review the achievement of module objectives by the module classes, taking particular account of workload and skills imparted
- Further develop and optimise the range of modular courses, taking particular account of modules put to versatile use

A compulsory element of a module evaluation is the workload survey, in particular used to prepare reaccreditations at least once during an accreditation period.

This module-level evaluation is initiated by the Course Director or the Dean for the relevant module of a specific partial/full course, and implemented with help from the faculty and central administration. Module evaluations can be performed in writing or online as a student survey.

The module evaluation may incorporate other elements as needed, in particular the parameters of the study and examination plan (e.g. 'skills', 'study and examination achievements'), ensuring no overlaps, and coordinating modular teaching and counselling services. The faculties are responsible for determining exactly how the evaluation is to be implemented.

d. Course of study evaluation

The objectives of a course of study evaluation particularly include:

- Ensure successful implementation of courses of study in accordance with the University of Kassel's targets and objectives
- Ensure that course quality objectives are achieved
- Optimise and further develop course structures

Course of study evaluations cover cross-module curricular structures, examination organisation, general conditions of study, all support and counselling services specific to or relevant to the course, and student mobility (domestic, international).

All Bachelor's, consecutive Master's and teacher training courses are regularly evaluated via student surveys. Bachelor's, Master's and teacher training courses can be evaluated in clusters and on a staggered basis. Discontinued courses are not included. Course of study evaluations are performed around every three to five years. The survey is organised by the central administration. In exceptional cases, for example if the number of people completing the survey is too low, a course of study evaluation may also take the form of a course discussion.

e. Graduate survey

The objectives of the graduate survey particularly include:

- Retrospectively evaluate the course programme and the study environment
- Measure academic success and skills via a self-assessment
- Evaluate and analyse skills acquired
- Review the transition from university to job market
- Evaluate the suitability of study content and objectives with regard to professional life
- Characterise career entry and professional success using various parameters
- Assess willingness regarding contact and commitment, and interest in further education

The graduate survey is coordinated by the central administration and is organised annually as a complete survey of all graduates within a particular academic year. The first survey is completed around 1.5 years after completion of studies. Approximately three years after the first survey, graduates who agreed to take part in a follow-up survey are questioned again (panel study). In addition to communication of the results within the university, key results are also published online and communicated to interested graduates.

- (3) The university is also seeking to meaningfully expand its range of tools, for example to include a survey of university drop-outs.

Section 8: Using evaluation results and deriving measures and forms of reporting

(1) Once the evaluation data from the various procedures and tools has been prepared and analysed, the results must be appropriately communicated at the relevant evaluation level and discussed with students.

(2) Results can also be incorporated by teachers (and even faculties where applicable) into individual performance assessments – for example as part of performance-based pay, an interim evaluation or reporting in accordance with section 61 para. 3 HHG.

(3) The results of evaluation procedures are used as the basis to derive action strategies and/or concrete measures as required on a teaching, course, faculty or overall university level. At faculty level, as per section 8 para. 4 the key tool used is a teaching report and associated procedures. As far as possible, corresponding developments are to be implemented by the next evaluation point. Developments to strategies and measures must be evaluated and re-adjusted where necessary by the next report date.

(4) The results of all procedures and the measures derived from them are included in faculty teaching reports and accreditation procedures in summarised form. The central teaching and study report examines results which are relevant for the university as a whole. The option for further publication of evaluation results (e.g. on faculty websites) remains unaffected, and is the responsibility of the faculty heads.

(5) Details are specified in the implementing provisions for individual procedures and tools.

Section 9: Entry into force

These statutes enter into force on the day following their publication in the University of Kassel newsletter.

Kassel, 4 February 2015

President
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