

Guidelines on the Evaluation of Teaching at the University of St.Gallen

These guidelines were developed by a committee appointed by the Senate of the University of St.Gallen and adopted by the Board of Governors of the University of St.Gallen on June 19, 2021.

A. General Provisions

Article I. Legal and Regulatory Foundations

Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (Higher Education Act, HEdA) – Institutional Accreditation

The quality assurance system of the University of St.Gallen provides for the regular evaluation of teaching and research, services and outcomes (Art. 22 para. 1 Annex 1 No 3.2 HEdA).

Act on the University of St.Gallen

The performance mandate of the University of St.Gallen sets out the tasks to be performed by the University in accordance with Art. 2 of the Act on the University of St.Gallen and with the University Statutes. The Act also establishes the framework for high quality and competitive teaching, research and services (Art. 1 para. 1 and Art. 27 HEdA, SR 414.20).

University Statutes – Quality Assurance and Quality Development (Art. 12) and Evaluation (Art. 54)

The University's activities are subject to quality assurance and quality development (Art. 12 para. 2). Responsibility for quality assurance and continuous quality development lies with the University President. He or she may appoint a delegate (Art. 12 para. 2). The Board of Governors shall determine the priorities and shall regulate in particular the procedures, rights, duties and impacts, as well as the procedure for the safeguarding of personality rights (Art. 12 para. 3). Teaching faculty shall support the periodic review of their performance by the University and shall contribute to quality assurance and improvement (Art. 54 para. 1).

Quality Development Strategy and Guidelines of the University of St.Gallen

These Guidelines on the Evaluation of Teaching are based on the Quality Development Guidelines of the University of St.Gallen and on the strategy of the University of St.Gallen. The Guidelines are reviewed on a cyclical basis, in order to establish whether any changes are necessary, and adapted if required. The University Strategy provides the framework for developing the quality of teaching.

Article II. Subject of the Guidelines

These Guidelines concern the evaluation of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching (Assessment Year, Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D. programmes). As such they concern quality assurance and quality development in Section 4 *Teaching I as Core Process* of the University's Quality Development Guidelines.

Article III. Definitions

Quality, quality assurance and quality development: The University of St.Gallen regards quality in teaching (as one of three core areas) and in student administration as multi-dimensional requirements. The University distinguishes quality in terms of impact (effectiveness) and procedure (efficiency), and is committed to ensuring both dimensions of quality. Quality assurance refers to those activities that are pursued in order to safeguard quality standards. Quality development includes all activities that contribute to continuous quality improvement. Quality and quality development at the University of St.Gallen are measured against nationally and internationally recognised standards.

Evaluation: The University of St.Gallen understands evaluation as the application of systematic qualitative and quantitative procedures that are appropriate for ascertaining the achievement of goals and the provision of services. At the University of St.Gallen, evaluation takes place in various forms: self-evaluation, external evaluation or the combination of both methods. The focus lies on overarching aspects of teaching (e.g. quality of learning objectives, didactic design, assessment procedures). Individually designed feedback on single aspects of courses or formative feedback (e.g. determining classroom atmosphere) within courses do not count as evaluation.

With regard to the evaluation of teaching, the University's regulations distinguish between

- (a) University-wide/central vs. decentralised evaluations of *formal course offerings* (courses, programmes). Such evaluations encompass programme curricula (in particular course and programme objectives), teaching-learning processes (i.e. course design and implementation) and examinations. In addition, formal course offerings may also be subject to decentralised evaluations. Responsibility for such evaluations lies with teaching faculty or programme directors. Individually designed feedback on single aspects of courses or formative feedback within courses do *not* count as evaluation.
- (b) University-wide/central vs. decentralised evaluations of the *conditions, i.e. learning conditions influencing course offerings* (e.g. student administration processes, use of infrastructure in teaching, specific learning conditions, graduate and alumni surveys). Such evaluations gather data and information on the conditions, academic situation, context, performance indicators (from enrolment to graduation) along the "student life cycle."

Article IV. Principles of Quality Assurance, Quality Development and Evaluation

Principles for Teaching as Core Area

Quality assurance and development in teaching as a core area are aligned with the University's strategy and guidelines, as well as with teaching as a core process in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. They support the involved actors

at the various levels of action in a systematic manner and enable an evidence-oriented approach that is geared towards continuous improvement.

The goal of developing teaching quality at the University of St.Gallen is to continuously improve the curricular, didactic and organisational aspects of teaching.

At the University of St.Gallen, teaching evaluations include the gathering, assessment, reporting and communication of relevant information. To this end, data are systematically collected using suitable procedures and processes, processed according to the University's concept of analysis and communicated at the appropriate level to those concerned and those responsible.

The interpretation of evaluation results and the deriving of conclusions or changes take place in respectful dialogue between those involved, with due consideration of the values set out in the University's Code of Conduct. In the event of deviations from this principle, the University has put in place processes for dealing with such cases (e.g. discriminatory statements).

Teaching evaluations must carefully balance transparency and confidentiality. Evaluations must be designed and conducted in a transparent manner. They must be comprehensible and verifiable; therefore, their purpose, procedure and processes, as well as the basis of assessment and the use to which results are put, must be disclosed and any information about any envisaged changes must be provided in a timely manner.

B. Competences and Responsibilities for Quality Assurance, Quality Development and Teaching Evaluations

Quality assurance and quality development (planning, regulation and improvement of quality) are management tasks that are performed in all areas and at all levels of the University.

Board of Governors, University Management, Delegate for Quality Development – Formal and Strategic Responsibilities

Within the framework of the principles adopted by the Board of Governors, the University President is responsible for the development and implementation of the University's approach to quality in the areas of teaching, research and services. The Board of Governors is responsible for adopting guidelines on the general principles of quality development.

The University President may appoint a Delegate for Quality Development to provide expert advice to the University President's Board. Likewise, he or she may establish an advisory-operational function of the Quality Development Office, which reports directly to the Delegate for Quality Development. With regard to decision-making powers in the evaluation of teaching, the University President's

Board provides a framework for the operational units, ensures minimum standards, enables continuous quality development and makes this its task.

The Vice-President for Studies & Academic Affairs and his or her responsible units (e.g. Centre for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, General Programme Management, Teaching Innovation Lab, AG Lehre) are available for consultation.

The President's Board is responsible for the *university-wide, central evaluations of formal course offerings*. The Board may delegate this responsibility to the Delegate for Quality Development. The Quality Development Office is responsible for the operational implementation of the respective tasks.

The Vice-President for Studies & Academic Affairs is responsible for evaluating the *university-wide, central conditions influencing course offerings* (e.g. student administration processes, use of infrastructure in teaching, graduate surveys).

Quality Development Office, responsible units in the Vice-President's Board for Studies & Academic Affairs – advisory-operational responsibility

At the operational level, the head of the Quality Development Office coordinates the concerns, processes and structures for university-wide teaching evaluations. Decentralised evaluations are coordinated by the responsible unit of the Vice-President's Board for Studies & Academic Affairs. This unit and the head of the Quality Development Office exchange information on a regular basis.

Schools, Director of Contextual Studies, Programme Directors – decentralised formal, strategic and operational responsibilities

The schools and the Director of Contextual Studies are responsible for the quality of degree programmes. They transfer the responsibility for implementing the university-wide, central teaching evaluations to the respective programme directors. The deans of the schools and the Director of Contextual Studies may require specific teaching evaluations (decentralised evaluations) to be conducted and will coordinate these with the Delegate for Quality Development.

The programme directors are responsible for the quality of degree programmes. To this end, they implement university-wide, central teaching evaluations, but may also conduct further programme-specific teaching evaluations (decentralised evaluations) in coordination with the Quality Development Office and/or the responsible unit of the Vice-President's Board for Studies & Academic Affairs.

C. Goal and Purpose of Teaching Evaluations

The goal of teaching evaluations is the multidimensional and multi-perspective monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning at the University of St.Gallen. The main purpose of teaching evaluations is to ensure continuous quality development through dialogue.

Evaluations serve to describe strengths and challenges in an evidence-based manner. Necessary changes are identified and a basis for deciding changes is established. Changes may be short-, medium- or long-term. Based on its understanding of an expert organisation, *teaching* evaluations at the University of St.Gallen focus on the critical-reflexive self-monitoring and further development of teaching faculty.

Teaching evaluations provide information and decision-making foundations for the attention of faculty and students, programme directors (course-offering degree programmes), deans of the schools, the Delegate for Quality Development, the President's Board (in particular the Vice-President for Studies & Academic Affairs, e.g. in the context of degree programme reforms) and the University President (in the context of re-election procedures for full and associate professors).

D. Teaching Evaluations: Subject and Procedure

Teaching evaluations focus in particular on student and faculty competencies, course design, competency acquisition and the connections between these aspects in terms of the concept of "constructive alignment."

At the University of St.Gallen, the following procedures and instruments or combinations of these are used to evaluate teaching:

- a) Quantitative and qualitative methods for the assessment of course design (e.g. central, modular student course evaluations, Teaching Analysis Poll).
- b) Primarily qualitative procedures for assessing teaching conditions (e.g. programme focus groups).
- c) Quantitative and qualitative procedures for the assessment of examination design (e.g. examination quality surveys).
- d) Quantitative and qualitative methods for the (retrospective) assessment of teaching and learning and the current academic situation (e.g. student surveys within the framework student monitoring, programme-entry / first-year student surveys, graduate surveys).
- e) Self-evaluation (e.g. by faculty).
- f) External evaluations (e.g. by students, programme directors, peer reviews, external experts).
- g) Ad hoc procedures (e.g. interviews in the context of programme reforms, data preparation in the context of accreditations and peer reviews).
- h) Procedures related to behavioural data (e.g. examination performance, "Assurance of Learning" (AoL) reports, Teaching and Learning Analytics).
- i) Data monitoring at programme level (e.g. administrative data on the "student life cycle").

E. Conducting and Implementing Central, University-wide Evaluations of Formal Course Offerings and Learning Conditions

The concept of "constructive alignment" is used in teaching at the interface between teaching and learning objectives, the designing of learning opportunities and examinations as a conceptual basis for designing procedures and instruments aimed at evaluating teaching.

Central Evaluations of Formal Course Offerings

The procedures, processes and instruments used in the central evaluation of teaching (e.g. course evaluation questionnaire, structure of the Teaching Analysis Poll, guiding questions for programme focus groups) are designed primarily based on concepts that are devised by the Delegate for Quality Development in association with the Quality Development Office and in consultation with the responsible units of the Vice-President's Board for Studies & Academic Affairs.

Central Course Evaluation

At the course level, quality assurance follows a standardised procedure and student surveys are conducted regularly and systematically in the form of course evaluations (including cyclical and programme-based mandatory evaluations, voluntary evaluations).

With regard to mandatory course evaluation as a key instrument, survey instruments are submitted to the Senate for its attention before being used in a comprehensive and binding manner. The Quality Development Office is responsible for further developing the central evaluation instruments in consultation with the Delegate for Quality Development, the Vice-President's Board for Studies & Academic Affairs and with the involvement of students, faculty, programme directors and the Director of Contextual Studies.

The Quality Development Office will provide appropriate advance information about the instruments and processes used in central course evaluations via internal communication channels.

Central Quality Reports

The deans of the schools or the programme directors report either periodically (e.g. "Assurance of Learning" reports) or ad hoc (e.g. in accreditation procedures) to the Delegate for Quality Development on the attained quality of programmes, teaching and examinations. In doing so, they are supported by the Programme Management Cockpit (esp. the information on teaching evaluations).

Central Evaluations of Learning Conditions

Factors influencing formal course offerings (e.g. usage of the Learning Management System LMS, specific concerns of student monitoring, student administration processes, graduate surveys) are evaluated as part of the central evaluation of learning conditions. The Vice-President's Board for Studies & Academic Affairs is responsible for designing the procedures, processes and instruments used in the central evaluations of learning conditions.

F. Conducting and Implementing Decentralised Evaluations of Formal Course Offerings / Degree Programmes and Learning Conditions

Decentralised Evaluations at the Level of Courses, Programmes, Contextual Studies or Schools

Students, faculty, programme directors, the Director of Contextual Studies, the deans of the schools can provide for and implement further measures for the evaluation of teaching.

Decentralised evaluations are subject to the general principles of teaching evaluations. Those involved in decentralised evaluations must be given an appropriate period of notice and the names of the University bodies and staff responsible for an evaluation must be disclosed. If decentralised teaching evaluations are university-wide, they must be set up in consultation with the Delegate for Quality Development and the Quality Development Office or with the responsible unit of the Vice-President's Board for Studies & Academic Affairs.

G. Reporting and Measures

The data evaluated within the framework of the above-mentioned evaluation procedures are made available in various aggregations to the following groups and bodies on a procedure-specific basis:

- Students, student representatives,
- Faculty,
- Module directors, i.e. coordinators,
- Academic directors,
- Director of Contextual Studies,
- Deans and, if applicable, school meetings, and, if applicable, other persons responsible for quality in the schools,
- Delegate for Quality Development,
- Vice-President's Board for Studies & Academic Affairs,
- University President, President's Board,
- Senate, University.

Groups receiving individual reports and/or aggregated group reports (e.g. at programme level, level of study), as well as authorised persons, are specifically determined for each evaluation procedure and instrument and are announced ahead of implementation. For this purpose, information is provided via appropriate communication channels, which are accessible to those concerned (e.g. Intranet, e-mail, guidelines, fact sheets).

Central Course Evaluations

Faculty and students are informed promptly and in an appropriate manner about the results of central course evaluations. Faculty and students involved in course evaluations are informed in advance about the evaluation instruments and receive the evaluation results directly concerning them.

The faculty concerned are entitled and requested to comment on evaluation results within a certain period of time or to discuss the results with students.

Course evaluation results form part of the re-election procedures for full and associate professors in accordance with Art. 38 para. 2 of the University Statutes.

Course evaluation results form part of the tenure evaluation procedures for assistant professors.

Evaluations are based on a level-oriented multi-level approach, in which, depending on responsibility, access to evaluation results is limited as far as required, while nevertheless enabling comparison at the same level. The different levels are:

- Faculty and students receive access to the respective course evaluation results (qualitative and quantitative data).
- Programme directors and the Director of Contextual Studies receive access to evaluation results (qualitative and quantitative data), which are differentiated by courses and faculty, for courses that are part of their programmes. They also receive access to the anonymised evaluations of other degree programmes (quantitative data) within the framework of the Programme Management Cockpit.
- The Delegate for Quality Development receives the results of all programme evaluations.
- The Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee receives evaluation results as part of procedures used to evaluate assistant professors.
- The University President has access, via the reports of the Delegate for Quality Development, to the evaluation results of full and associate professors as part of the re-election procedures.

Within the scope of their responsibility, the Director of Contextual Studies, the deans of the schools and the Vice-President for Studies & Academic Affairs receive access to programme evaluations via the Programme Management Cockpit. If there is a justified need, they may inspect the results at the level of courses or faculty.

If teaching evaluations indicate critical points, these are discussed with the faculty member concerned in a development-oriented dialogue in terms of hierarchical escalation:

Level 1: Programme directors/Director of Contextual Studies,
Level 2: Delegate for Quality Development,
Level 3: Vice-President for Studies & Academic Affairs.

The critical points are defined specific to an instrument during process development and communicated internally in advance. At the beginning of the following semester, programme directors are asked to report back to the Delegate

for Quality Development about whether these discussions have taken place, what changes have been made or whether further support is needed.

The Vice-President's Board for Studies & Academic Affairs supports faculty and programme directors in developing teaching quality through the responsible units (e.g. Centre for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, Teaching Innovation Lab, General Programme Management).

Central Evaluations of Learning Conditions

In evaluating learning conditions, those concerned and the reporting style are determined in advance and those involved are informed in advance. Care must be taken to ensure that those involved are informed promptly of the results directly concerning them.

Decentralised Evaluations at the Level of Courses, Programmes, Contextual Studies or Schools

If further decentralised teaching evaluations are conducted at the course or programme and school level, those concerned and the reporting style are determined in advance and those involved are informed in advance. Care must be taken to ensure that faculty and students are informed promptly about the results directly concerning them.

H. Data Protection, Data Security, Information Security and Cybersecurity

When conducting teaching evaluations, care must be taken to ensure that the University's guidelines on data protection, data security, information security and cybersecurity are verifiably adhered to.

Teaching evaluation data may be used as research data in compliance with University guidelines as applicable.



University of St.Gallen

Quality Development Service Unit

Tellstrasse 2

CH-9000 St.Gallen

Phone: +41 71 224 29 20