

Recommendations for Effective Evaluations for Programme Committees

Introduction

Educational evaluations play a vital role in enhancing the quality of education. For programme committees to effectively fulfill their responsibilities, it is essential that evaluations yield reliable results. This document offers programme committees practical guidance on how to promote, support, and, if necessary, conduct effective evaluations.

1. Encourage students to complete the digital evaluations

Digital evaluations provide valuable insights into what works well and what can be improved. However, these insights are only meaningful if a large number of students participate. Low response rates can compromise the reliability of the results, limiting their usefulness for programme committees, programme directors, and teachers seeking to enhance education.

One way to increase response rates is to clearly communicate to students the importance of evaluations and how the results are used. Programme committees can play a crucial role in this effort by leveraging their direct communication channels with students. For instance, student members of the committee could highlight the importance of the evaluations in their year-group's chats when the evaluations are open.

2. Encourage lecturers to conduct the digital evaluations during the last class

Another effective way to boost response rates is to ensure that evaluations are conducted at an optimal moment. When lecturers allow students to complete the evaluation during the final class of the period, the response rate is significantly higher compared to sending it out later via email. While lecturers are encouraged to do this¹, it does not happen consistently. Members of the programme committee can raise awareness about this practice among lecturers who have not yet adopted it.

3. Contribute to a diverse range of evaluation methods

Evaluations are most effective when a variety of methods are used. In addition to digital surveys, qualitative methods such as panel discussions can be organized to gather more in-depth feedback. Programme committees are also authorized to organize such evaluations themselves. In consultation with the programme director, different approaches to evaluation can be implemented, enabling the collection of a broad range of insights to support educational improvement.

Background

This document is part of a broader series of resources aimed at improving the evaluations of teaching. At VU, there is a clear ambition to strengthen the engagement of all stakeholders in the evaluation process and to optimize its role as a feedback mechanism. VU aims to empower all parties involved in evaluations — lecturers, students, programme committees, programme directors, and faculty boards — to contribute more effectively to this process. Excellent education is a collective effort!

¹ See also [Best Practices for Lecturers](#)