Effective Evaluations:
Best Practices for Lecturers

This document provides guidelines and best practices for lecturers to conduct effective course evaluations and increase response rates, ensuring that feedback is representative and actionable. As a lecturer, you play a pivotal role in encouraging students to actively participate in course evaluations. By engaging students and raising awareness of the importance of their input, you contribute to a more effective evaluation process.

1   **Show appreciation for student feedback:** Inform students at the start of the course about the importance of their feedback and the upcoming evaluation. Emphasize that by providing feedback, they are directly contributing to improving the quality of education. Highlight specific examples of how previous evaluations have led to changes in course materials or teaching methods.

2   **Explain how the results are used:** Clearly communicate to students that their feedback is not only seen by the lecturer but also reviewed by the programme director and the programme committee. Let them know that their input plays a key role in curriculum development and educational improvements. Reassure students that their privacy is protected and that feedback is processed anonymously.

3   **Promote a positive tone:** Encourage students to view the evaluation process as an opportunity to provide both positive and constructive feedback. Let them know that highlighting strengths is just as valuable as pointing out areas for improvement for a more comprehensive picture of the course experience.

4   **Provide feedback to students:** After the evaluation period, share the key results, main feedback points, and any planned changes (where possible) with students. This transparency shows students that their input is being taken seriously, and it also increases the likelihood of their future participation in evaluations.

5   **Integrate evaluations into the course programme:** Reserve time for students to complete the evaluation during the (final) class of the course. This approach offers a natural opportunity for students to provide feedback without requiring them to do so outside of class hours.

A recommended method is to use the **combined evaluation approach**. With this method, students can complete the evaluation live in class using a QR code, and a follow-up invitation email is sent to those who have not yet submitted their feedback. For guidance on setting up this combined method in Evalytics, please refer to this step-by-step guide.

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!