



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT FEEDBACK ON TEACHING QUALITY

Name:	Principles and Procedures for student feedback on teaching quality	
Reference number: <i>(supplied by Office of the Registrar)</i>		
Originator/Author: <i>(name and position)</i>	Dr Lumkile Luvuyo Lalendle Director: Quality Promotion and Assurance Mr Rajin Padayachi and Ms Rani Chunder QPA Consultant and QPA Coordinator	
Custodian: <i>(position/office)</i>	Director Quality Promotion and Assurance	
Policy approved by:	Structure: Senate	Date:
Policy effective date:	01 January 2013	
Policy review date:	01 January 2016	
Implementation responsibility:	Quality Promotion and Assurance Academics, Academic Leaders and Deans	
Implementation procedures approved by:	Structure: Senate	Date: Nov 2012

1. PURPOSE STATEMENT

This document outlines the University's approach to the evaluation of teaching through its systems of student feedback which is one of a number of ways of evaluating teaching and learning effectiveness. Student feedback is important in providing evidence-based information that assists the University to improve teaching quality and assist academics, as part of their professional development, to periodically reflect on their teaching practice. This process should also be used in conjunction with peer evaluations and other forms of evaluation.

Student evaluations will also provide college, school and academic leaders with composite reports to enable them to give the necessary support and take corrective action in modules that are not meeting quality standards and expectations. From these reports, academic leaders and line managers may identify areas that require improvement as well as reward excellence in respect of teaching quality.

2. INTRODUCTION

UKZN is committed to excellence in teaching and learning. It recognises that a fair and transparent system of evaluation is essential to maintain the quality of teaching and learning at the university. The University has an extensive system of student feedback on modules managed by Quality Promotion and Assurance (QPA). The system is one of the key institutional quality processes aimed at providing feedback to the lecturers and their line managers and in assessing teaching quality.

3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- 3.1. **Assessment:** the process of gathering information to improve student learning through formative and summative judgments.
- 3.2. **Module:** a coherent delivery of learning offered by the University over a semester.
- 3.3. **Student Evaluation:** the collection, analysis and interpretation of data and feedback on the quality of teaching and learning.
- 3.4. **Student Feedback:** a university process that enables students to comment on teaching quality in modules and academics to receive feedback on various aspects of their teaching based on the module evaluated.
- 3.5. **Student Feedback Report:** a QPA report of student feedback on teaching quality gathered from questionnaire responses. This can be either a

manually administered or electronically generated product from online surveys that a lecturer receives after the evaluation.

4. SCOPE

- 4.1 These principles and procedures apply to all staff and students of UKZN.
- 4.2 The practice of student feedback on teaching quality covers teaching and learning, supervision of post-graduate student and all related activities at the University.
- 4.3 These principles and procedures must be read in conjunction with the Quality Promotion and Assurance Policy and with all the UKZN policies that govern and regulate teaching, learning, and assessment; with the Principles and Guidelines on Academic Staff Promotions and the amended University Strategic Plan (2007-2016).

5. PRINCIPLES

- 5.1. All academics must obtain independent student feedback on modules that they teach at each offering of the module.
- 5.2. Student evaluations used as part of a teaching portfolio that forms part of the promotion process must be obtained in the past not exceeding five years.
- 5.3. Students must participate in the evaluation of teaching quality by providing feedback on the modules they take.
- 5.4. A range of factors in the evaluation of teaching quality through student feedback must be considered which includes the discipline content, assessment, the level, the learning outcomes, and lecturer style.
- 5.5. Student feedback is obtained for formative developmental purposes and to monitor, maintain and improve the quality of teaching and curricula.
- 5.6. Evaluation of teaching quality by students is used for summative purposes in that evidence gathered informs academic promotion, probation, teaching awards and performance management.
- 5.7. The administration of the manual system of evaluation should be managed by the school and not the lecturer of the module being evaluated. Academics are encouraged to use the electronic student feedback questionnaire.
- 5.8. Student evaluation should be triangulated with other evaluations including but not limited to external, peer and self-evaluation.
- 5.9. The practice of obtaining student feedback on teaching quality must preserve anonymity of respondents.
- 5.10. Academics are required to reflect on issues raised in feedback reports and inform students on changes effected in the modules as a result of student feedback in order to preserve the efficacy of student feedback on teaching.
- 5.11. Modules with repeated low/poor student evaluations must be investigated by the respective line manager(s) responsible for teaching and learning in the School/College.

- 5.12. Summarised student module evaluation reports should be available to staff and students in respective Schools and Colleges.
- 5.13. Reports that synthesize student feedback across modules /programmes in a given period (e.g. annually) should be produced and tabled at respective School and College Boards as part of continuous teaching and learning quality monitoring and improvement.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 General Procedures

- 6.1.1 The QPA's Student Feedback Questionnaire must be administered after each offering of the module but definitely after three cohorts of students have taken the module.
- 6.1.2 All new modules must be evaluated at the end of the first offering to provide feedback to the designers.
- 6.1.3 Evaluation may be undertaken more frequently, to evaluate staff on probation or those seeking promotion, including where high failure rates have been identified and where previous student feedback has been negative.
- 6.1.4 Feedback will be gathered using the QPA Student Feedback Questionnaires which can be administered online via learning.ukzn.ac.za or manually using questionnaires provided on the QPA website and administered to students on-site.
- 6.1.5 The manual independently administered evaluations should be sent to QPA within five working days from the date of it being administered and they should not be handled by the academic(s) concerned with teaching of module being evaluated.
- 6.1.6 The QPA Student Feedback Questionnaire has a number of core compulsory questions which must be administered. Academics may select additional questions from a list of optional questions. The questionnaire should not include more than 30 questions.
- 6.1.7 In exceptional circumstances, where appropriate, an alternative questionnaire may be used to evaluate teaching in a particular context. The instrument must be approved by QPA in consultation with the School Academic Leader: Teaching and Learning and should contain the core questions in the appropriate categories.
- 6.1.8 Responses to each question and the questionnaire as a whole will be given a rating and will be colour coded to indicate student opinions on an aspect of teaching quality in a particular module: Green - meeting expectations, orange - need focused attention to identified areas, red - urgent attention is needed.
- 6.1.9 Completed Student Feedback Reports generated will be sent by QPA to the lecturer, respective Academic Leader, School Academic Leader Teaching and Learning, Dean and Head of School (HOS) and to the College Dean Teaching & Learning.
- 6.1.10 Where response rates are lower than 25% of the total number of students register for a module careful immediate consideration should be given by

the line manager to obtaining additional sources of feedback and alternative ways improving response rates. In students' feedback from post graduate students as minimum of six passed and current students should complete QPA student feedback questionnaire.

- 6.1.11 Modules with poor student evaluations must be identified and the respective line manager(s) should discuss them with the academic in order to plan remedial action that should be taken to address quality challenges.
- 6.1.12 Composite reports will be provided to leaders of the College to enable them to identify modules that could present risks to College expected outputs and raise awareness of areas that will need focused attention.

6.2. Responsible entities for implementation

6.2.1 QPA staff

- 6.2.1.1 QPA will process the manual student feedback and provide a Student Feedback Report within 40 working days from the day they are submitted to QPA.
- 6.2.1.2 QPA will provide synthesis reports annually on modules evaluated and advise College Deans of Teaching and Learning on interventions that could to be introduced to improve teaching quality.
- 6.2.1.3 QPA will ensure that all modules evaluated and an overall rating (score) of each module is published on the QPA website.

6.2.2 Schools

- 6.2.2.1 School Academic Leaders will provide QPA with a schedule for evaluation of modules before the academic year begins. The Academic Teaching and Learning must monitor the cycle of evaluations to ensure that all modules are evaluated and adhere to the schedule as per policy.
- 6.2.2.2 Careful consideration should be given to the scheduling of evaluations to avoid questionnaire fatigue.
- 6.2.2.3 College Deans of Teaching and Learning, Deans and Heads of School, or School Academic Leader: Teaching and Learning can request evaluations which are additional to those in the schedule to be conducted where necessary.
- 6.2.2.4 Academics in consultation with the College Dean of Teaching and Learning, Dean and HOS and teaching and learning academic leader will decide on the method of evaluation which should take careful consideration of such factors as access to computers and familiarity with online via learning.ukzn.ac.za or an applicable electronic platform.
- 6.2.2.5 Academic Leaders and the Dean and HOS may decide which student feedback reports to discuss with the staff member. They may use other available information about teaching and learning to moderate the feedback in the report and decide on a course of action as part of performance management and professional development plan of the staff member for the management of teaching and learning quality.

ANNEXURE 1: Ratings and Weightings submission to Senate

SUBMISSION IDENTIFIERS:

Title	Ratings and Weighting in students evaluation on TQ
Author and position	Dr Lumkile Lalendle (Director: Quality Promotion and Assurance)

APPROVAL HISTORY

Structure consulted	Target date for discussion	Outcome
CAAB (Health Sciences)	29 July 2013	Supported
CAAB (AES)	30 July 2013	Supported
CAAB (Law and Management)	31 July 2013	Supported
CAAB (Humanities)	7 August 2013	Supported
Teaching and Learning strategy Groups	8 October 2013	Supported
Senate	6 November 2013	

SUBMISSION CONTENT

Proposal

To consider the proposed ratings and weightings to be part of the early warning systems for modules that are at risk in schools and colleges in the implementation of a new reporting system on student evaluation of teaching quality (TQ):

In respect to weighting of the different aspect in the evaluation of a module QPA would like to propose that:

- 1. The module component be given a weighting of 10% out of 100%**
[This includes coherence of topics within the module, how the module fostered enthusiasm amongst students and the impact of tutorials and/or practicals (where applicable) in fostering better understanding of the content. See Question 1-3 on the attached document]
- 2. The role of the Facilitator be given a weighting of 50% out of 100%**
[This speaks of Facilitators (Lecturers and Tutors) preparedness, punctuality, approachability and availability]
- 3. Assessment of the module be given a weighting of 40% out of 100%**
[This entails the guidance provided in formative assessment and provision of useful feedback; appropriateness of assessments and level of difficulty]

The early warning module system/Robot system

As teaching and learning is a critical component in a number of performance, promotions and teaching development and support initiatives at the University. The overall assessment of modules by students is critical in all the above mentioned processes, there is a need to set some targets that are realistic and take cognisance of our aspirations as a globally competitive institution and that values high levels of performance in all areas.

An early warning system that enables prompt action to be taken, where warranted, will operate as a "robot system" for ease of reference.

A module that is rated by students in the OPA student evaluation of teaching quality will be given ratings that are aligned with the performance management system (1-4) and the following colour-coding:

Blue: is for modules that are rated by students at **90 % to 100%**. This is an assurance that students are satisfied with all aspects of the module and there is no need for concern.

Performance rating 4

Green: is for modules that are rated by students at **80 % to 89 %**. This is an assurance that students are satisfied with most aspects of the module and there is some room for improvements.

Performance rating 3

Yellow: will be assigned to a module that is rated by students in a range between **70 % to 79 %**. This is an indication that there are some aspects of the module that need attention and the lecturer and line manager should engage with those issues urgently to safeguard teaching quality.

Performance rating 2

Red: will be given to modules that are rated by students **below 70%**. This is a sign that there might be serious challenges with some or all aspects of the module and urgent and prompt action need to be taken by the lecturer, Academic Leaders and Dean. Modules that are at this level will need to be monitored and be evaluated every time they are offered until they have graduated to yellow and green status to protect students and university interests.

Performance rating 1

NB: Student evaluations of modules should be considered together with student performance; moderator/external examiners reports and peer evaluations.

Motivation

These proposals are in line with teaching and learning goal 4 of the Strategic Plan 2007-2016 and the new Quality Promotion and Assurance Policy with its accompanying Principles and Procedures on student evaluation of teaching quality. As part of the global university fraternity which prides itself with

preserving excellence UKZN has benchmarked with other Universities - University of St Andrew, University of Westminster and City University - in this area. Satisfaction levels that are below 3.5 in a five point scale warrant intervention by the institutions we benchmarked against.

The early warning system thresholds provided above are also informed by the pilot undertaken in the School of Mathematics, Computer Science and Statistics in the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science. In the School 65% of modules evaluated achieved 80% and above; while 6% of modules were evaluated below 60%.

It is also noted that UKZN Extended Learning has set its target at 85% and above for all evaluations for its short courses.

Inputs from the Colleges Academic Boards:

Health Sciences Proposed the following changes:

1. The weighting for module component should be 20% out of 100%
2. The weighting for assessment be adjusted from 40% to 30% out of 100%
(see attached minutes of the CAAB of 29 July 2013)

Agriculture, Engineering and Science :

The College supported the weighting and ratings without any changes
(see attached minutes of the CAAB of 31 July 2013)

Law and Management :

The College supported the weighting and ratings without any changes and further requested that an electronic rating and weighting system be applied in student evaluations.
(see attached minutes of the CAAB)

Humanities

The College noted and supported the weighting and ratings without any changes
(see attached minutes of the CAAB of 7 August 2013)

Financial implications: Minimal as existing budgets should accommodate the changes

**Attachment: 1. Revised Student Evaluation Questionnaire
2. Excerpts of Minutes of the CAAB's (July and August 2013)**

ANNEXURE 2: Student Evaluation Questionnaire

The aim of this questionnaire is to derive a minimal set of core questions that will capture the most important aspects of the class room environment so that the results of the student evaluation will lead to data-based class room enquiry.

Module

1. It was clear to me how the different topics and sections of the module fitted together.
2. I felt enthusiastic about studying this module

Lecturer

3. I thought that the lecturer was always well prepared.
4. I thought that the lecturer's explanations were clear.
5. I thought that the lecturer was approachable.
6. I found that the lecturer was available during consultation times.
7. I found the lecturer to be very knowledgeable about the content of the module

Assessment

8. I thought there was a good link between what is learnt in the module and what is assessed.
9. I was provided with feedback on the assessment tasks
10. I found the feedback on assessment useful.

Tutorials/Practical's (if applicable)

11. I found the tutorials/practical's helped me to understand the module better.
12. I thought that the tutors were always well prepared.

COMMENTS (Brief statements, written in full)

13. **What aspects of the module were facilitated well?**
14. **What areas do you believe need to be improved in this module?**
15. **Any other comments**

ANNEXURE 3: Excerpts of Minutes of the CAAB's (July and August 2013)

MINUTES OF THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES COLLEGE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS BOARD (CAAB) HELD ON 29 JULY 2013.

6.3.4. Dr Lalendle spoke to the report as circulated. Members deliberated on the proposed ratings and weightings to be part of the early warning systems for modules that are at risk in schools and colleges in the implementation of a new reporting system on student evaluation of teaching quality.

The proposal was Approved subject to the following amendments;

- Modification for Weighting must be from 10% to 20%
- Assessment should be 30%

MINUTES OF THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE COLLEGE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS BOARD (CAAB) HELD ON 30 JULY 2013.

8.1.1. Ratings and Weighting in Student' Evaluation of TQ

The committee supported the proposed rating and weighting in students evaluations.

Prof Vithal confirmed that the student evaluation questions were approved by Senate as a core set. The questionnaire will be sent to student electronically at the end of every semester.

MINUTES OF THE COLLEGE OF LAW AND MANAGEMENT COLLEGE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS BOARD (CAAB) HELD ON 31 JULY 2013.

7.5. Rating and weighting in Student Evaluation of TQ

CAAB supported the proposed rating and weighting in student evaluation of teaching quality, attached as Appendix S of the agenda. It was further suggested that the rating and weighting system be applied for student evaluation.

MINUTES OF THE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES ACADEMIC AFFAIRS BOARD (CAAB) HELD ON 07 AUGUST 2013.

7.6. Ratings and Weighting in Students evaluation on teaching Quality

Dr Lalendle led the Board through the motivation to consider the proposed ratings and weightings to be part of the early warning systems for modules that area at risk in schools and colleges in the implementation of a new reporting system on student evaluation of teaching quality - Appendix 22 of the Agenda.

CAAB noted and supported the Ratings and Weightings on evaluation on Teaching Quality