

August 19, 2022

Evaluation Directive

General objective

§ 1.

Evaluation serves the quality management of universities pursuant to § 14 of the Universities Act 2002. Evaluation supports and motivates WU faculty and staff members in performing their tasks. Furthermore, evaluation serves to recognize and evaluate their performance. The aim is to develop a partnership for quality enhancement throughout the university that is characterized by mutual trust.

Evaluation measures shall be organized by the Rector's Council. The Senate shall make recommendations on how to perform evaluation measures and functions as a supervisory body to ensure that evaluation is carried out in an unbiased manner.

Objectives of evaluation

§ 2.

The objectives of evaluation are:

1. Measuring, assuring, and enhancing the quality and diversity of the services and tasks performed by WU
2. Providing support in making decisions for medium- and long-term planning
3. Making available data to render account to the public
4. Providing support in performing tasks and services and enhancing potential for further development

Objects of evaluation

§ 3.

(1) Evaluation covers research (research output, quality of research, and research cooperation) and teaching (syllabi, didactic quality, contextual factors).

(2) The objects of evaluation are:

1. Persons
2. Organizational units
3. Programs
4. Degree programs

Performing evaluation

§ 4.

The Rector's Council shall organize evaluation measures for all areas of the university and support measures for the units tasked with performing the relevant evaluation. This includes the following tasks:

1. Selecting external evaluators, taking into account the proposed list prepared by the evaluated units
2. Ensuring compliance with internationally customary evaluation standards in teaching and research
3. Systematically auditing and developing evaluation procedures and instruments, and analyzing their effects
4. Supporting dialog about evaluation at the university
5. Making recommendations to the evaluated units and entities, while observing confidentiality and data protection
6. Ensuring that detailed reasons are given for the evaluation results against the background of the interests behind evaluation and special procedural requirements, and that detailed reasons are given for the conclusions drawn from the results
7. Regularly reporting to the Senate on completed evaluation measures
8. Preparing an annual WU evaluation report
9. Ensuring the required funds for performing evaluation measures, depending on whether they can be covered by the budget

Evaluation monitoring

§ 5.

(1) The Senate's tasks with regard to evaluation include:

1. Issuing directives for the committees responsible for evaluation pursuant to § 3
2. Making recommendations to the Rector's Council on all issues related to the conduct and development of evaluation measures, based on continuous observation of the evaluation processes
3. Giving opinions on the Rector's Council's annual evaluation report

(2) The Academic Programs Committee is responsible for the evaluation of teaching (syllabi, didactic quality, contextual factors), and the Research Committee is responsible for the evaluation of research (research output, research quality, and research cooperation) pursuant to § 3. These Committees have the following tasks, among others:

1. Monitoring the proper and unbiased implementation of evaluation measures, and observing confidentiality
2. Providing advice in the case of disagreement on the implementation of evaluation measures, evaluation criteria, evaluators to be appointed, or the conclusions drawn from evaluation measures. The persons, units, or program directors subject to evaluation can contact the relevant committee if they do not agree with the procedure used during an evaluation. In that case, the committee functions as an arbitration body.
3. If required, inspecting evaluation documents
4. Submitting recommendations, including reasons, to the Senate and the Rector's Council in the case of conflicts that cannot be resolved by agreement with the Rector's Council

(3) The persons tasked with carrying out the evaluation are obligated to provide information to the Senate or the committee responsible for the evaluation.

Evaluation criteria

§ 6.

(1) The most important criterion of any evaluation of research and teaching is quality. Evaluation procedures follow subject-specific international evaluation standards, for which reasons must be able to be given in all individual cases.

(2) Evaluation procedures are based on communication between the parties involved and are meant to ensure acceptance by the persons or units concerned.

(3) In the interpretation of evaluation data, the contextual factors of performance and the specific type of the task performed are to be taken into account in all cases.

General procedural provisions

§ 7.

(1) All academic units of WU are to be evaluated with respect to teaching and research at regular intervals.

(2) In principle, evaluation is performed by means of two procedures:

1. Self-evaluation: Self-evaluation serves the purposes of self-assessment and development of a self-critical and self-reflective awareness of achievements by identifying existing or potential strengths and weaknesses. For that purpose, it provides information for continuous quality development. Self-evaluation involves the preparation of a performance report and/or the application of standardized or custom-made evaluation instruments. In addition, measures implemented to promote quality must be stated that were regarded as useful during the evaluation period or were recommended in the previous evaluation report (in particular by external evaluators). A standard performance report, which makes available general, basic qualitative and quantitative data and which is to be prepared for that purpose, forms the basis of self-evaluation.

2. External evaluation: External evaluation serves to verify and supplement self-evaluation and is intended to make visible aspects of performance that have received too little consideration, and to make recommendations for further development. External evaluation is performed on the basis of self-evaluation, and is carried out by external experts who are internationally renowned in their field.

(3) The evaluation results are to be discussed with the persons or units evaluated with a view to how the evaluation was carried out and which possible measures can be derived from the results. On the basis of an overall report and consultations with the parties concerned, appropriate measures for quality assurance and development are agreed upon.

Evaluation of persons

§ 8.

The assessment and evaluation of performance covers activities in research, teaching, and administration and is performed in the context of personnel development and management. Any evaluation beyond that serves to examine performance with regard to the framework conditions under which a person performs; discussions of the evaluation results between the parties concerned are a necessary element of such evaluation measures.

Evaluation of organizational units

§ 9.

(1) The procedure of evaluating organizational units is based on the following steps:

- a) Self-evaluation that serves to present the respective unit's performance across the entire scope of its activities (documentation of performance)
 - b) Following self-evaluation, external evaluation by third parties, taking into account and supplementing the results of the self-evaluation process. External evaluation concludes with a joint discussion of the future development of the organizational unit and its quality management.
- (2) The self-evaluation and external evaluation results form the basis for negotiating the respective unit's target agreements.

Evaluation of programs

§ 10.

(1) The evaluation of programs primarily serves to examine the program with regard to the achievement of targets, functionality, optimization and further development, and the motivation of the persons involved in the program. The program's specific time schedule in the evaluation intervals must be taken into account.

(2) The evaluation of programs refers to teaching and research (including continuing education programs), with a focus on the following areas: examination and achievement of program targets, the quality of the program, and assessment by the program's target group.

Evaluation of degree program performance and student trajectories

§ 11.

The evaluation of teaching activities and their organization must take into account the efficiency of teaching in the existing degree programs, the innovation effect of new degree programs, international development, and suggestions for curricula amendments. Evaluation is carried out in three ways:

1. Self-evaluation by the Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs for monitoring the development, quality, and acceptance of the respective degree program
2. External evaluation (by external evaluators, an evaluation agency, or as part of accreditation procedures)
3. Aggregate evaluation of courses by means of the evaluation of teaching activities to be performed for all teaching staff members. The results are analyzed in anonymous form, and the analysis is based on the assessment of the quality of teaching by students, supplemented by the contextual factors apply for the relevant course.

Evaluation of research

§ 12.

Research evaluation serves to monitor the research output of persons or organizational units and provides a basis for quality improvement. The instruments used are to ensure that the evaluation of research:

1. Permits a comparison of research at WU with other (at least Austrian) universities
2. Provides WU with a basis for strategic planning and positioning
3. Facilitates differentiated feedback
4. Involves the researchers whose work is evaluated from an early stage
5. Takes into account the special characteristics of the relevant academic discipline
6. Relates to the framework conditions (in particular teaching activities) under which the relevant research work was performed
7. Also includes independent researchers that are not part of WU

Meta evaluation

§ 13.

The Rector's Council shall systematically examine, by means of quantitative procedures (monitoring) and qualitative procedures (feedback), the instruments used for evaluation and the effects achieved with them.

Selection of external experts

§ 14.

(1) The organizational unit to be evaluated shall propose a list of four external experts. The Rector's Council shall select two experts from this list. The Rector's Council can also use other experts but must give reasons for doing so to the Senate or the Evaluation Committee at its request. In that case, the Evaluation Committee can also appoint two experts.

(2) In the case of the evaluation of persons, these provisions apply accordingly, unless deviating special rules apply.

Transparency of the procedure and privacy

§ 15.

(1) The Rector's Council shall take measures to ensure the transparency of the evaluation procedures in cooperation with all parties involved. The Rector's Council shall inform, in due time, all parties involved of all steps of the procedure and its results.

(2) In consultation with the Senate, the Rector's Council shall decide on the form in which evaluation results are made available or published. The Rector's Council shall take measures to prevent any misuse of evaluation data. Evaluation results relating to specific persons may be disclosed only to the Senate, the committee responsible for the evaluation, and the University Board. Any disclosure beyond that requires the written consent of the person evaluated.

(3) The Rector's Council shall report to the Senate on the evaluation activities performed and on how documentation of the evaluation activities and their results can be accessed. In addition, the Rector's Council shall ensure that this information is accessible to members of the WU community.