Mitteilungsblatt 52. Stück, Nr. 290, vom 18. August 2021

# WUPOL Course Evaluation Reporting

WU Policy on the Implementation of Reporting Activities on Course Evaluation at WU

# Contents

# 1. Purpose

WU carries out course evaluation activities to strengthen the ongoing development of teaching and the feedback culture within WU. Of course, WU must take into account the relevant political and legal context, such as the Universities Act (*Universitätsgesetz*, UG) and the requirements of external accreditation agencies. Nevertheless, the conceptual orientation of course evaluation at WU is based on the feedback function of course evaluation activities. The goal is to ensure students' active involvement in the development of WU's teaching and to offer them an official feedback channel. This is also necessary because there are several unofficial feedback channels, e.g. social media or apps available on the market, which, however, (can) contribute only very little to a culture of feedback and reflection at WU. Teachers should receive constructive feedback on their teaching efforts. To ensure that this is the case, it is necessary to obtain student feedback, reflect on it, and discuss it within the respective academic units and programs. This process is supported by reports that are made available centrally by WU. In this way, student course evaluation offers an institutional feedback channel and can constitute one of several bases for discussions and reflection on teaching. Against this background, the objective of this guideline is to regulate the appropriate use of the reports generated based on the results of student course evaluation, which are made available to supervisors and academic directors.

# 2. Scope

## 2.1 Personal scope

This WU Policy applies to members of the academic and administrative university staff pursuant to § 94 (1) items 4 and 5 of the UG.

## 2.2 Temporal scope

This WU policy shall come into force on September 1, 2021, and will be applied for the first time with regard to evaluations of courses that will take place in the winter semester 2021/22.

# 3. The instrument of student course evaluation

The instrument of student course evaluation takes into account different factors that may influence courses and contains the following elements, which are included in an evaluation questionnaire:

- Two open questions
- Four compulsory modules of four items each
    - Questions about the general conditions of the course
    - Questions about the course instructors
    - Self-evaluation of the students and
    - A block of questions on assessment and feedback
    - The compulsory modules each comprise four questions, two to three of which cannot be changed and one to two of which can be changed freely.
- Two elective modules of four items each, which can be designed completely freely by the course instructor
- A question about whether students would recommend the course in question to others (cannot be changed)
- A question about how the requirements of the course were perceived (cannot be changed)
- Information about the student's gender (cannot be changed)

# 4. Reporting

At the individual level, teachers receive feedback on all of their results (including open feedback). Teachers are provided with comparative scores so that they can compare their course to other courses that cover the same subject.

Course instructors can publish the evaluation results of their course (including the comparative score) to make them available to students on a voluntary basis. The instructors can choose whether they want to show the students only the four compulsory modules, including the questions about requirements and recommendations, or also the additional elective modules. If the comparative score is shown to the course instructor, the students will also be able to see the comparative score.

This reporting of evaluation results to both the course instructors and the students is essential for ensuring that course evaluations adequately fulfill their feedback function. However, this guideline does not refer to this function of student course evaluation.

In the following, reports are described that are generated on the basis of the student course evaluations and go beyond the presentation of evaluation results to teachers and students. Instead, these reports are aimed at department chairs, immediate supervisors, and academic directors.

## 4.1. Interpretation guides for the recipients of the respective reports

The recipients of the respective report are provided with interpretation guides for interpreting the reported results, which also indicate the limitations of the report and the data it contains. The report includes a direct reference to these interpretation guides, which are available on the course evaluation platform.

## 4.2. Transparency for teachers

On the evaluation platform, course instructors can find information about how the evaluation results are used for reporting (when clearing the results for inclusion in the reports). Next to the field where course instructors are asked to give their consent, a data protection statement is provided, showing which data is used for the reports. Consent to the inclusion of the respective course evaluation in the reports is obtained separately for each course evaluation.

## 4.3. Clearance of the results by the course instructor

After completing the course evaluation and viewing the data, teachers decide whether to include their evaluation results in the reports, choosing between two release options:

(a) “Do not share results for reporting” (including a voluntary justification):
The corresponding items (compulsory items of the compulsory questions, questions about recommendation and requirements) cannot be included in the reports. Any reasons provided to justify why they cannot be included are not entered into the reports. Instead, they are used as an easily accessible source of feedback for the Program Management and Teaching & Learning Support office to find out more about teachers’ doubts and reservations. This information is used to implement well-targeted improvements of course evaluation process and the associated communications. Teachers are informed about this use of the information next to the field where they can enter their voluntary justification.

(b) “Share results for reporting”:
The corresponding items (compulsory items of the compulsory questions, questions about recommendation and requirements) can be included in the reports.

Courses with five or fewer responses are automatically excluded from the reports.

## 4.4. Basic considerations for the reports

Reports are created for the purpose of further developing teaching activities (both at the course level and at the degree program level). The reports are intended to help initiate and contextualize discussions and measures for the further development of teaching. It must be noted, however, that WU offers different initiatives for the development of teaching at different levels (e.g. personal development, further development of course designs, the program design, ...). The results of student course evaluations can therefore only be one of several input factors regarding university teaching.

The planned reports should be available to three target groups: The reports should be sent to direct supervisors, department chairs, and academic directors. These target groups sometimes act as direct supervisors who are responsible for personnel development in their areas of responsibility. In any case, these target groups bear responsibility for the further development of teaching in their respective areas of activity.

## 4.5. The technical format of the reports

The recipients of the reports indicated above can download the reports via the evaluation platform. In this way, the appropriate use of the reports can be ensured (e.g. personnel development: to conduct an employee performance review; teaching development: to revise the academic program; in conflict situations: to help supervisors perform their supervisory role in the department). Also, the latest version of the interpretation guide can be brought to the attention of the recipients, and the recipients can be informed about the retention periods for the reports and the restrictions that apply to the disclosure of the reports to others. More detailed information (e.g. interpretation guides, information on deletion deadlines, and a link to this guideline) can be found on the platform.

The deletion deadlines for the reports are based on the provisions of the Operational Agreement on Operative Systems (*Betriebsvereinbarung für operative Systeme*).

## 4.6. What are the purposes of course evaluation reporting?

### 4.6.1. Personnel development activities by direct supervisors

The duties of supervisors are set out in § 18 (1) of the WU By-Laws. Gaining insights into the students’ perspective through course evaluation can help supervisors in “performing the function of a supervisor,” as stated in item 5. The reports can help supervisors to perform their duties regarding personnel development activities for employees. This also applies to department chairs, who have to perform the role of a supervisor for the entire staff of a department (§ 12 [1] item 5).

The course evaluation items indicated in section 4.6.4. are included in the reports to department chairs, academic directors, and direct supervisors. To gain a holistic picture of the teaching situation, no individual items are used for this purpose. This is intended to avoid interpretations that are too narrow, for example if the focus is only on the individual teacher.

### 4.6.2. Organization and further development of teaching

Department chairs are responsible for organizing their department’s teaching activities, pursuant to § 12 (1) item 6 of the By-Laws of WU, and bear the ultimate responsibility for the course planning and announcement processes.

Academic directors are responsible for organizing the academic program they are responsible for and further developing their program’s contents (pursuant to § 24 [2] of the By-Laws of WU). They play a key role in the course planning and announcement processes. An active feedback culture can be strengthened by looking at different perspectives within the program. Information about the students’ perspective, as offered by course evaluation, helps to further develop the respective academic program. In this context, the academic director can use the reports for the purpose of developing their academic program.

### 4.6.3. What are exemplary applications for the stated purposes?

Direct supervisors are responsible for personnel development. Direct supervisors, for example, conduct employee performance review interviews. In these interviews, it is recommended to address matters related to the future development of teaching activities.

Academic directors engage in an exchange with the teachers of the program as part of an active feedback culture in order to further develop the teaching program at the course level but also at the overall program level.

Department chairs encourage personnel development measures at the department level and, in line with WU's matrix management structure, they are responsible for providing teaching that is appropriate for the objectives of the respective academic program.

All target groups should actively use the insights from student course evaluation to pick up positive impulses for the development of teaching activities (e.g. positive support by encouraging instructors to submit their courses for the Innovative Teaching Award, to disseminate pioneering course designs in cooperation with the WU teaching/learning development team for the benefit of all WU teachers; discussing the respective general conditions for teaching activities, e.g. temporal and spatial aspects, support structures such as tutors, ...).

### 4.6.4. Which data should be included in the reports?

Course evaluation reports on the courses taught by the respective organizational unit (e.g. group, institute, department) can be used for performing personnel development tasks. Different dimensions of the course evaluation should be shown in the reports to avoid that an overly narrow perspective is adopted that focuses only on individual items and to better do justice to the multidimensional nature of teaching and learning settings. This includes the following dimensions:

- The course (to be able to reflect on and discuss the design of the course, for example, together with the relevant employees)
- The course instructors (in order to be able to discuss the students’ feedback together, for example)
- The student (to be able to use the student’s self-evaluation as contextual information in the overall picture)

- Performance assessment and feedback (to be able to analyze the students' opinions in relation to the examination design)
- The question about whether students would recommend the course (to be able to determine whether students would recommend this course to others)
- The question about the requirements of the course in the course evaluation (as contextual information)

Open questions and elective questions are not shown in the reports.

#### 4.6.5. Aggregation of the data and comparative scores

Data are shown at the level of the individual course evaluation and not at the level of the individual course instructor. Comparative scores should be given so that individual results can be better discussed in context. These comparative scores should be based exclusively on similar teaching and learning settings (same subject[s]). If more than five reference values are given, the average value per item and semester at the subject module level is shown as a comparative score. The development of the items over time is shown at the subject module level. The number of courses used for comparison is also shown.

#### 4.6.6. For what purposes are the reports not suitable?

The reports generated on the basis of the student course evaluations may not be used as a performance assessment tool, as a basis for personnel decisions, or as a basis for decisions about awarding teaching assignments. The reports may not be passed on to third parties without the consent of all persons named in the respective report.

### 4.7. Changes to the reporting process and the questions

For the introduction of the reporting system and in the event of any changes or adaptations, the team of the Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs consults the Academic Staff Council to reach an agreement prior to the introduction or the changes or adaptations. Once an agreement has been reached, the team of the Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and student affairs then proceeds to inform the Senate's Academic Programs Committee.

## 5. Use of the evaluation data for ad-hoc decisions ("make your own case")

When using evaluation data for purposes other than those indicated in section 4 and for all recipients other than the ones mentioned in this guideline, course instructors make their data available themselves and can, if necessary, contextualize the data themselves. This "make your own case" logic is used, for example, for:

- Personnel decisions such as converting fixed-term senior lecturer positions into permanent positions
- Salary negotiations for professors
- Applications and appointments to other institutions

If necessary, the data provided by the course instructors are checked for accuracy and completeness by the appropriate unit of the central administration.

Deviations from the “make your own case” logic are only possible in the event of imminent danger (if there are concrete suspicions that course instructors may have engaged in serious misconduct as part of their employment or committed criminal offenses). In such cases, the data will be made available to the responsible decision-makers by WU’s central administration.

The following procedure is used in such cases:
Only staff members of the Program Management and Teaching & Learning Support office may inspect the data.
If the suspicions are corroborated during the inspection and legal consequences are being considered for the employee in question, the inspection must be interrupted and the procedure must then be resumed in cooperation with the appropriate staff council.

WU shall keep the footprint of the inspection as small as possible and limit it to the specific case of suspected wrongdoing.

WIRTSCHAFTS UNIVERSITÄT WIEN VIENNA UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

## 6. Document Details

All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

EQUIS ACCREDITED AACSB ACCREDITED AMBA ACCREDITED

| | |
|---|---|
| **Short title[1]*** | WUPOL Course Evaluation Reporting |
| **Long title** | WU Policy on the Implementation of Reporting Activities on Course Evaluation at WU |
| **File name[2]*** | WUPOL_Course_Evaluation_Reporting.docx |
| **Replaces** | |
| **Title of German version** | WU Policy zum Reporting der Lehrveranstaltungsevaluierung; Link |
| **Version (number, date)*** | 2021-1.0; dated 8/16/2021 |
| **Responsible for content*** | Rammerstorfer, Margarethe / Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs<br><br>Vettori Oliver / Program Management & Teaching and Learning Affairs |
| **Author*** | Ledermüller, Karl / Evaluation and Quality Enhancement |
| **Contact for content-related questions and practical implementation** | Ledermüller, Karl / Evaluation and Quality Enhancement |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Communication* (multiple selection is possible)** | ☐ email ☒ WU Bulletin<br>☒ WU regulations database |
| **Publication in the WU Bulletin (*Mitteilungsblatt*)** | academic year 2020/21; issue 52; dated 8/18/2021; Link to bulletin |
| **First publication (optional)** | academic year 2020/21; issue 52 19.08.2021; dated 8/18/2021; Link to bulletin |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Valid as of*** | 9/1/2021 |
| **Valid until*** | 8/31/2026 |
| **Approved by** | Rammerstorfer, Margarethe; Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs on 16.08.2021 |
| **Further information*** | Course evaluation |

1 Examples of short/long titles:
- Short title = category and keyword, e.g. WUPOL Software
- Long title or subtitle = designation provided by the organizational unit, e.g. "Regulation on the use of WU Software"

2 No more than 60 characters; do not use any diacritics, special characters, and spaces