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[This is an English translation only. The German original is the legally binding version.]

DIRECTIVE

Teaching evaluation by students at ETH Zurich

The Rector,

pursuant to Art. 9, Para. 2 of the ETH Zurich Organisational Ordinance of 16.12.2003 (RSETHZ 201.021),

has issued the following directive:

1 Subject and scope

Students of ETH Zurich regularly evaluate teaching at the institution, in all departments. The student survey is one element in this comprehensive ETH Zurich teaching evaluation.¹ The below directive sets out the rules which govern teaching evaluation by students.

2 Goal of teaching evaluation

2.1 Improve teaching, learning and examinations

Teaching evaluation is primarily intended to help faculty and the departments to improve teaching, student learning and examinations. Faculty and students are together responsible for the learning effectiveness of teaching, and it is in the interests of both to create an optimal teaching and learning environment. Teaching evaluation supports this because its participants are aware of their responsibility for the teaching and learning process, take it seriously and thus contribute to improving the quality of teaching. Orientation aids in this context are the documents 'Quality Criteria for Teaching'² and 'Guidelines on Grading Written Examinations'.³

1 Art. 10a of the ETH Law of 4.10.1991 (SR 414.110) and Art. 3, Para. 1 (c) of the ETHZ-EPFL Ordinance of 13.11.2003 (SR 414.110.37)

2 See http://www.let.ethz.ch/docs/Qualitaetskriterien_LehreETH_EN.pdf

3 See http://www.let.ethz.ch/docs/Guidelines_GradingEN_2013_11.pdf

2.2 Quality development

At the same time, the teaching evaluation is an instrument of quality assurance and development for the degree programmes (Directors of Study, Teaching Commissions, Department Conferences) and the Rector. It supplies detailed information on how course units and examinations are rated by students. This information enables the Rector and the persons responsible for degree programmes to make statements on the quality of teaching at ETH and in the departments and to take appropriate measures to improve and innovate teaching.

3 Procedure

Teaching evaluation is a three-level procedure, comprising

- 1) Semester feedback at the request of students, faculty or the department
- 2) Evaluation of course units before the end of the semester
- 3) Evaluation of examinations (end-of-semester examinations and session examinations)

3.1 Semester feedback

Semester feedback is an optional procedure and is conducted at the request of students, faculty or the department. It guarantees an exchange between students and faculty, with the goal of achieving adjustments during the current semester. The Educational Development and Technology unit (*Lehrentwicklung und -technologie*, LET) assists in the process and coordinates and collects the feedback data.

Semester feedback is a formative⁴ procedure. No report is written.

For further information on semester feedback see the ETH website.⁵

3.2 Evaluation of course units

Course units and examinations are evaluated alternately. During the course unit evaluation cycle no examinations are evaluated, with the exception of the first-year examinations.

4 A formative evaluation assesses teaching during the course. Improvements are undertaken on the basis of the results.

5 <https://www.ethz.ch/intranet/en/teaching/academic-support/teaching-evaluation/semester-feedback.html>

Student evaluation of course units takes place online towards the end of the semester. Faculty receive the results two weeks before the end of the semester and discuss them with the students during class. Course unit evaluation is both formative and summative.⁶

3.3 Evaluation of examinations (end-of-semester and session examinations)

During the examination evaluation cycle no course units are evaluated. (During the course unit cycle no examinations are evaluated, with the exception of the first-year examinations.)⁷

Student evaluation of examinations proceeds online. All students who registered for the examinations are surveyed. The evaluation of examinations is summative.

The following sections relate to the evaluation of course units and examinations.

4 Procedure

LET conducts evaluation of course units and examinations on behalf of the Rector and in cooperation with the departments. The department which offers the course unit or examination is the contact party for data collection, and is responsible for discussing the results and implementing measures derived from them.

In the context of course unit evaluation all course units of the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes are in principle evaluated online, provided that the questionnaire for the corresponding course type is available.

In the context of examination evaluation all end-of-semester and session examinations of the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes are also evaluated online, provided that the corresponding questionnaires are available. The first-year examinations are evaluated every semester.

An evaluation cycle comprises the Autumn Semester and the following Spring Semester. Information on the evaluation cycle is published on the ETH website.⁸

⁶ Summative evaluation assesses teaching after the course or examination is over.

⁷ For definitions see the Ordinance on Course Units and Performance Assessments at ETH Zurich, Art. 2.i., <http://www.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/20121393/index.html> (in German)

The Rector rules on exceptions at the request of the Head of Department.

5 Processes

The course unit and examination evaluation process is described in the ‘*QMS Lehre Prozessdiagramm 2-01-37 Unterrichtsbeurteilung*’ (teaching quality management system process diagram; in German). Information on the current evaluation semester is published on the ETH website.⁹

6 Instruments

6.1 EvaSys evaluation software

Course units and examinations are evaluated online using the evaluation software EvaSys. EvaSys is operated according to the pertaining terms of use and the current service description, viewable at <http://evasys.let.ethz.ch/>.

6.2 Standard questionnaires

Standard questionnaires are used which have been developed on behalf of the Rector for the various academic levels, course types and examination types according to pedagogical principles and testing theory.

The departments may add three ‘departmental questions’ (department offering the course) or three ‘degree programme questions’ (department where e.g. a service course is taught).

Questionnaires are available in German and English, even though German is the standard language of Bachelor’s degree course units / examinations and English the standard language of Master’s degree course units / examinations. Students may select the language.

Current questionnaires may be viewed on the ETH website.¹⁰

7 Service course units and service course unit examinations

8 <https://www.ethz.ch/intranet/en/teaching/academic-support/teaching-evaluation.html>

9 <https://www.ethz.ch/intranet/en/teaching/academic-support/teaching-evaluation.html>

10 <https://www.ethz.ch/intranet/en/teaching/academic-support/teaching-evaluation/verwendete-frageboegen.html>

Service course units and service course unit examinations are evaluated by the department offering the respective course. This department is responsible for the quality of the service course units taught and the respective examinations.

The departments at the receiving end automatically receive the results for the service course units and their examinations and look these over. In critical cases they contact the Head of Department of the department offering the course, who takes appropriate measures and informs the department at the receiving end.

8 Return rates and evaluation burden

To stabilise return rates the evaluation burden on students is increasingly being taken into account. Critical minimum return rates which depend on the size of the course unit have been defined. If these rates are not achieved, motivational measures are taken in consultation with departments and implemented in the following semester. To avoid 'over-evaluation' further online surveys (e.g. innovation evaluations) are coordinated with the teaching evaluation and (if possible) integrated into it.

9 Results

9.1 Format of results

Evaluation results are available in various formats:

- **Report with comments for faculty:** A PDF file with detailed scores of individual course units / examinations with student comments, including scores by degree programme subgroup.
- **Report without comments for departments and the Rector:** A PDF file with detailed scores of individual course units / examinations without student comments, including scores by degree programme subgroup.
- **Means comparison:** An Excel file with an overview of the averages of the scaled questions¹¹ regarding a department's course units / examinations, per questionnaire type. Both 'offered' and 'received' service course units / examinations are displayed.
- **Departmental version:** Online overview of the indicators (weighted average of a question group) and scaled question averages, plus access to the 'reports without comments' on

¹¹ Scaled questions make it possible to estimate the data values between two poles (e.g. 'not true' to 'absolutely true') on an ordinal scale (e.g. from 1 to 5).

the department's course units / examinations. Both 'offered' and 'received' service course units / examinations are displayed.

- **Rector's version:** Online overview of the indicators (weighted average of a question group) and scaled question averages, plus access to the 'reports without comments' on the course units / examinations and means comparisons of all departments.

9.2 Viewing of results

Students, faculty, departments (Department Heads, Directors of Study and administrative staff with operational responsibility in the department) and the Rector may view results as follows:

	Students	Faculty	Department	Rector
Report with comments		X		
Report without comments			X	X
Means comparison	X	X	X	X
Departmental version			X	
Rector's version				X

All students of a department may view their department's results (means comparison), independent of whether they have attended the course units involved. Students may view the results for all the course units and examinations offered by their department which have been attended by students of their department. They may also see the results of course units and examinations offered by other departments which students of their own department have attended.

Password-protected publication is conducted centrally by LET.¹² Faculty receive the results by email immediately following the survey. The departments and the Rector have direct access at all times via EvaSys evaluation software.

Departments who receive service lectures automatically receive viewing access to the respective service lecture results via EvaSys.

Faculty alone may view the student comments in the report. In well-grounded cases (e.g. where 'general satisfaction' or other criteria lie below the minimum value) Heads of

¹² Until implementation (from Autumn Semester 2015) the student portal will provide a list of links to the departmental publication sites.

Department or Directors of Study may request to view comments. The Rector rules on any conflicts.

The results of course unit / examination evaluation may be drawn upon in the context of appointments, promotion or re-election. The president of the respective commission may ask the Rector for information and pass it on to the commission orally.

10 Definition of 'critical' course units and examinations

A course unit is defined as 'critical' if the average score it receives for 'general satisfaction' and/or other criteria is below a 3. The median and standard deviation may be taken into account in evaluating course units and examinations.

11 Cognisance, rights and delegating

11.1 Rector

The Rector is responsible at the institutional level for the quality of teaching and its periodic inspection. At the beginning of the semester he/she informs Heads of Departments on the teaching evaluation.

The Rector may assign further evaluation tasks. He/she provides regular information to faculty and students regarding measures to improve teaching and learning which derive from the results of the teaching evaluation.

11.2 Departments

The Head of Department is responsible for conducting the departmental side of the evaluation, for initiating corrective measures and for reporting to the Rector. The Head of Department usually delegates tasks to the Director of Studies.

Cognisance involves the following tasks in particular:

- Determining the person responsible for conducting the evaluation
- Providing information to all faculty in the department at the beginning of the semester about the current cycle (course unit or examination evaluation) and the evaluation procedure
- Discussing the results and their features (both positive and negative) in departmental bodies (e.g. the Teaching Commission)

- Initiating measures to improve teaching and examinations
- Informing departmental bodies and students in a general way on measures taken based on the results of the teaching evaluation
- Maintaining a dialogue with those offering and those receiving service course units.

11.3 Faculty

Faculty provide information to the students in their courses and motivate them to participate in surveys. Faculty receive the results two weeks before the end of the semester and discuss them with students during class.

Faculty who do not wish students to have central, password-protected access to the results for their course units must submit a written request, containing grounds, to the Rector to have their course unit or examination, including comments for faculty, deleted from the report on averages as soon as they receive this report. These faculty are, however, still required to discuss the results with their students during class.

11.4 Students

Students answer the questions on course units and examinations fairly and honestly. In so doing they contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

In well-grounded cases student representatives in the Teaching Commission and at the Department Conference may request to view the 'report without comments'.

Students are informed regularly by the departments, and in special cases by the Rector, on measures taken on the basis of the teaching evaluation.

12 Departmental reports to the Rector

The report to the Rector lists all those course units and examinations rated as 'critical'.

The following points are covered in the report form:

- **Measures resulting from the last evaluation**
 - Were the measures resulting from the last evaluation implemented?
 - Is the effectiveness of these measures visible in current teaching evaluation results?

- **Features of the current evaluation:** The decisive features (positive and negative) of the current evaluation result are described on the basis of its assessment by the Teaching Commission and the Director of Studies.
- **Measures:** ‘Critical’ course units and examinations are listed and the measures taken in their connection described. Service course units must be listed by the department offering them, and may also be listed by the department at the receiving end.
- **List of non-evaluated course units:** A listing of the course units / examinations which were not evaluated, with the grounds as to why not. Only those course units / examinations should be listed which were scheduled for evaluation in the original announcement.¹³

The Rector’s Office sends the form to the Head of Department with a deadline for its return. The completed form should be addressed to the Rector.

13 Data archiving, data use and data protection

- **Right to view:** The departments inform faculty whose course units have been evaluated that the results (‘data’) of the teaching evaluation have been saved in EvaSys. Faculty receive the results by email. LET publishes the results centrally for password-protected viewing by students.
- **Usage rights:** The data may only be actively used – to further objectives and according to this directive – by the Rector, the staff of the Rector’s Office and the cognisant persons in the departments. Creating a ranking according to the means comparison is not recommended.
- **Storage, archiving and deletion:** LET is responsible for the secure storage of evaluation data according to prevailing data protection rules.¹⁴ Any data relating to individual persons is only stored for as long as absolutely necessary. Decentralised storage in the departments is not permitted.

The means comparisons on the departmental intranet are deleted after two years at the latest.

13 See <https://www.ethz.ch/intranet/en/teaching/academic-support/teaching-evaluation.html>

14 Data protection law of 19 June 1992 (SR 235.1); data protection ordinance of 14 June 1993 (SR 235.11); Art. 36a and 36b of the ETH Law also apply, as well as the *Verordnung über die Bearbeitung von Personendaten, die bei der Nutzung der elektronischen Infrastruktur des Bundes anfallen* [ordinance on the processing of personal data accumulated using the electronic infrastructure of the federation] (SR 172.072)

LET deletes individual-related evaluation data after seven years at the latest. It anonymises any data which must be kept longer than this (removes names; deletes answers to individual questions; deletes comments) and offers it to the ETH Library¹⁵ for long-term archiving (year, title of course unit, individual question block indications).

Storing teaching evaluation results in any location other than EvaSys and the ETH Archive is not permitted.

14 Aids

In the context of evaluating course units and examinations the following aids are available:

- ETH website (<https://www.ethz.ch/intranet/en/teaching/academic-support/teaching-evaluation.html>) with information on teaching evaluation
- EvaSys portal (http://www.let.ethz.ch/itservices/dienstleistungen/evasys_service/index_EN)
- LET support (evasys@let.ethz.ch)

15 Final clauses

14.1 Rescinding of previous directive

The directive '*Unterrichtsbeurteilung durch die Studierenden der ETH Zürich*' ['Teaching evaluation by ETH Zurich students'] of 1 October 2013 has been rescinded.

14.2 Entry into effect

This directive enters into effect on **1 September 2014**.

THE RECTOR

Prof. Dr. Lino Guzzella

15 cf. *Reglement für das Archiv der ETH Zürich* [regulations for the ETH Zurich archive] of 3.12.2002 (RSETHZ 420.1)