Hersiening van die Studenteterugvoerstelsel: Interim verslag van die Taakspan 28 April 2015

1. Agtergrond

Tydens ‘n vergadering op 17 Januarie 2013 het die Viserektor (Leer en Onderrig) versoek dat ‘n elektroniese stelsel ontwikkel word om alle studenteterugvoer in die toekoms in elektroniese formaat af te neem. Hierdie versoek het saamgeval met die voorgenome hersiening van die Studenteterugvoerbeleid binne die gebruiklike 5 jaar-hersieningsiklus van beleide aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch (US). ‘n Taakspan is aangewys met die opdrag om hierdie proses te bestuur. Die Sentrum vir Onderrig en Leer (SOL) bly verantwoordelik vir die administrering van die stelsel, onderhouding van die studenteterugvoervraelyste, prosessering en stoor van die data, sowel as die saamstel en verspreiding van studenteterugvoerverslae aan fakulteite.

2. Redes vir hersiening van die stelsel

‘n Kernprioriteit van die studenteterugvoerproses is om ‘n inligtingproduserende stelsel te skep wat op aspekte van onderrig sal fokus wat nóú met verbeterde leer verband hou. Die nuwe vraelyste behoort dus aan beide dosente en studente die geleentheid te bied om betekenisvolle gesprekke te voer ten einde by te dra tot effektiewe, gehalte onderrig.

Die oorskakeling na ‘n elektroniese stelsel sal ook die geleentheid skep vir ‘n meer buigsame stelsel wat ‘n bydrae tot bogenoemde gesprekke kan lewer. Dit sal dosente groter toegang tot formatiewe moontlikhede bied en hulle in staat stel om met gemak hul eie pasgemaakte terugvoerinstrumente te ontwikkel. In hierdie verband kan studenteterugvoer ‘n baie groter rol speel in die bevordering van die gehalte van modules, programme en onderrig. Verslae sal ook vinniger beskikbaar gestel kan word, ten einde dosente in staat te stel om te reageer op die terugvoer, indien nodig. Studente sou dan ook die uitkomste of effek van hul eie terugvoer kon ervaar.

Die elektroniese stelsel behoort dus te fokus op die lewering van ‘n effektiewe diens, gekenmerk deur die optimale gebruik van beskikbare hulpbronne en tegnologie, die vinnige en effektiewe prosessering van data en die tydige verspreiding van resultate. ‘n Ge-outomatiseerde stelsel sal die ruimte skep om hierdie doelwitte te bereik.

3. Die aktiwiteite en aanbevelings van die taakspan

Die taakspan het hierdie hersieningsproses binne drie werkgroepe gehanteer, met me. Melanie Petersen (Sentrum vir Onderrig en Leer) as sameroeper van die taakspan en lid van al die werkgroepe:

- Werkgroep: Beleid
  Dr Hanelie Adendorff (Sentrum vir Onderrig en Leer)
  Prof Hansie Knoetze (Fakulteit Ingenieurswese)
  Me Babette Rabie (Skool vir Publieke Leierskap)

- Werkgroep: Vraelyste
  Prof Peter Beets (Fakulteit Opvoedkunde)
  Prof Anton Basson (Fakulteit Ingenieurswese)
  Me Juanita Bester (Fakulteit Geneeskunde en Gesondheidswetenskappe)

- Werkgroep: Operasionele aspekte – elektroniese stelsel
  Me Marinda van Rooyen (Informasietegnologie)
  Me Loumarie Kistner (Konsultant)
  Mnr Thys Murray (Sentrum vir Leertegnologieë)

Verder is twee adviserende groepe tydens die aanvangsfase gekonsulteer ten einde die perspektiewe van beide dosente en studente in te win. Van die voorstelle wat deur hierdie groepe gemaak is, sluit in dat:

- Die terugvoervraelyste verkort moet word;
- Studente terugvoer oor modules en onderrig binne 'n enkele vraelys verskaf;
- Studente steeds die geleentheid moet hê om kommentare binne oop afdelings te kan verskaf;
- Dit vir fakulteite moontlik moet wees om die vraelyste te kan aanpas by die behoeftes van bepaalde modules en dat 'n toepassing ontwikkel word waarvolgens studente toegang tot die vraelyste via hul selfone kan verkry;
- Die huidige meganisme vir die bepaling van 'n algemene indrukspunt vervang moet word deur 'n meer statistiese berekening van so 'n punt;
- Navorsing gedoen word oor die moontlike impak van die elektroniese stelsel op die kwaliteit en inhoud van die terugvoerdata.

3.1 Werkgroep: Beleid

Die aktiwiteite van hierdie groep het gekulmineer in die ontwikkeling van 'n Reglement (sien Bylae A). Die reglement dien as 'n bestuursdokument wat die reëls ten opsigte van die afneem en gebruik van studenteterugvoer bevat. Nakoming van hierdie reëls is verpligtend.

3.2 Werkgroep: Vraelyste

Die aktiwiteite van hierdie groep het gelei tot die ontwikkeling van 'n enkele vraelys vir modules en dosente. Die teoretiese raamwerk onderliggend aan hierdie konsepvraelys staan bekend as "Productive Pedagogies" (Hayes et al., 2006), en beskryf die soort onderrigpraktyke en organisatoriese prosesse wat 'n verskil maak aan die akademiese en sosiale leer van studente. Die raamwerk waarbinne die vrae aan studente gestel sal word, bestaan uit drie dimensies van gehalte onderrig en leer, nl. intellektuele gehalte, die daarstelling van 'n kwaliteit leeromgewing en die betekenisvolheid van dit wat geleer word. Die identifisering van hierdie drie dimensies van kwaliteit onderrig word ook geïnformeer deur die navorsing wat onderneem is deur die Danielson Groep (http://danielsongroup.org/framework/).

Die vertrekpunte vir die gebruik van die vraelys sluit in:

- Dat die insigte bekom vanuit die studenteterugvoer formatief gebruik word ten einde professionele ontwikkeling te ondersteun, en as een van verskeie bronne van inligting oor onderrig[1] wanneer dosente se onderrig oorweeg word tydens prestasiebeoordelingsprosesse;
- Dat die bepaalde elemente soos vervat in die vraelys oorweeg en geïnterpreteer word binne die konteks van onderrig op beide voorgraadse en nagraadse vlakke, aangesien die vraagitems generies van aard is en sowel voorgraadse as nagraadse onderrig verteenwoordig;
- Dat die gebruik van die vraelys gepas moet wees vir die wydste moontlike gebruik, d.w.s. in die meeste modules, insluitend waar 'n bepaalde dosent slegs

[1] Dit kan onder andere insluit: eweknie-evaluerings, kurrikulumontwikkeling, betrokkenheid by departementele of fakulteitsprogramme om onderrig te verbeter, administrasie van modules en professionele ontwikkeling.

‘n gedeelte van die module onderrig gegee het (die studente behoort die vraelys te kan voltooi wanneer die betrokke dosent sy/haar gedeelte van die module afgehandel het).

Verder moet fakulteite in gedagte hou dat die doel van die vraelys is om algemene terugvoer te bekom oor die sleutelareas van onderrig wat bydra tot die gestelde kenmerke van die Universiteit Stellenbosch-graduandi. ‘n Algemeen bruikbare vraelys, wat kort genoeg is sodat studente dit vir elke module kan voltooi, kan nie spesifieke probleme of uitdagings diagnoseer nie. Dit kan bloot aspekte identifiseer wat verdere aandag mag vereis ten einde leer te bevorder.

Fakulteite sal ook die geleentheid hê om fakulteitspesifieke vrae tot die standaardvraelys toe te voeg, met dien verstande dat hierdie vrae deur die betrokke fakulteitsraad en die Komitee vir Leer en Onderrig (KLO) goedgekeur word. Daar moet egter teen té lang vraelyste gewaak word, aangesien dit ‘n negatiewe impak op die responskoerse binne die elektroniese stelsel kan hê.

3.3 Werkgroep: Operasionele aspekte

Dit is hierdie werkgroep se taak om ‘n elektroniese Studenteterugvoerstelsel binne SUNLearn, die huidige leerbestuurstelsel, te ontwikkel. Alhoewel elektroniese terugvoer alreeds via SUNLearn afgeneem kan word, is verdere ontwikkeling nodig ten opsigte van die prosesse in aanloop tot en na afloop van die afneem van die terugvoer binne die hersiene stelsel en vraelyste. Hierdie terugvoer sal as proeflopies gebruik word om personeel binne die Studenteterugvoerkantoor op te lei sowel as om alle kwessies voortspruitend uit die stelsel en die proses aan te spreek.

BYLAE A

Universiteit Stellenbosch

Konsepreglement vir die afneem en gebruik van studenteterugvoer oor programme, modules en onderrig
28 April 2015

1. Inleiding

Studenteterugvoer is 'n belangrike institusionele proses gemik op die ondersteuning en bevordering van gehalte onderrig aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch (US). Hierdie reglement gee die detailregulering met betrekking tot die afneem en gebruik van studenteterugvoer. Dit sluit aan by die strategiese prioriteit van die US met betrekking tot die behoud van die momentum ten opsigte van uitnemendheid, ook binne die leer- en onderrigomgewing.

2. Terminologie

2.1 Studenteterugvoer

Inligting verskaf deur studente aangaande hul leer- en onderrigervarings binne modules en programme

2.2 Formatiewe terugvoer

Studenteterugvoer wat gedurende die onderrigproses in die module of program afgeneem word ten einde 'n bydrae te lewer tot onderrig- en personeelontwikkeling.

2.3 Summatiewe terugvoer

Studenteterugvoer wat na afloop van die onderrigproses in die module of program afgeneem word ten einde te dien as 'n bron van inligting ten opsigte van onderrigeffektiwiteit op module-, program- of institusionele vlak.

3. BEGINSELS

Die US se benadering tot die gebruik van studenteterugvoer berus op die volgende beginsels:

3.1 Die gebruik van studenteterugvoer het dit eerstens ten doel om individuele dosente te bemagtig om die gehalte van hul onderrig te bevorder; enige ander gebruik van studenteterugvoer is onderhewig hieraan. In die lig hiervan word daar aanvaar dat:

- 3.1.1 dit nodig mag wees om dosente (veral onervare dosente) te ondersteun met die interpretasie en gebruik van studenteterugvoerdata, ten einde die rol daarvan in die ontwikkeling van individuele onderrig te optimaliseer;
- 3.1.2 studenteterugvoerdata nuttig kan wees in die saamstel van personeelontwikkelingsplanne vir doserende personeel. Dit is egter van kardinale belang dat die data binne konteks hanteer en saam met ander databronne gebruik word;
- 3.1.3 studenteterugvoerdata nooit as enigste bron van inligting of sonder inagneming van die onderrig- en leerkonteks tydens die peiling van onderrigprestasie gebruik behoort te word nie.

3.2 Aangesien studenteterugvoer anoniem afgeneem word, kan studente hul opinies vryelik uitspreek, sonder vrees vir benadeling of die risiko van verdraaiing van die resultate.
3.3 Dosente behoort ook die geleentheid te kry om terugvoer te gee oor hul onderrigervarings ten einde ŉ geheelbeeld van die konteks te verkry.
3.4 Verantwoordelikheid vir die afneem van studenteterugvoer berus by elke fakulteit en departement.

4. DETAILREGULERING MET BETREKKING TOT DIE AFNEEM EN GEBRUIK VAN STUDENTETERUGVOER

4.1 Elektroniese afneem van studenteterugvoer

Die gebruik van elektroniese terugvoer word sterk aanbeveel en sal die verstekopsie vir die institusionele stelsel wees. Dit laat nie alleen groter soepelheid toe nie, maar kan ook teen ’n aansienlik laer koste en binne ’n korter tyd geprosesseer en beskikbaar gestel word.

4.2 Bepalings met betrekking tot die **frekwensie** van studenteterugvoer

Studenteterugvoer word met die volgende frekwensies afgeneem:

4.2.1 Die lynfunksiebestuur in die omgewing sien toe dat summatiewe studenteterugvoer oor alle modules en dosente minstens een keer elke twee jaar afgeneem word. Verder kan formatiewe studenteterugvoer ook by meer as een geleentheid gedurende die verloop van ŉ module afgeneem word sodat studente die effek van hul eie terugvoer kan ervaar. Daar moet egter gewaak word teen die oormatige gebruik van vraelyste, wat tot vraelysuitputting kan lei.

4.2.2 Studenteterugvoer oor leer- en onderrigprogramme (uitgesluit die hoofsaaklik navorsingsgebaseerde programme op M- en D-vlak) word jaarliks aan die einde van die finale akademiese jaar van die program afgeneem. Die opname word gedoen onder finalejaarstudente. Dit is die verantwoordelikheid van programkomitees en -koördineerders om toe te sien dat dit geskied. In die geval van gestruktureerde M-programme behoort die terugvoer aan die einde van die gestruktureerde deel van die program afgeneem te word.

4.3 Bepalings met betrekking tot die **aanvra** van studenteterugvoer

4.3.1 Voordat dosente terugvoer oor hul onderrig en modules aanvra, behoort hulle eers die aanlyn dosenteterugvoervraelys te voltooi. Dosente se eie terugvoer kan help om die studente se terugvoer te kontekstualiseer.

4.4 Bepalings met betrekking tot die **afneem** en **hantering** van studenteterugvoer

4.4.1 Die Universiteit onderskei tussen studenteterugvoer wat na afloop van die onderrigproses (in die module of program) afgeneem word (summatiewe terugvoer), en studenteterugvoer wat tydens die proses afgeneem word (formatiewe terugvoer). In die geval van formatiewe studenteterugvoer word

die resultate slegs aan die betrokke dosent en nié aan die lynfunksiebestuur beskikbaar gestel nie, tensy anders versoek.

4.4.2 Die US se amptelike stelsel maak gebruik van drie tipes vraelyste vir die afneem van summatiewe terugvoer:

i. Studenteterugvoervraelys
ii. Vraelys oor Leer- en Onderrigprogramme
iii. Dosenteterugvoervorm

Die Studenteterugvoervraelys en Programvraelys word deur studente voltooi, terwyl dosente terugvoer oor hul eie ervaring van die onderrigsituasie in die betrokke module op die Dosenteterugvoervorm gee.

In uitsonderlike gevalle waar die summatiewe gebruik van die universiteitswye Studenteterugvoervraelys grotendeels onvanpas is, mag fakulteite ’n pasgemaakte vraelys gebruik, met dien verstande dat die vraelys, na aanbeveling van die betrokke fakulteitsraad, deur die Komitee vir Leer en Onderrig goedgekeur is.

Die Sentrum vir Onderrig en Leer (SOL) kan ook van hulp wees in die ontwikkeling van ander formatiewe metodes vir die verkryging van studenteterugvoer.

Let wel: SOL self is op geen wyse betrokke by die beoordeling van die gehalte van onderrig, modules of programme nie.

4.4.3 Daar word vereis dat die akademiese personeellid nie self betrokke is by die afneem van summatiewe studenteterugvoer van ’n module wat hy/sy aanbied nie.

4.4.4 Studenteterugvoer word vertroulik hanteer deur die departementele persone wat die vraelyste beskikbaar stel, asook deur SOL wat vir die verwerking van die data verantwoordelik is. Elektroniese vraelyste sal anoniem hanteer word en dosente sal geen toegang hê tot enige inligting of data waarvolgens die identiteit van studente gekompromitteer kan word nie. Dit impliseer dat:

a. resultate van summatiewe studenteterugvoer oor dosente en modules aan die betrokke dosent, die dekaan of vise-dekaan (onderrig) (waar van toepassing) en departementele/modulevoorsitter (en, waar van toepassing, afdelingshoofde) ter insae gegee word;
b. die resultate van studenteterugvoer oor modules, met voorsiening vir die beskerming van vertroulike inligting, ook aan programkoördineerders beskikbaar gestel word;
c. die resultate van studenteterugvoer oor leer- en onderrigprogramme aan die dekaan of vise-dekaan (onderrig) (waar van toepassing) en die programkoördineerder beskikbaar gestel word;
d. die diskresie by die dekaan lê om, via die departementele of modulevoorsitter, en die programkoördineerder (in die geval van leer- en onderrigprogramme):
    i. relevante inligting op toepaslike wyse aan die studente en ander belanghebbendes beskikbaar te stel;

ii. effektief van klasverteenwoordigers gebruik te maak ten einde relevante studenteterugvoerinligting aan studente beskikbaar te stel; en
iii. waar nodig, gepaste opvolgaksies te loods;

e. die identiteit van studente wat aan die studenteterugvoerproses deelneem, onbekend bly.

4.4.5 Dit is ook belangrik dat dosente die studente inlig oor die rol wat studenteterugvoer in die betrokke onderrig- en leersituasie speel. Dit kan help om studente aan te moedig om die terugvoerproses met groter integriteit te benader.

4.5 Bepalings met betrekking tot die gebruik van studenteterugvoer vir **navorsing**sdoeleindes

Die primêre doel van die studenteterugvoerproses is om ’n bydrae te lewer tot onderrig- en personeelontwikkeling. Verder kan studenteterugvoerdata ’n bydrae lewer tot institusionele leer met die oog op onderrigeffektiwiteit op module-, program- of institusionele vlak. Vir hierdie doel mag slegs geaggregeerde studenteterugvoerdata gebruik word, met die voorbehoud dat inligting ten opsigte van responskoerse, betroubaarheid, geldigheid en die tydstip wanneer die data versamel is, te alle tye verskaf word. Onder geen omstandighede mag die beskerming van studente en dosente se identiteit gekompromitteer word in die gebruik of publikasie van studenteterugvoerdata nie.

Die volgende kriteria geld vir beide die interne en eksterne gebruik van studenteterugvoerdata vir navorsingsprojekte soos nagraadse studies, kongresbydraes en publikasies:

4.5.1 In die geval van nagraadse studies moet ’n navorsingsprotokol deur die betrokke fakulteit goedgekeur word. Die navorsingsprotokol moet ook uiteensit watter sekuriteitsmeganismes gebruik gaan word om die vertroulikheid van data te beskerm;
4.5.2 Volle etiese klaring vir die navorsingsprojek moet verkry word via die toepaslike komitee(s);
4.5.3 Goedkeuring vir die gebruik van die Universiteit se databasisse moet via die Afdeling Institusionele Navorsing en Beplanning verkry word.

4.6 Beheer oor hierdie reglement

4.6.1 Verantwoordelikhede

a. Die eienaar van hierdie reglement is die Viserektor (Leer en Onderrig) as lynhoof van die gehalteversekeringsfunksie van die Universiteit en hy/sy is verantwoordelik daarvoor dat die reglement bestaan, opgedateer en geïmplementeer word en dat ’n kurator en verbandhoudende strukture en rolle aangewys is en effektief funksioneer.

b. Die kurator van hierdie reglement is die Senior Direkteur: Leer en Onderrigverryking en hy/sy is daarvoor verantwoordelik om te sorg vir die formulering, goedkeuring, hersiening, kommunikasie en beskikbaarstelling van hierdie reglement. Die kurator roep periodiek, soos nodig, ’n taakspan bymekaar vir die hersiening van die reglement.

4.6.2 Monitering en verslagdoening

a. Die eienaar van hierdie reglement is daarvoor aanspreeklik en die kurator is daarvoor verantwoordelik om die nodige kontroles daar te stel

vir die monitering en verslagdoening van die reglement en om jaarliks aan die Rektor se Bestuurspan verslag te doen.

b. In gevalle van die nie-nakoming van hierdie reglement sal die normale lynbestuurspraktyke van toepassing wees.

Revision of the Student Feedback system:
Interim report of the Task Team
28 April 2015

1. Background

At a meeting on 17 January 2013, the Vice Rector (Learning and Teaching) requested that an electronic student feedback system be developed in order to collect all student feedback in electronic format in future. This request co-incided with the revision of the Student Feedback Policy which was due within the general policy lifetime cycle of five years, as is the case at Stellenbosch University (SU). A task team was appointed and mandated to manage this revision process. The Centre for Teaching and Learning remains responsible for the administration of this system, maintenance of the student feedback questionnaires, processing and storage of the data, as well as the compilation and distribution of student feedback reports to faculties.

2. Reasons for revision of the system

A key priority of the process is to develop an information producing system that will focus on aspects of teaching that are closely linked with improved learning. In this way the new questionnaires should provide both lecturers and students with the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations to work towards effective, quality teaching.

Moving towards an electronic system will also create the opportunity for a more flexible system which could contribute to such conversations. It will allow lecturers greater access to formative feedback possibilities and enable them to easily develop their own customised feedback instruments. In this regard, student feedback can thus play a bigger role in the enhancement of the quality of modules, programmes and teaching. Reports could also be made available quicker, so as to enable lecturers to respond to feedback, if necessary. Students will also be able to experience the outcomes of their feedback.

The electronic system should thus focus on delivering an effective service known for the optimal use of available resources and technology, the fast and effective processing of data and the timely distribution of results. An automated system should create the space to achieve this.

3. The activities and recommendations of the task team

The task team dealt with this revision process within three working groups, with Ms Melanie Petersen (Centre for Teaching and Learning) as convenor of the task team and member of all working groups:

- Work group: Policy
  Dr Hanelie Adendorff (Centre for Teaching and Learning)
  Prof Hansie Knoetze (Faculty of Engineering)
  Ms Babette Rabie (School for Public Leadership)

- Work group: Questionnaires
  Prof Peter Beets (Faculty of Education)
  Prof Anton Basson (Faculty of Engineering)
  Ms Juanita Bester (Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences)

- Work group: Operational aspects – electronic system
  Ms Marinda van Rooyen (IT)
  Ms Loumarie Kistner (Consultant)
  Mr Thys Murray (Centre for Learning Technologies)

Furthermore, two advisory groups were consulted in the initial stages in order to get both lecturers' and students' perspectives. Some of the suggestions made by these advisory groups included that:

- the feedback questionnaires be shortened;
- students provide feedback about modules and teaching on a single questionnaire;
- students still have the opportunity to provide comments in an open section;
- faculties should be able to adapt the questionnaires to the needs of the particular modules and that an application be developed for students to access the questionnaires via their cellphones;
- the current mechanism for determining a general impression mark be replaced by a more statistical calculation of such a mark;
- research be done on the possible impact of the electronic system on the quality and content of the feedback data.

3.1 Work group: Policy

The activities of this group culminated in the drafting of a Rules of Procedure document (see Addendum A). This serves as a management document containing the rules regarding the collection and use of student feedback. Adherence to these rules is compulsory.

3.2 Work group: Questionnaires

The activities of this group culminated in the drafting of a single questionnaire for modules and lecturers. The theoretical framework underpinning this draft questionnaire is referred to as "Productive Pedagogies" (Hayes et al., 2006), which describes the kinds of teaching practices and organisational processes that make a difference to the academic and social learning of students. The framework within which questions are to be posed to students is constituted by three dimensions of quality teaching and learning, i.e. intellectual quality, establishing a quality learning environment and the significance of what is learnt. The identification of these dimensions and elements of quality teaching are also informed by research work conducted by the Danielson Group (http://danielsongroup.org/framework/).

The points of departure regarding the use of the questionnaire are:

- That the insights gained from students' feedback be used formatively in order to support professional development, and as one of various sources of information about teaching[1] when considering staff's teaching during performance reviews;
- That the particular elements in the questionnaire be considered and interpreted in the context of teaching on both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, since the question items are generic and representative of both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching;
- That the questionnaire should be suitable for use as widely as possible, i.e. in most modules, including where a particular lecturer has taught only part of a

[1] This could include: peer evaluations, curriculum design, involvement in departemental or faculty programmes to improve teaching, administration of modules and professional development.

module (it could be completed by the students when that lecturer has completed his/her part of the module).

Furthermore, faculties should note that the aim of the questionnaire is to obtain broad feedback on the key areas in teaching which contribute to the stated attributes of the Stellenbosch University graduate. A generally used questionnaire, which must be brief enough so that students can be asked to complete it in every module, cannot diagnose specific problems or challenges, but can identify aspects that require further investigation to enhance learning.

Faculties will also have the opportunity to add faculty-specific questions to this standard questionnaire, provided that these questions have been approved by the appropriate faculty board and the Committee for Learning and Teaching (CLT). However, caution should be taken regarding making the questionnaire too long, since this could have a negative impact on response rates in the electronic system.

3.3 Work group: Operational aspects

It is this group's task to develop an electronic Student Feedback system within SUNLearn, the current institutional learning management system. Although electronic feedback can already be collected via SUNLearn, more development is necessary at the front and back-end of the student feedback process in terms of the revised rules and questionnaires. This feedback will be used to inform the training of the Student Feedback Office staff as well as to clarify issues emerging within the system and the process.

ADDENDUM A

Stellenbosch University

Draft Rules for obtaining and utilising student feedback about programmes, modules and teaching

28 April 2015

1. Introduction

Student feedback is an important institutional process aimed at the support and promotion of quality teaching at Stellenbosch University (SU). This document provides the detailed regulations with regard to obtaining and utilising student feedback. This is linked to the strategic priority of SU to maintain excellence in the learning and teaching environment.

2. Terminology

2.1 Student FEEDBACK

Information provided by students about their teaching and learning experiences within modules and programmes

2.2 Formative FEEDBACK

Student feedback obtained <u>during</u> the teaching process within the module or programme to contribute to teaching and staff development.

2.3 Summative FEEDBACK

Student feedback obtained <u>upon completion</u> of the teaching process within the module or programme to serve as a source of information regarding the effectiveness of teaching on module, programme or institutional level....

3. PRINCIPLES

The following points of departure form the basis for obtaining and utilising student feedback at the University.

3.1 The use of student feedback should firstly aim to empower individual lecturers to improve the quality of their teaching. Only thereafter should feedback be used for any other purpose, and then with circumspection. In view of this, it is assumed that:

3.1.1 it may be necessary to support lecturers (especially inexperienced lecturers) with interpreting and utilising student feedback results in order to optimise the role that feedback could play in the development of individual teaching;

3.1.2 student feedback data could be useful when drawing up suitable staff development plans for teaching staff. However, it is essential to handle the data in context and to use data in conjunction with other data sources;

3.1.3 within the appraisal of teaching performance, student feedback should never be used as the only source of information or without considering the teaching and learning context.

3.2 As students give feedback anonymously, the feedback system allows students to express their opinions freely, without fear of retribution or the risk of misrepresentation of the results.

3.3 Lecturers should also have the opportunity to provide feedback about their own teaching experiences, in order to provide a more complete representation of the context.

3.4 Each faculty and department is responsible for obtaining student feedback.

4. DETAILED REGULATION WITH REGARD TO OBTAINING AND UTILISING STUDENT FEEDBACK

4.1 Electronic collection of student feedback

The use of electronic feedback is strongly recommended and will be the default option for the institutional system. Electronic feedback allows not only for greater flexibility, but also costs less to administer and can be processed and distributed more quickly.

4.2 Stipulations with regard to the **frequency** of student feedback

Student feedback is obtained at the following frequencies:

4.2.1 The line function management in a particular environment ensures that summative student feedback on all modules and lecturers is obtained at least once every two years. Further to this, formative student feedback could also be collected on more than one occasion within the duration of the module in order for students to experience the effects of their own feedback. Caution must however be taken with regard to the excessive use of questionnaires which could lead to questionnaire fatigue.

4.2.2 Student feedback on learning and teaching programmes (excluding the mainly research-based programmes at M and D level) is obtained annually at the end of the final academic year of the programme. Final-year students participate in the survey. Programme committees and coordinators are responsible for overseeing this feedback process. In the case of structured M-programmes, the feedback should be obtained at the end of the structured part of the programme.

4.3 Stipulations for **requesting** student feedback

4.3.1 Before lecturers request feedback about their teaching and modules, they should first complete the online lecturer feedback form. Lecturers' own feedback could help to contextualise the feedback received from the students.

4.4 Stipulations for **obtaining** and **handling** student feedback

4.4.1 The University distinguishes between student feedback obtained upon completion of the teaching process in the module or programme (summative feedback) and student feedback obtained during the teaching

process (formative feedback). In the case of formative student feedback, the results are made available only to the lecturer involved and not to the line function management, unless otherwise requested.

4.4.2 The official system at SU makes use of three types of questionnaires for obtaining summative feedback:

i. Student feedback questionnaire
ii. Questionnaire for Learning and Teaching Programmes
iii. Lecturer feedback form

The Student feedback and Programme feedback questionnaires are completed by students, whilst lecturers provide feedback about their own experiences of the teaching situation (within the particular module) on the Lecturer feedback form.

In exceptional cases where the summative use of the university-wide Student feedback questionnaire remains largely inappropriate, faculties may use a customised questionnaire, provided that these questionnaires are recommended by the appropriate faculty board and approved by the Committee for Learning and Teaching.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) can also assist with developing other formative methods of obtaining student feedback.

Please note: The CTL is in no way directly involved in the evaluation of the quality of teaching, modules or programmes.

4.4.3 Academic staff should never be involved in the collection of summative feedback on a module which he/she teaches.

4.4.4 Student feedback is handled confidentially by the departmental staff who distribute the questionnaires as well as the CTL, which is responsible for the processing of the data. Electronic questionnaires will be dealt with anonymously and lecturers will have no access to any information or data that could compromise the identity of students. This implies that:

a. the results of summative student feedback on lecturers and modules are made available to the lecturer involved, the dean or vice dean (teaching) (where applicable) and the departmental/ module chairperson (and, where applicable, divisional heads);
b. the results of student feedback on modules may also also be made available to programme coordinators, provided that there are sufficient measures in place to protect confidential information;
c. the results of student feedback on learning and teaching programmes are made available to the dean or vice dean (teaching) (where applicable) and the programme coordinator;
d. at his/her discretion the dean may, via the departmental or module chairperson and the programme coordinator (in the case of learning and teaching programmes):
    i. provide the students and other stakeholders with the relevant information in a suitable manner,
    ii. make effective use of class representatives in order to make relevant student feedback information available to students; and

iii. where necessary, launch appropriate follow-up actions;

e. the identity of students who participate in the student feedback process, remain undisclosed.

4.4.5 It is also important that lecturers inform students about the role that student feedback plays within the particular teaching and learning situation. This could help to encourage students to approach the feedback process with greater integrity.

4.5 Stipulations for the use of student feedback data for **research** purposes

The primary aim of the student feedback process is to contribute to the development of teaching and staff. Student feedback data can also make a contribution to institutional learning with a view to enhancing teaching efficacy at either module, programme or institutional level. Only aggregated student feedback data may be used for this purpose, on condition that information regarding response rates, reliability, validity and time when the feedback was collected, be supplied at all times. Under no circumstances may the protection of the identity of students and lecturers be compromised by the use or publication of student feedback data.

The following criteria apply to both the internal and external use of student feedback data for research projects such as postgraduate studies, conference presentations and publications:

4.5.1 In the case of postgraduate studies, a research protocol must be approved by the applicable faculty. The research protocol must also indicate which security mechanisms will be used in order to protect the confidentiality of data;

4.5.2 Full ethical clearance for the research project must be obtained via the appropriate committee(s);

4.5.3 Approval for the use of the University's databases must be obtained via the Division Institutional Research and Planning.

4.6 Governance over these rules

4.6.1 Responsibilities

a. The owner of this document is the Vice Rector (Learning and Teaching) as line manager for the quality assurance function of the University and he/she is responsible that the document exists, is updated and implemented and that a curator and relevant structures and roles are identified and function effectively.

b. The curator of this document is the Senior Director: Learning and Teaching Enhancement and he/she is responsible for the formulation, approval, revision, communication and distribution of this document. The curator periodically, as deemed necessary, calls together a task team for the revision of this document.

4.6.2 Monitoring and reporting

a. The owner of this document is accountable and the curator is responsible for establishing the necessary control mechanisms for monitoring and reporting regarding this document and to report to the Rector's management team on an annual basis.

b. In cases of non-compliance with these rules, normal line management practices will be applicable.