

Course evaluation template

After the course has ended, the course leader must fill in this template. The program director and education management will use your reflections to make adaptations to the program and/or the next time the course is given. The reflections will also be posted on the program web for students to read.

Course code 4FH100	Course title Degree project in Public Health Sciences - PHEPI	Credits 30 hp
Semester VT22	Period 20220117-20220603	

Course leader Jette Möller, Marie Hasselberg, Lene Lindberg, Lucie Laflamme	Examiner Jette Möller, Marie Hasselberg
Other participating teachers Anna Borgström, Mathilde Sengoege, Nicola Orsini	Other participating teachers Several "medrättande lärare" as examiners for the theses

Number of registered students 43 of which 23 PHEPI	Number who have not completed the course¹ PHEPI: 1	Number passed after regular session² PHEPI: 19
Methods for student influence other than course survey³ Individual meetings with students at 3 occasions (project plan seminar, mid-term review and examination seminar). Students were encouraged to come with suggestions for teaching activities during the course. At the end of the course a verbal evaluation of the course was performed in the two classrooms.		

¹ At the time of completed grading and mandatory assignments/revisions.

² After first summative examination.

³ State: how the students were given the opportunity to participate in the preparation and decisions at course level, how the students were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the course and how this forms the basis of the analysis and proposals below, response frequency (for example, concluding survey 70 % response frequency, post-it notes – improvement suggestions after the second course week 90 % response frequency, course council 85 % attendance).

Conclusions from the previous course evaluation

- Insert reflections from previous course evaluation.

Regarding our aim to increase interaction between students during seminars, the students still reported that COVID-19 and online teaching hindered active interaction between students. As previous year, KIB held a workshop on peer-reviewing which was much appreciated. We will discuss with the students and explore new ways to achieve more active interaction between students. Early in the course we experienced the students as stressed, therefore additional tasks as written feedback was not implemented.

To clarify the expectations of supervisors, we revised the supervisor contract and added a list of tasks and responsibilities included in the role as supervisor.

The students had reported differences in feedback if one or two examiners were present at the examination seminar, students with two examiners received more questions and comments.

To avoid this, we updated the requirements to allow only one examiner per student to pose questions and discuss during the examination seminar.

Considering the new specialisation (HPP) we coordinated and aligned the course for both tracks regarding schedule and deadlines, as well as timing of the workshops. A series of modules in generic skills was developed to help the students to develop their scientific generic skills. The students were encouraged to do the modules in the morning and in the afternoons we, as course leaders, offered follow-up discussions, providing an opportunity for the students to ask questions and receive clarifications etc. The modules were scheduled in relation to the progress of the course. Based upon the request of the students, additional workshops were included this year, including “presentation of thesis” and “public health relevance”.

Overall, we think this course went very well, considering the COVID-19 situation, it was less opportunities for the students to interact both with other students and their research groups. We planned for a couple of educational activities at campus. Students were invited to present their project plans and their theses at the examination seminars on campus if they wanted to, and about half of the students presented on campus at one of the occasions. A risk assessment was conducted beforehand, recommendations of social distancing, and use of large venues were applied. Even though some students were in their home countries, the connection was good and participation was the same as for those in Sweden, despite the time lag.

We are not satisfied with the low participation in the online modules and offered workshops. This definitively affected the overall quality of the theses. We also received far more emails with detailed questions that would not have been asked had the students engaged in the offered teaching sessions and the modules on Canvas. We do not have any clear explanation of why, but maybe it can be linked to the pandemic and stress that the students reported.

The students expressed a need for statistical support during the course. Further, statisticians (teachers in the biostatistics courses) at the department also reported many students reaching out to them for statistical support. To facilitate support in statistical methods we arranged three workshops with Nicola Orsini (responsible for the biostatistics courses in the program).

This year the students had already presented their project plans as part of the previous course, Applied epidemiology 2. The feedback after the project plan seminars was that this was unnecessary to do twice. We have consulted the course leader for Applied Epidemiology 2 and the examination for this course will be changed so the project plans for the degree project will not be presented there.

Only one student was delayed with submission of the thesis and presented with a two-week delay. After that all 18 students have been graded and passed the course.

To improve the course further, we think there is a need for enhanced support in certain areas and to implement self-assessment among the students. Self-assessment could raise students' awareness of their own learning and development. The assessment criteria help the students to identify their needs for improvements to pass the examination. This in combination with feedback from examiners and opponents during the examination seminars, and the possibility to revise accordingly, creates learning opportunities.

This year we had quite many new supervisors. To increase the engagement among the



supervisors we plan to repeat a successful workshop from 2019 “How to provide effective feedback to your master student”.

An online survey was distributed to the supervisors, at this moment we have still not closed the survey, but any feedback will be incorporated in the planning of the next course.

Almost all students conduct their thesis projects within an existing research group, within KI or outside Sweden. This provide an opportunity for the student to be directly involved in research discussions and interact with several different professions in academia, which contribute to their scientific maturity. Due to the pandemic several students reported that the interaction with the research group was hampered due to the “work at home” recommendations. On the other hand, it was reported that they had easy access to their supervisors and were able to participate in research group meetings and present their projects. In conclusion, the additional added value of performing a degree project in a research group was not optimal this year.

Description of conducted changes since previous course occasion

For this course, we aimed to increase the student’s motivation for participating in the online modules and workshops. We emphasized this several times during the course.

Some students expressed frustrations during the process of finding a project and supervisor. To facilitate the process of finding a project and supervisor we developed a brief introduction to the program and the two tracks to be included in the call for projects, which the students could enclose when they reach out to potential supervisors.

The template for the thesis was updated and closer aligned with the instructions for the thesis.

To clarify the role of the examiners further, we invited examiners to a workshop about the assessment criteria. At the individual meetings with the students after the examination seminars we also emphasized their role and what type of feedback they could expect. We mapped all the comments (from the course in 2021) that was received from the examiners. These were grouped into more common broader areas and examples were given. The results of this mapping were included at the assessment criteria workshop.

We implemented individual meetings with the students after the project plan seminars. During these sessions the students were asked to reflect on their potential strengths and weaknesses in relation to the criteria for the degree project. This was later followed up at the mid-term seminars.

To make the time for revision more equal, all students received their feedback in written form from the examiners at the same time after all students had presented.

Summary of the students' response to the course valuation

The response rate on the online survey was 57% (13 of 23 students). It is important to notice that the low response rate limits our ability to draw strong conclusions.

- Among the responders, the assessment of the course was good with an average on the KI mandatory questions varying from 4.5-4.9. On the question on "I have developed valuable expertise/skills during the course" 100% of the responders reported "to a large extent" or "to a very large extent"
- The question "In my view, all students were provided with the same learning opportunities in the course" had a slightly lower average (4.2), which is in line with previous years. In the open-ended questions students reported overall high satisfaction with the course; they reported to not have any severe problems with finding a project and supervisor, that they would prefer to have discussants that are relevant for their projects (and in oral evaluation that they would like to act as discussant on more than one project), that they would like to have more support and information about data management and data cleaning, and some support from senior statisticians. As previous years some students commented on the timing of the workshops.
- Overall, all except one student reported to be satisfied with the support from their supervisors. The students reported variations related to what they were supported with, overall, they reported to have received support regarding research questions, aim, presentation, writing up the thesis, but less support on time management, ethics and language. Although students reported in the open-ended questions that they want more support in statistics, many also reported to have received a lot of support regarding data management and statistical analyses.
- Around 50% of the students reported to have participated in the workshops and those that did were highly satisfied with them. Additional, around 50% of the students reported to have done the self-learning modules in Canvas, with varying satisfaction.

The course leader's reflections on the implementation and results of the course

Reflections on the course's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, limitations within, for example, the following areas:

- *How have the students' previous knowledge, experiences and prerequisites been used as a basis during the course?*

Some students seem insecure about their data management and statistical skills.

Overall the students performed very well orally, but in written less good with regard to the discussion on strengths and limitations in their projects. *In what way the work methods used during the course contribute to the students' attaining the learning outcomes? (Reflect on the selected learning activities and the students' type of engagement and presence in class)*

During the degree project we experience that the students work in very different pace, time and place, hence we have arranged both workshops in classroom as well as self-learning modules in Canvas.

How has the course worked with -constructive alignment - from learning outcomes to examination form and examination content?

The thesis will be assessed based on the assessment criteria, which is presented to the students early on in the course. For their first individual meeting with course leaders, they were asked to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the criteria, and discuss with course leaders what strategies they would employ to handle potential weaknesses.



- *How do examinations and assessment criteria ensure that students achieve the learning outcomes of the course? (Reflect on the choice of examination form and formative assessments.)*

We will continue using the assessment criteria as formative assessments during the whole thesis process. The criteria are also shared with the supervisors early in the process.

Course leader's conclusions and suggestions for improvement

We believe the following points could improve the course further:

- Develop a workshop on data management and data cleaning, to be implemented early in the course
- Develop a workshop for discussion of methodological aspects of the project, i.e., epidemiological biases
- Include 2-3 occasions with Biostat-corner
- To consider if it is possible to match the discussant closer to the topic of the thesis (we do this at the mid-term reviews)
- To consider if it is possible to have multiple discussants at the examination seminars

Other comments