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 **3GB001**	Course title Research methodology	**Credits** **7,5 hp**
Semester **HT24**	**Period** **20240930-20241110**	

Course leader Carina King	**Examiner** **Carina King**
Other participating teachers Helle Mölsted Alvesson, Peter Alping, Henrike Habel, Samuel Wiqvist, Francesca Zanni, María del Rosario Alsina, Katrine de Angeles	**Other participating teachers**

Number of registered students **47**	**Number who have not completed the course[1] 12**	**Number passed after regular session[2] 35**
Methods for student influence other than course survey[3] Throughout the course, the student representatives were welcome to provide feedback around student concerns, and there was a Q&A forum in Canvas that was open to students to give suggestions or pose questions. These forms of communications were introduced in the first session of the course. Students also provided real-time feedback on scheduling and pacing of content during teaching sessions.		

[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

The course evaluation from 2023 had the following recommendations:

- Re-working the exam schedules for the methods and introduction courses, so that the students can ”finish” a topic before moving to the next.
- Figuring out how to present a single schedule on TimeEdit for the Introduction and Methods course, so student dont need to jump back and forth between Canvas pages.
- Re-think how group work activities can be part of students examinations, and be used to link the two courses (e.g. can we combine sessions to make the schedule less busy by having joint course group activities)

- Re-visit the biostatistics learning objectives and how the lecture content reflects these and the exam questions to ensure this is made clearer to the students.

Description of conducted changes since previous course occasion

The course in 2023 ran in parallel with the Introduction to Global Health course. For the 2024 course, we did not do this, and ran them sequentially. This meant that the timetable changed considerably since the previous course occasion – and recommendations 1 and 2 were no longer applicable. However, the timing of the exams in the previous year was problematic, so I changed this to have the exam done seperately for each of the 3 sub-sections of the course, and that the exam would be completed before moving to the next topic.

The other major shift was switching from Stata to R as the statistical software that students were introduced to. This change was done to allow students to learn in a software that's open access – meaning they could continue using it after their studies. With Stata, we have indiviudal paid licenses, which was expensive for the programme and meant students lost access after their MSc was completed.

I also changed the Epidemiology exam, to better use the group work (based on the recommendation from the previous year – see point 3). Instead of an invigilited written exam, students were asked to write a self-reflection on what they had learnt in the group work – and specifically, the hardest aspect of epidemiological study design.

Summary of the students' response to the course evaluation

Students gave the course 3.2/5 for developing valuable skills, which was slightly lower than the previous year (3.4/5). The areas where the students gave the lowest scores were the design of the course to acheive the intended learning outcomes (2.6/5), the study aids (e.g. computer programmes) supporting the students in acheiving the learning outcomes (2.6/5), feeling that they had acquired applicable and relevant skills (2.8/5) and attained the learning outcomes (2.8/5). From the narrative responses, the reasoning for these lower scores largely reflects the biostatistics part of the course. Students reported that the consepts in this part of the course were not explained well, there was a mismathc between what was being taught and the capacity of the class, and that the time was too short. Some of the negative comments specifically related to the use of R, which was a steel learning curve in such a short period. In addition, they raised concerns around not feeling there was a clear thread linking the different parts of the course together, and how they apply to global health more practically.

In terms of what the students scored the course well on, the highest score was for promoting a scientific way of thinking (3.5/5), and the design of the tests/exams as being appropriate (3.4/5). The narrative feedback probided very few positive themes around the course – a major difference from previous years, where the lecturers and use of global health examples to bring methods to life have consistently been highlighted. Some students commented that they had learnt relevant skills, but this was inconsistent.

Overall, feedback was poor. However, the response rate of students to the evaluation survey was low (26 responses, 54%), and the feedback provided in this evaluation conflicts with some of the informal positive feedback provided. The biostatistics component of the course was overwhelmingly the subject of the feedback received, and a key comment was having the same person consistently teaching, rather than having different teachers for each session. Comments about the workload being high were also consistent – and is consistent with student feedback we receive every year on this course.

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

Despite the negative feedback and low student scores for the course, overall, we had a good pass rate for both the qualitative and epidemiology sections, and more distinctions in the biostastics than

in previous years. During classes, teachers noted that the students were engaged, thoughtful, and actively took part in discussions and group activities. Positive comments were given about the flexibility in the schedule, and responding to requests for shifting deadlines or moving topics.

As the course leader, I was a bit surprised by how negative some of the comments in the evaluation were (e.g. “this was a nightmare from start to finish”, ” I am very let down by this course and the teaching.”, ” Very unimpressed. Had higher expectations for how a KI course would be run.”). Students had raised concerns about the biostastics during the course, and I amended the exam to remove topics that lecturers told me they ran out of time to cover, and gave everyone an additional mark for a question that I felt was unfair. The exam was developed with the teachers who delivered the lectures, and so should have reflected the content taught.

Course leader’s conclusions and suggestions for improvement

Overall, its clear that the shift from Stata to R, and inconsistency in the biostatistics teaching was problematic this year, and dominated students opinions of the course. While I tried to make adjustments during the course, its apparent that these were not enough to overcome the barriers to learning biostatistics for some students. However, more real-time and tangible feedback from the students would have helped – as issues around organisation and how content linked to learning objectives was never raised with me. Its also hard to understand if the reflections presented here representative of the class, given the response rate was so low.

Suggestions for improvement:

- At the start of each section in the course, more clearly explaining the ILOs, how they will be examined, and how these methods apply to global health
- Revise the way in which R is introduced to the students, returning to how we did this in previous years with Stata (i.e. making R a specific learning task, rather than optional, and dedicating class time to it).
- Aim to have the same teacher cover all of the biostatistics content.
- Rather than having a passive forum within Canvas for student feedback and suggestions, have an active 15 minute check-in at the end of each week.
- Re-emphasise to the whole class the importance of constructive student feedback – an action that is relevant across the programme, not just for this course.

Other comments