

Course analysis (course evaluation)

Course code 4BI114	Course title Frontiers in Biomedicine: Research Project 1	Credits 15hp
Semester (spring/autumn) VT26	Period March 25 - June 7, 2026	
Course coordinator Bernhard Lohkamp		Examiner Bernhard Lohkamp
Teacher in charge of component		Other participating teachers various
Number of registered students during the three week check 46	Number approved on the last course date 46	Response frequency course valuation survey 69.6%
Other methods for student influence (in addition to concluding course valuation) Meeting with course representatives during the course and after to discuss survey and analysis.		
Feedback reporting of the course valuation results to the students Survey (without comments) published on open Kursweb Drupal. Discussed with student representatives and will be presented at the start of next course.		

Note that...

The analysis should (together with a summarising quantitative summary of the students' course valuation) be communicated to the education committee at the department responsible for the course and for programme courses also the programme coordinating committee.

The analysis was communicated to the education committee on the following date: **01/07/26**

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1. Description of any conducted changes since the previous course occasion based on the views of former students

An information meeting for this course was held ahead of the course in conjunction with other information sessions. To provide students with information prior to course start, an open Canvas course for all project courses in the programme was launched; this provides general information incl. information for supervisors and expectations from these (incl. framework for working hours), hints on how to find projects etc. Basic course specific information can be found there too but details are provided in the course specific Canvas course(s).

Progress meetings were scheduled further apart, and some discussion topics were added. The corresponding reflections were given fixed deadlines.

The peer-review exercise was redesigned. Rather than giving feedback themselves (as done previously) students now evaluate and reflect upon received peer-feedback. The 2nd part of the exercise, i.e. formal annotation/proof-reading of a project report, remains unchanged.

Project report guidelines were updated to reflect instructions for short reports of life-science journals. To accommodate the stricter requirements the word count was slightly increased. The materials & methods section was increased to allow full descriptions of the methodological part of the project.

The examination session was reduced to max 5 students with clear instructions how to prepare and what to do. The use of projectors was explicitly discouraged.

A voluntary ½ time control/discussion between student and supervisor was introduced where a preliminary assessment of the student may be discussed.

2. Brief summary of the students' valuations of the course

(Based on the students' quantitative responses to the course valuation and key views from free text responses. Quantitative summary and any graphs are attached.)

The course is valued by students for providing a hands-on research experience, exposure to new methods, and the opportunity to engage directly with research groups. This supports the development of practical skills and scientific thinking. The peer-feedback component—both giving and receiving—was also well-received.

The project report writing is frequently challenging and time consuming due to word limits. Students continue to experience difficulties finding suitable project places, which is partly attributed to the course's duration.

The updated Canvas page and instruction content improved the information flow but there is room for optimisation.

3. The course coordinator's reflections on the implementation and results of the course

Strengths of the course:

- gain experience in lab work within a small project,
- get acquainted with research in general and research groups at KI in particular,
- very relevant assessment with written report and discussion session,
- Focus is on lab work and not extensive writing,
- Progress meetings give students opportunities to discuss, meet, reflect on their project and progress,
- Useful peer-feedback,
- Good course organisation.

Weaknesses of the course:

- Word limits on report requires too much time and may hinder students to demonstrate their writing abilities,
- Some content (on Canvas) appears fragmented or unclear, requiring more streamlined information,
- Supervisory guidance and expectations vary,
- Progress meetings are not equally valued by all,
- Extend of course makes it difficult to find hosting labs/supervisors,
- Limited teacher contact,
- Insufficient time allocated for peer-feedback of report and varying quality of feedback.

3. Other views

The different assessments of the course were discussed but not revised at this point since alternatives were not regarded as an improvement on the current ones.

Several comments in the survey mention excessive demands from some supervisors and dependency issues on supervisors, together with a lack of support structure in case there are issues with the supervisor. At this point it is not clear if this is an isolated case or wider problem and therefore will be looked into further.

Additional points discussed in a course council meeting during and after the course:

- The revised peer-feedback exercised was considered different to ones in previous courses and valuable. However, the corresponding question in the survey appears to have been misunderstood by at least some students based on the comments.
- The ½ time discussion with supervisor may be formalised and become a requirement.
- Possibility to schedule Project fairs to make useful for RP1 (probably most difficult)
- Possibilities to make supervisor assessments fairer and/or remove 3 scale grade.

4. Course coordinator's conclusions and any suggestions for changes

(If changes are suggested, state who is responsible for implementing them and provide a schedule.)

- update the project report instructions based on specific student feedback; clarify the word count limit and encourage students to take into consideration from the beginning rather than spending time on cutting later (BLo),
- clarification of the objectives of the peer-feedback exercise as well as progress meetings incl. reflection and improve their communication to the students (BLo),
- the ½ time control/discussion with supervisor on e.g. assessment will be made mandatory; this may have a fixed (at least suggested) format and requires a brief report back to the course director (and student) from the supervisor (BLo),
- progress meetings: more discussion topics will be provided incl. requirement to discuss a selection of these; groups for progress meeting should have at least 4 members; the 2nd progress meeting may become optional and be replaced with a reflection questionnaire (BLo),
- The Canvas course will be reviewed to see if information can be better grouped, summarised, integrated with the course for all project courses, etc.; at the same time information should only be available in one place and not repeated (BLo),
- Update the Canvas course for the project courses within the programme and make it available to students at the start of their studies (BLo, J. Laurencikiene, course directors of other project courses),
- the optional meeting within the peer-feedback groups to discuss the peer-feedback on the project report will be made mandatory and, if possible, the time allocated for peer-review extended (BLo),
- Add an (mandatory) "examination information" session later in the course (3-4 weeks before the end) and avoid overload on corresponding information in the course kick-off meeting; considered to be in hybrid format to allow attendance of all and minimising impact on the project work; this will be accompanied by more detailed instructions for the discussion session; consider to add (fixed, virtual) office hours for direct contact with the course director (BLo),
- include more details on supervisor duties, expectations incl. interaction etc. and make these clearly visible in the supervisor agreement; establish a support structure and path for students with supervisor issues; include some special clause for external supervisors to get more control on these (BLo, J. Laurencikiene, course directors of other project courses),
- grading of the course: re-evaluate "Originality" in the project work assessment since it is difficult for students to show this in the short project and early career stage; evaluate the trade-off between a longer report with one examining teacher versus shorter report with two examining teachers; in case of the latter grade deviations require discussion between the teachers and/or the course director; consider a wider scale for supervisor assessment (0-5) to make it not as "binary" (currently 0-2) and allow a fairer assessment; evaluate possibility to remove 3 grade scale (BLo, J. Laurencikiene),
- discuss the possibility to have the project fairs early in term 2 and at a given time within the course schedule (PN, BUS).

Appendices:

Survey