

Evaluation of Courses

Guidance for Implementation

Feedback from colleagues for colleagues: Critical Friends

Teachers who apply this method of course evaluation ask other teachers for feedback on their course. Teachers who are by definition not involved in the teaching of the course to be evaluated visit the course and observe, following the action between teacher and students. These observations provide the basis for a cooperative feedback which can be used for further course development.

Feedback from colleagues is only intended to be used to reflect on your own course. For data protection reasons, personal information about other teachers may not be collected.

Procedure for the implementation of feedback from colleagues for colleagues

1. Identification of the aspects of teaching on which feedback is invited

At the beginning, you consider which aspects of your teaching you would like to reflect on, and best write them down in the form of key words. In this way, the observer is given a concrete task of what the observation should focus on. This should also include considerations in how far the selected aspects could eventually be altered within the frame of your own possibilities. Furthermore, they should be observable so that your "critical friend" can base his*her feedback on concrete perceptions.

2. Observable aspects of teaching

Please think carefully about what can actually be observed in your delivery of the course or in the student group. How could someone from outside recognise what is important with regard to the selected aspects of teacher-student interaction? To this end, it can be helpful to collect terms, situations and behaviours, note them down, and then rank them in order of importance. An observation task should be formulated as simply, clearly and precisely as possible for any observer.

3. Distinction between description and assessment

When observing social processes such as teaching and learning or competence acquisition, it is important to distinguish between the description of observations and the assessment that can be derived from them. In an observation, attention is focused on perceived and identified details. On the one hand, the visitor describes the observations made so as to fulfil his*her observation task. On the other hand, the visitor evaluates the observations in the sense that he*she will be looking for reasons behind the observed behaviour of teachers and students, which can be the starting point for future changes and improvements. The observers provide their comments and suggestions based on their own experience, knowledge, and competences. Thus, the assessments and suggestions for improvement are person-specific and should therefore be kept separate from the descriptions.

4. Constructive feedback to the person visited (feedback rules)

Feedback should be well-considered in order to become productive for the person visited. It is essential to show appreciation by making it clear that the feedback is well-intentioned as it is given within a relationship of mutual trust. In a first step, the relevant observations are described as facts. In the second step, evaluative statements are formulated in the way described above. Critical issues or aspects which could be further improved from the observer's point of view are specifically addressed. Sweeping judgements are not constructive for the visited person. Consecutively, the recipient of the feedback has room for his*her comment, presenting the facts addressed from his or her point of view. This is followed by an open dialogue about the causes and effects of the issues raised, aiming at the identification of concrete suggestions and proposals for the further development of the teaching practice, according to the principle that "even good things can always be further improved".

If you should have questions about feedback from colleagues for colleagues, please contact lehrevaluation@uni-ak.ac.at.

Documentation

To complete the evaluation, you must document the implementation on service.uni-ak.ac.at by the end of the semester in which the evaluation of your course has been carried out. In this documentation, please describe the method you have used and also assess its usefulness. For purposes of further development of the evaluation methods, we also ask you for a detailed feedback on the procedure.

To document the implementation of the evaluation, please go to service.uni-ak.ac.at and log in with your p-number and password. Under 'Evaluation' please click on the course to be evaluated, then go to the line 'Feedback durch KollegInnen' and select 'Dokumentation'. The following window will open, which you please fill in (English is welcome).