



Memorandum:

The role of external experts in programme evaluations at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, HEALTH

HEALTH carries out programme evaluations of its study programmes with the involvement of external experts every six years. The aim is to continuously monitor and develop the quality of the study programmes. The programme evaluation gives a detailed insight into the current state and challenges of the study programme.

The role of external experts in programme evaluations

A minimum of three external experts are included in a programme evaluation. The external experts must help the programme management with the quality assurance and development of the objectives, content, organisation, and research base of the study programme by discussing new ideas and perspectives in relation to the study programme.

The head of studies is responsible for preparing a programme evaluation on the basis of a range of quantitative and qualitative data. The draft of the programme evaluation is approved by the study board for the programme before it is presented to a panel of external experts, who discuss the study programme together with the programme management, students and teaching staff from the study programme. Input from the external experts is worked into the programme evaluation. In addition, a follow-up plan is prepared for the development and quality assurance of the study programme for the next six years.

In addition to analysis of data, a programme evaluation also includes a competence matrix and a research matrix. The competence matrix illustrates the connection between the programme's learning objectives as described in the competence profile and the learning objectives of the individual course elements on the programme. The research matrix illustrates the connection between research areas and teaching on the programme. For professional master programmes the head of studies may choose to add a list of external/guest lecturers to the research matrix, in order to illustrate the study programme's affiliation to the industry and the future job market of the graduates.

The task of the external experts is both to ensure quality assurance and to develop the objectives, content and organisation of the study programme. External experts can decide to raise their own topics on the basis of the data and information supplied to them. The faculty may also ask the external experts to deal with specific issues. However, the University of Copenhagen (UCPH) demands that external experts should always relate to the research base as well as the structure of the study programme.

Selection and involvement of external experts

At the beginning of the year, the programme management suggests to the dean which external experts they wish to involve in a programme evaluation.

UCPH has formulated common guidelines for the selection of external experts. The experts must not be persons who have had close research or work-related cooperation with the programme management within the last few years. Any concerns about this should be mentioned in the proposal to the dean. The dean can choose to approve the proposal, ask for other suggestions (e.g. due to suspicion of problems of affiliation) or make suggestions for one or more experts. When there is agreement about the proposed persons, they are contacted and asked whether they will accept the task. At the beginning of May, the appointed experts are sent a draft of the programme evaluation, including appendices and other relevant material about the study programme. The external experts can, when needed, consult with the programme management if they have questions or comments.

May/June: the experts meet with the programme management and representatives for the students and teaching staff of the study programme – either at a joint meeting or at separate meetings with the different players. The format and organisation of the meeting(s) is agreed upon by the programme management and the external experts. The head of studies will normally be the chair of the meeting, but the role may be undertaken by others, such as the associate dean of education. At the meeting(s), the external experts are expected to examine and inquire into the aspects of the draft programme evaluation that they, on the basis of their expertise, are particularly interested in and can contribute to. In advance of the meeting, the experts can choose to send the programme management a list of topics they wish to at the meeting.

In connection with the meeting, there may be a guided tour of the campus and facilities of the study programme.

The external experts' dialogue with programme management, teaching staff and students

The appendice “Question guide” gives examples of topics, which the external experts may touch upon in the dialogue with the different players. The guide is meant as an inspiration; the experts are not expected to go through all the questions at the meeting.

Based on the experts' analysis of the draft programme evaluation, including the appendices, and their dialogue with the programme management, teaching staff and students, the experts present their assessment of the study programme and their suggestions and recommendations for the development of the study programme; this takes place in connection with the meeting. As the University of Copenhagen demands that external experts should always relate to the research base as well as the structure of the study programme, these topics are included in the agenda.

Conclusion of the involvement of the external experts

HEALTH ensures that minutes are taken of the meetings with the external experts and that any requests for further information, clarifications or anything else are followed up on. The minutes are sent for approval to the experts, together with a draft of the programme evaluation. The external experts are given one week to approve the minutes and to make further input, suggestions and any other contributions that they wish to have incorporated in the final evaluation. After this, the external experts' involvement in the evaluation is considered concluded.

On the basis of the programme evaluation and the experts' recommendations, the head of studies/head of education and the study board/school council draw up a follow-up plan for the next six years.

The external experts are sent a copy of the final evaluation.

Question guide: Programme evaluation with participation of external experts

When the external experts meet with the programme management, teaching staff and students they may touch upon topics of their own interest and choice. However, the the University of Copenhagen demands that external experts should always relate to **the research base** as well as **the structure of the study programme**.

The external experts may wish to discuss the following topics with the programme management:

Data on employment/unemployment; the dropout rate and study completion time; etc. They may also ask about the following topics:

- How is reseach integrated into the teaching on the programme?
- How do you ensure an active research environment?
- How do you ensure that students have access to the research environments connected to the programme?
- Which future challenges to you see for the programme and the relevant academic environment?
- What is the academic progression and level on the programme?
- How is the students' and teachers' access to the head of studies and study board?

The external experts may ask the students about the following topics:

- What is he possibility for contact to researchers
- Are you being included in activities related to the academic environment?
- Do you find that the work load on the study programme is reasonable?
- Do you have access to study and career guidance
- Do you find that the organisation of the study programme gives you the possibility to acquire the skills, competences and knowledge that are described in the competence profile
- Do you have access to influence on the structure of the study programme
- Do you have access to influence on the quality of the teaching?
- Are you informed aboutthe possibility to study abroad or at other universities in Denmark?

The experts may ask the teaching staff about the following topics:

- Do you find that there is a fair balance between research and teaching?
- How do you include research in the teaching on the programme?
- How do you ensure that students have access to the research environments?
- Do you, as teachers, follow up on course evaluations? How does the study board/head of studies follow up on them?
- Which future challenges to you see for the programme and the relevant academic environment?