



Report - AG2809 - 2021-11-16

Respondents: 1
Answer Count: 1
Answer Frequency: 100.00%

Please note that there is only one respondent to this form: the person that performs the course analysis.

Course analysis carried out by (name, e-mail):

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DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS

Describe the course evaluation process. Describe how all students have been given the possibility to give their opinions on the course. Describe how aspects regarding gender, and disabled students are investigated.

This analysis is based on an online KTH learning experience questionnaire (LEQ) with a response rate of 55% in combination with evaluative discussions throughout the course, a final course feedback discussion (2021-01-15), and the final written learning reflections (part of examination). The group feedback discussions used rounds to open up for all students to contribute.

DESCRIPTION OF MEETINGS WITH STUDENTS

Describe which meetings that has been arranged with students during the course and after its completion. (The outcomes of these meetings should be reported under 7, below.)

The course is built on progress meetings with flexible content, that is related to the project process. Specific course feedback discussions were held after the first assignment, the literature overview and at the final course seminar.



COURSE DESIGN

Briefly describe the course design (learning activities, examinations) and any changes that have been implemented since the last course offering.

Similar to the previous course rounds the 2020 round was run without collaboration with the other SUPD project courses, except for the final presentation seminar. The main changes of the course were due to necessary adaptations to the Covid-19 restrictions, where the whole course was run digitally mainly using the zoom platform. The main course elements were similar to previous years. The course core part was the project work (10.5 ECTS) which was examined in oral presentations and a written report, as well as progress reporting and a process diary (logbook). The project work was built on a background research process broadly addressing sustainable development in Värmdö municipality. Literature report and seminars (3.0 ECTS) included a synthesis of scientific literature of relevance for the project (extended background) and presentation and discussion of this literature during seminars. Finally, the students wrote a learning reflection (1.5 ECTS) where insights for future projects and work were to be captured. The course projects were developed in collaboration with Värmdö municipality and around the broad theme of sustainability challenges. This was made possible by the formal collaboration agreement between KTH Water Centre and Värmdö municipality.

Compared to previous years the number of students was significantly higher, 20 (compared to 3 2019 and 11 2018). Possible reasons were the travel restrictions, inhibiting exchange studies abroad, and a targeted course selection seminar for the whole SUPD, where the three project courses were presented in detail (similarities and differences).

Main changes that were implemented, aside from Covid-19 adaptations:

- Increased number of peer-review activities, where the students provided feedback to each other's work.
- Increased number of group supervision sessions where several project groups participated
- Final workshop with the municipality, with the main purpose to discuss preliminary findings with the civil servants and other actors invited as an input to the finalizations of the project reports.
- Optional format of the popular science presentation, not just posters.
- Increased interaction with the municipality, where one specific expert at the municipality was connected to almost each of the projects. These contacts were facilitated by the course's main contact at the municipality, the sustainability strategist.
- The presence of the SDGs as a frame for the course was increased, specifically in the background analysis and the literature overview. The integration of the SDG's was part of the grading criteria.

THE STUDENTS' WORKLOAD

Does the students' workload correspond to the expected level (40 hours/1.5 credits)? If there is a significant deviation from the expected, what can be the reason?

The workload was experienced as high, but ok, since it was even throughout the course, adapted to the workload of other courses within the SUPD-program that were studied in parallel, and that the course was well organised. Most of the respondents of the online LEQ estimated their workload to 15-20 hours/week, which corresponds to the expected level.

THE STUDENTS' RESULTS

How well have the students succeeded on the course? If there are significant differences compared to previous course offerings, what can be the reason?

All students passed the course, and this high proportion of successful students is similar to previous years.



STUDENTS' ANSWERS TO OPEN QUESTIONS

What does students say in response to the open questions?

Appreciated parts:

- The welcoming, open, sympathetic atmosphere during the whole course
- The excellent organisation and clear structure
- The teachers' engagement, flexibility, and empathy create a safe and supportive learning environment in such difficult times (Covid-19).
- That all activities were aligned with each other and supported the project work, and also served as relevant thesis preparation
- The opportunity to collaborate with the municipality, which provided a real setting for the project and learning how to apply academic knowledge in practice.
- The large freedom to choose a topic
- The regular progress seminars, frequent feedback, and the literature review were highlighted as good learning activities.
- The progress seminars that provided learning opportunities, e.g. how to condense material, how to present in different formats, communication skills
- Methods and tools for how to run a project from plan to final seminar including tools for how to perform a literature overview. This was appreciated as a great preparation for master thesis work.
- One respondent wrote: " The best course so far in my university life"

Challenging parts and suggested improvements:

- The digital format made group formation and topic selection difficult, as well as made group work more difficult and difficulties in keeping the motivation up when working from home.
 - Too many and too long seminars
 - Need of more feedback, particularly on written material
 - Need of activities that work as reminders to write in the project diary regularly
 - Increase the partner collaboration even further
 - Add a startup seminar/tutorials in January ahead of the final seminars
 - Just one teacher running the whole course, suggest adding a course assistant to increase the potential for more timely feedback
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SUMMARY OF STUDENTS' OPINIONS

Summarize the outcome of the questionnaire, as well as opinions emerging at meetings with students.

Comments LEQ1-6 meaningfulness

- 9/11 respondents strongly agreed that they "explored parts of the subject independently" and 7/11 strongly agreed that they "learned by trying out own ideas", and this is well aligned with the overarching course goal of training independent scientific work.

-9/11 respondents strongly agreed that "they felt togetherness with the others on the course" and 10/11 strongly agreed that "the atmosphere on the course was open and inclusive". This is a significant achievement of both the course team and the students, given the digital format.

Comments on LEQ7-16 comprehensibility

-Even if the course team put an effort to communicate intended learning outcomes (ILOs) for each activity during the course, there is still room for improvement since the score was a bit lower (average 6) compared to other questions.

- the organisation and teaching was found accessible by the respondents (9/11 – agreed or strongly agreed and none disagreed to that "the course was organised in a way that supported my learning", and 11/11 strongly agreed that "I understood what the teachers were talking about")

-9/11 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "the course activities helped me achieve the ILO efficiently".

-9/11 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "I received regular feedback that helped me to see my progress. This was something that was improved in the course design of this course round and it seems to have been received well.

-the grades had not yet been communicated at the time of the LEQ wherefore some respondents stated that they did not know the relation between the expected learning and grades, nor the fairness of the grading (LEQ 13, 16).

Comments regarding LEQ17-22 manageability

- 10/11 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they "regularly spent time to reflect on what I learned". This high score is related to the course activities specifically targeting learning reflections, e.g. the project diary ok that is used throughout the course and the examination "learning reflection".

- all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "they" had opportunities to influence the course activities" and that they "were able to get support if in need of it", which reflects the flexibility in the course design that intends to be open to the dynamic process of long term project work

Comments regarding the digital format (LEQ open questions)

Challenges: inhibits informal interaction/connection/communication among the course participants which is essential to group work, certain data collection methods that could not be applied, zoom fatigue from long sessions online, difficulties to form groups for the different assignments without meeting each other, and that the opportunities for visiting the study sites were very limited.

Potential to be kept digital: tutorials and feedback sessions (esp the optional ones), lectures with remote teachers, interviews for data collection since it saves time for all parties and then might be easier to schedule.

OVERALL IMPRESSION

Summarize the teachers' overall impressions of the course offering in relation to students' results and their evaluation of the course, as well as in relation to the changes implemented since last course offering.

The course was very successful despite the difficult situation, with a rapid transformation of the course to be run completely digital. Together we created a very good learning environment which seems to have been very beneficial. It was a very inspiring and great course round, with engaged and flexible students.

ANALYSIS

Is it possible to identify stronger and weaker areas in the learning environment based on the information you have gathered during the evaluation and analysis process? What can the reason for these be? Are there significant difference in experience between:

- students identifying as female and male?

- international and national students?

- students with or without disabilities?

According to the LEQ, the students generally appreciated the learning environment, where the majority of the respondents answered: "strongly agree with the statement" for the three categories – meaningfulness, comprehensibility, and manageability. There were no significant differences in the answers that could be related to the student's gender, being an exchange student, or to functional variability (disability).



PRIORITIZED COURSE DEVELOPMENT

What aspects of the course should be developed primarily? How can these aspects be developed in short and long term?

- Adding more teacher hours: Given that the number of students was high there is room in the course budget for adding more teacher hours, which will increase the resilience of the course (not being dependent on one teacher) and also the feedback process (frequency and timing) between teacher and students, which was asked for.
 - improve the communication of ILO in relation to the course activities
 - Fine-tune the course activities towards the end of the course in January – including a start-up seminar
 - given the responses regarding the digital format a combination of in-classroom meetings and digital meetings can be a good setup for future course rounds.
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