

General Course Analysis AL2160 2023

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1. 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.

KTH's standardized questionnaire was automatically sent out to all participants to gather information for the course analysis. Only 15 % answered the questionnaire, thus making the feedback from the course committee of utmost importance. In addition, two meetings with the three student representatives were held, one in the middle of the period and one at the end of the course. This course committee gathered the thoughts and feedback from the student group by e.g. sending a survey with questions in regards to the course activities and content. The students were also invited to share their thoughts and experiences regarding the course's other activities, such as the supervision meetings.

2. Description of meetings with students

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

Two online meetings with the three student representatives and the course coordinator were arranged. The course committee presented the feedback from the student group and the different topics of feedback were discussed in a constructive manner.

3. Course design

Describe briefly the course design, the constructive alignment (intended learning objectives, learning activities, assessment, and how they interact), and the development that has been implemented since the last course offering.

The overall aim of the course is to generate knowledge and critical thinking on how companies work with, report and communicate on sustainability. The course includes all three pillars of sustainability from a company perspective and also connects this to policy and environmental law for a holistic view of this complex topic. An overview of tools and standards, as well as key concepts, provides an initial understanding needed to analyze, compare and reflect on companies from a sustainability perspective. The course provides concepts and theory on the key aspects as well as provides applied examples through sustainability reports and guest lectures.

The course is based on group projects and individual work. The projects are desktop studies on sustainability reporting of companies as well as a smaller project focusing on environmental law. For the main project, the groups have an academic supervisor from KTH. The projects are presented in a written report and an oral presentation. The project groups also read and comment on each others' work (in writing and orally) (peer review). The individual part includes a home exam examining the key concepts and an individual reflection on a course topic. The reported grade (including an individual seminar grade) and the grade of the individual reflection generate the course grade (provided that the other mandatory course components, i.e. the project plan, the draft project report, the written and oral peer review and the project presentation are all approved). This year, the projects were conducted in groups of 4 students due to a large increase in students (+25%) compared to the previous year.

This year, some assignments were either reduced or removed to provide a better alignment of the course in terms of workload and time management.

A self-study module on scientific writing was introduced to support the group work.

4. Students' workload

Are the students working to the expected extent in relation to the course credits? If there is a significant difference from the expected, what can be the reason?

Based on the LEQ answers, the students' workload varies depending on the student. Half of the students answering the survey have worked more than the intended hours, while half have worked far less. The fact that there are few scheduled teaching activities (only course introduction, method seminar, supervision and final presentations) and the students themselves have a great own responsibility to plan their own work probably has an impact on the time spent. The number of students per group being a bit higher this year may also have contributed to a smaller workload for the individual students in some cases.

5. Students' results on the course

How have the students succeeded in the course? If there is a significant difference compared to previous course offerings, what can be the reason?

Overall, the students performed well this year, with approximately half of the students receiving higher grades on the scale. The project part of the course account for about half of the grade, while the individual parts represent the other half.

6. Students' answers to open questions

What does students say in response to the open questions?

The students are generally appreciative of the course and its content. They appreciate the company presentations and the opportunity to ask questions and discuss directly with company representatives. The diversity of course activities (e.g. seminars, group assignments, class discussions) enabled them to learn in different ways. The students emphasize the importance of planning their own work throughout the course and not to procrastinate. The struggles in some groups on different levels of knowledge and ambition levels were a reoccurring concern.

7. Summary of students' opinions

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

The students are generally appreciative of the course and its content, especially the link between theory and practice. The different learning activities provided a good balance in the course but some more seminars and/or discussions would have been appreciated. The final seminar was described as very rewarding by the students.

The guest lectures and the possibility to speak directly to the company representatives were very appreciated.

The final deadlines are within a few weeks at the end of the course and concerns about this were reflected upon from a time management perspective. The hours the students put into the course varied a lot, which depended on both ambition level and previous knowledge.

The main concern is the different initial knowledge levels, in terms of course content but also in scientific writing. The sense of having to teach other students basics in scientific writing took away time from focusing on the project content.

8. 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 with regard to the changes implemented since the last course offering.

The students were generally satisfied with the course. The main concern is the different initial knowledge levels, in terms of course content but also in scientific writing, despite adding a self-study module for this.

The course provides theory and concepts, as well as an applied perspective in terms of analysis of sustainability reports and guest lectures. The students very much appreciated the link between concepts and practice and the possibility of discussing directly with the companies.

9. 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 a significant difference in experience between:

- students identifying as female and male?
- International and national students?
- students with or without disabilities?

The students come from different backgrounds and Master programs and this creates challenges to adjust the course to fit everyone. Initial self-study modules are available for students who feel they need additional support, while other students from programs with a sustainability focus sometimes experience overlap from other courses on parts of the conceptual lectures. Furthermore, some of the international students lack basic training in scientific writing, causing issues in group work.

10. Prioritized course development

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

- Prerequisite on basic environmental knowledge for 2024, to ensure the initial knowledge levels. This is an action to mitigate the different knowledge levels for students when the course starts since this is the leading cause of problems in the project groups.
- Further adjustment of assignments of the duration of the course for better time management and workload.
- Adding self-study module of project management and scientific writing to ensure appropriate level in project work.
- Adding a project contract to help to ensure and create awareness of the contribution and responsibility of each project member.

11. Other information you want to share