

Evaluation Regulations for Studies and Teaching of RWTH Aachen University

Dated March 18, 2019

Please note: This publication is an English translation. Only the German original of these regulations as published in the Official Announcements of RWTH Aachen University (“Amtliche Bekanntmachungen”) is legally binding.

Based on § 2 (4) and § 7 (2) of the Higher Education Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz; HG) in the version of the announcement dated September 16, 2014 (Law and Official Gazette of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia p. 547), most recently amended by Art. 3 of the Act to Ensure the Accreditation of Study Programs in North Rhine-Westphalia dated October 17, 2017 (Law and Official Gazette NRW p. 806), RWTH Aachen University has issued the following regulations:

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§ 1 Scope of Application

- (1) These regulations apply to all faculties and central academic and other institutions of RWTH Aachen University and their undergraduate and graduate degree programs.
- (2) It regulates the implementation of evaluation procedures in the area of teaching and learning at RWTH. The individual evaluation procedures: Annual Review, Course of Study Evaluation, Teaching Services Evaluation, and Teaching Round Table are named in the Quality Management in Teaching concept and are continuously reviewed by the University. If a change appears necessary, a corresponding adjustment of the respective procedure will be made after consultation with the faculties and the committees of the University and thus an amendment of the current regulations for the implementation of evaluation procedures will be implemented.
- (3) The faculties may make supplementary regulations as long as they do not contradict these regulations. These must be reported to the Senate.

§ 2 Quality Objectives

Quality Management in Teaching has quality objectives from five areas (students, staff, studies, structure, and system), which are operationalized by means of criteria, key figures, and indicators. These are reviewed as part of the evaluation procedures and are also made available to the faculties/department/divisions and student representatives in an appropriate form at any time for the purpose of implementing quality assurance.

§ 3 Responsibilities

- (1) The Rectorate is responsible for quality management in teaching and learning and thus in particular for the evaluation procedures at the entire University in accordance with §7 HG. With the help of Central University Administration (ZHV), it supports the faculties in carrying out evaluation procedures by providing the necessary data and information. The Rectorate is responsible for reviewing measures based on the recommendations of the Rectorate Commission for Quality Management in Teaching (RKL) and the Senate. The Rectorate is responsible for deciding on the internal University accreditation (certification) of the study program. In the event of an inconsistent vote, a meeting shall be held with the Senate Council of Elders to reach a unified decision.
- (2) The Vice-Rector for Teaching is involved in particular by participating in the audit of the course of study evaluation according to §6 and chairs the annual meeting according to §5 as well as the Teaching Round Table on teaching according to §8.
- (3) The Senate appoints internal reviewers for the program evaluation audit from among the professors, academic staff, and students. They have the right to veto the appointment of external reviewers or the right to propose external reviewers if the faculty does not appoint them. After referral to the RKL, it also makes a recommendation as to whether the program can be certified.

- (4) The RKL reviews and recommends whether the measures adopted in the catalog of measures are appropriate to compensate for any weaknesses in the program identified during the evaluation process and prepares the Senate's certification recommendation.
- (5) At the faculty level, the Dean is responsible for the evaluation procedures. This applies to all evaluation procedures mentioned in these regulations. The Dean may delegate individual duties to the Dean of Academic Affairs. Together with the Dean, he or she participates in the annual meetings, heads the evaluation project group in accordance with §3 (6), or appoints an authorized person for this task. Both are involved in the evaluation of teaching services according to §7 and in the Teaching Round Table according to §8 or are represented by corresponding functionaries of other faculties. The faculties are encouraged to appoint officers or committees to assist in these tasks.
- (6) The Evaluation Project Group, consisting of instructors and students, is appointed by the Faculty Council. The group size is up to the faculties, but ten people are recommended, at least three of whom should be students. It addresses the current state and goals of the program, reflects on the mandatory metrics and indicators, and designs actions for identified weaknesses and deviations. It prepares the evaluation report as well as the catalog of measures.

§ 4

Evaluation Procedures and Instruments

The following four evaluation procedures are used at RWTH: Annual Review, Course of Study Evaluation, Teaching Services Evaluation, and Teaching Round Table (see § 5-§ 8). In order to obtain a systematic data basis for the evaluation system, quantitative data from University statistics are used on the one hand. In addition, RWTH uses quality assurance tools that provide qualitative data throughout the Student Life Cycle (see §9-§14). A detailed description of the individual evaluation procedures and instruments can be found in the Teaching and Learning Process Portal at RWTH.

§ 5

Annual Review

- (1) In order to jointly analyze and increase the quality of teaching, quantitative and qualitative data from the area of teaching are discussed each year first between University management and student representatives and then between University management and faculty representatives. A separate annual meeting is held for the teaching profession with additional participation from the RWTH Teacher Training Center. The goal of the annual meetings is to derive a catalog of measures jointly developed with all groups involved in teaching from the data material provided as well as to review the implementation of measures from the previous annual meetings or the Course of Study Evaluation.
- (2) At RWTH, the annual meetings are coordinated by the ZHV. It compiles the data material that serves as the basis for the annual talks.
- (3) The data is prepared in a suitable form. They consist of, e.g., attrition/graduation rates, credit point attainment, pass rates, Bachelor's to Master's transition rates, and qualitative data from the Student Course Evaluation and Graduate Survey. In addition, pre-established focus topics and faculty-specific topics are discussed.
- (4) The results of the annual meetings are presented to the Faculty Council of the participating faculties. A summary of the results is presented in the Rectorate by the Vice-Rector for Teaching and made available in an appropriate form.

§ 6 Program Evaluation

- (1) The program evaluation offers both students and academic staff (professors and non-professorial academic staff) the opportunity to participate in the further development of the program by analyzing its current state. A defining goal of program evaluation is to foster discussion among faculty and students in the evaluation project group, which enables the faculty/department/division to identify and reflect on its own strengths and weaknesses as well as draw conclusions. The respective faculty submits an evaluation report and a list of measures to address the identified weaknesses. As part of the preparation of the evaluation report, a review and definition of the goals of a faculty/department/division with regard to the study programs to be evaluated as well as a critical reflection of obligatory key figures and indicators takes place. The procedure also verifies compliance with formal external requirements and frameworks, such as those of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Accreditation Council.
- (2) The faculty is responsible for conducting the program evaluation. The faculty is supported by the ZHV. To assess whether the formulated measures are suitable for compensating for any weaknesses identified, internal and external experts from the University are involved via an audit. In order to assess whether formal external requirements and frameworks are met, a review by the ZHV takes place prior to the audit.
- (3) The coordination of teaching degree programs is carried out in coordination with the Teacher Training Center with the participation of the relevant faculties/departments/divisions, which also receives the documents available to the expert group and has the right to submit a statement prior to the inspection and to participate in the inspection. The Ministry of Schools and Education must also be involved in the teaching-related procedures in accordance with the applicable regulations.
- (4) The procedure is carried out approximately every six years and extends in each case over a period of approximately three semesters.
- (5) The catalog of measures adopted by the Rectorate shall be published. The fulfillment of the defined measures is reviewed in the annual meetings of the Vice-Rector for Teaching and Learning with the faculty heads and the student representatives.

§ 7 Evaluation of Teaching Services

- (1) The Evaluation of Teaching Services is a survey of the quality of teaching services. It aims to evaluate all units that are secondarily involved in teaching through the service they provide, such as the Central Examination Office, International Office, Center for Learning and Teaching Services, and the Library.
- (2) A standardized survey of faculty and student satisfaction with instructional services will be conducted at least every six years.
- (3) The results are published and addressed in the other procedures, especially in the Teaching Round Table (see §8). Measures from the evaluation are fed into the existing catalogs of measures.

§ 8 Teaching Round Table

- (1) With the Teaching Round Table, in which representatives of the faculties and the students participate, the idea of the course evaluation and the annual discussions is transferred to the area of the teaching service units in order to continuously improve general study conditions in addition to teaching. The meetings of the Teaching Round Table take place as moderated discussions in which strengths and weaknesses of service units for teaching, such as the Examination Office, International Office, Center for Learning and Teaching Services, Library, etc., are identified and measures for improvement are developed. These measures are fed into the catalog of measures in the other evaluation processes. In addition, dovetailing with the other procedures is ensured by the fact that the measures from the annual interviews and the study program evaluation are taken up in this framework and discussed with the stakeholders involved.
- (2) The moderated discussions are initiated by the Vice-Rector for Teaching and Learning. A neutral host from RWTH will be in charge of the discussion. The heads of the service units involved in teaching take part in the discussion.
- (3) Two moderated discussions take place each winter semester according to an annually determined schedule. Representatives of the teaching service units and of academic staff, who are to be nominated by the faculties, take part in an interview. Representatives of the teaching service units and representatives to be nominated by the students take part in the other interview. If needed, a separate interview will be offered in the teaching department. After about 6 years, the cycle repeats. On an annual cycle, all teaching service units must submit a statement on the agreed measures as well as the new measures from the ongoing course evaluations and annual reviews.
- (4) The fulfillment of the defined measures is reviewed in the annual meetings of the Vice-Rector for Teaching and Learning with the faculty heads and the student representatives. A summary of the results is presented in the Rectorate by the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs.

§ 9 First Term Survey

- (1) The first term survey is a feedback tool for program directors, faculty, students, and instructors. It extends to all Bachelor's degree programs. In particular, it serves to gain

knowledge about the situation and first impressions of first-year students with regard to the service and advising offers as well as the support on the part of the lecturers.

- (2) First-year students should be surveyed every three years, if possible. The timing of the survey should typically be in early January to ensure that students have had their first experience with the different RWTH service units.
- (3) The results are incorporated into the teaching quality management system and are published in anonymous form on the University website.

§ 10 Student Course Evaluation

- (1) Student course evaluations are used to ensure and improve the quality and efficiency of individual courses. Its primary goal is to constantly review the teaching and learning methods practiced and to provide individual instructors with constructive feedback on courses from the perspective of participating students. The teachers receive hints and assessments, on the basis of which they are required to make modifications on their own responsibility at short notice. Students evaluate the quality of teaching across the board on a semester-by-semester basis, giving grades to their courses and instructors.
- (2) At RWTH, the student course evaluation is coordinated with the help of the ZHV. The faculties are responsible for conducting the surveys and supporting them along with the instructors. Academic staff members who do not teach independently may choose to participate in the Student Course Evaluation under their own name or under the name of the responsible professor.
- (3) All instructors at RWTH take part in the student course evaluation for every course in every semester, provided that the number of course participants does not fall below ten. If the response rate is less than five, no evaluation may take place for data protection reasons. For courses smaller than ten persons, it is recommended that student evaluation of the course be conducted in some other appropriate manner. Student course evaluation is also not recommended for the lecture series type of event with more than two instructors in a semester, but rather evaluation should be conducted in another appropriate form, such as a face-to-face meeting or discussion in the virtual learning space. For courses with at least two lecturers, in which the teaching portion clearly exceeds the extent of a lecture series, an individual evaluation of the teaching performance can be carried out upon request and (in the case of academic staff) after approval by the lecturer(s).

- (4) When the evaluation results are available, the teachers have the right to submit a statement on their own evaluation to the Dean of Academic Affairs. Instructors should discuss the results with students. Individual evaluations are published internally. Aggregated, anonymized overall evaluations of individual event types of a faculty/department/division are published externally. Faculty managers receive a semi-annual overview of course evaluation results at their department, specifically a listing of professors who have not evaluated at least one course and courses or instructors who have been rated lower than three. The faculty heads should contact the corresponding professors and discuss with them possible measures to improve the quality in the courses. A statement by the faculty managers to the ZHV should be made within ten weeks. Students can view the results of the courses they have evaluated online without the free text comments. Student councils can view the results of courses in their faculty/department/division online without the free text comments.

§ 11

Module and Examination Survey

- (1) The Module and Examination Survey is designed to determine how the various courses within a module are organized and how high the subjective workload in a module is. In addition, the survey is intended to provide information on the organization of module examinations, examination preparation, and the adequacy of examinations. The implementation of the module and examination survey is conducted at regular intervals in alignment with the upcoming course of study evaluation.
- (2) The survey is conducted during the examination period of each semester, namely one day after the end of the examination period, if possible before the grades are announced.
- (3) Once the assessment results are available, they are made available to the Deans of Academic Affairs and the module representatives. Students can view the results of the modules or exams that they have assessed online. The module chairperson has the right to evaluate the results and may submit an opinion to the Dean of Academic Affairs.

§ 12

Pass Rates

- (1) The primary purpose of determining pass rates is to regularly review the teaching and examination methods practiced and to provide feedback to individual instructors on students' poorer exam performance.
- (2) Exams with low pass or low participation rates (<50%) will be identified on a semi-annual basis after the end of each semester (May/November).
- (3) Faculty leaders receive a semi-annual summary of statistical examination data on their faculty's pass and participation rates. The corresponding examiners are provided with their statistical examination data on the pass and participation rates according to Para. 2 for control, so that they can make concepts for the improvement of the rates and general examination conditions.

§ 13

Student Survey

- (1) The student survey aims to obtain information on the organization of studies and the quality of teaching, on the requirements and difficulties encountered during studies, on the support

and advice provided by lecturers, as well as on the equipment and services offered by RWTH. It is aimed at all students at RWTH.

- (2) All students enrolled in a Bachelor's or Master's degree program and those enrolled in the Medicine state examination program at RWTH Aachen University are surveyed. The survey takes place no later than every third winter semester.
- (3) The results are incorporated into the teaching quality management system and are published anonymously in an appropriate form.

§ 14 Graduate Survey

- (1) The graduate survey serves to gain information about assessments and experiences during studies and their significance for the later profession, in order to be able to continuously adapt the profile of university education to the requirements of the economy.
- (2) The graduate survey is conducted annually and is aimed at all those who graduated from RWTH approximately 1 ½ years ago. Doctoral graduates are not included.
- (3) The results are incorporated into the teaching quality management system and are published anonymously in an appropriate form. Detailed results reports are published internally, anonymized, and simple results reports are published externally.

§ 15 Documentation and Publication

The results from the quality assessment procedures are documented in writing and published: Unless otherwise regulated, "internal" in the following information means that the documents can only be viewed internally at the University and at most by the students of the respective degree program and the academic staff of the involved faculties/departments/divisions as well as by the responsible student representatives and the members of the responsible faculty or University committees. As a general rule, documents containing information about academic staff who are not teaching independently may only be passed on with their explicit consent, otherwise they must be anonymized before being passed on. "External" in this context means that the records are made available to all members and affiliates of the University. The Vice-Rector for Teaching and Learning can generally view the results from the evaluation procedures.

- **Annual Meeting:**
 1. FactSheet¹ / Appendix (internal)
 2. Catalog of measures (external)
 3. Integration of the measures from the annual review into the catalog of measures of the Course of Study Evaluation (external)
 4. Integration of results into the data cockpit² (internal)
 5. Presentation of an overall summary of the results to the Rectorate (internal)
 6. Publication of an overall results report on the website of RWTH Aachen University (external)

- **Course of Study Evaluation:**
 1. Evaluation report (internal)
 2. Catalog of measures (external)
 3. Integration of the measures from the Course of Study Evaluation into the catalog of measures of the annual review (external)
 4. Integration of results into the data cockpit (internal)

- **Evaluation of Teaching Services:**
 1. Result report (external)
 2. Integration of results into the data cockpit (internal)

- **Teaching Round Table:**
 1. Catalog of measures (internal)
 2. Integration of results into the data cockpit (internal)
 3. Presentation of an overall summary of the results to the Rectorate (internal)
 4. Publication of an overall results report on the website of RWTH Aachen University (external)

- **First Term Survey:**
 1. Overall evaluations across degree programs or at the faculty level (internal)
 2. Aggregated, anonymized overall evaluations of the University (external)
 3. Integration of the measures from the first-semester survey into the catalog of measures for program evaluation (external)
 4. Integration of results into the data cockpit (internal)

¹ The FactSheet is a short, aggregated, and anonymized compilation of quantitative data from University statistics and qualitative data from quality management instruments; it only consists of a few pages. These include, for example, transition rates from Bachelor's to Master's programs, course progression and graduation rates, credit point attainment, average grades of theses, degrees, as well as from student course evaluations and results from the graduate survey.

² The data cockpit is a role- and rights-controlled web-based tool through which all evaluation procedures can be viewed, edited and carried out electronically, and QM activities can be documented. RWTH basic data (number of students, graduates, etc.) can be queried and specific reports on the evaluation data (evaluation results of surveys, graduation, study progress and transition rates, credit point attainment, etc.) can be called up in detailed and interactive form.

- **Student Course Evaluation**

1. Individual evaluations (internal)
2. Aggregated, anonymized overall evaluations of individual event types of a faculty or department/division. (External company)
3. Integration of the measures from the student course evaluation into the catalog of measures of the course evaluation (external)
4. Integration of results into the data cockpit (internal)

- **Module and Examination Survey:**

1. Individual evaluations (internal)
2. Aggregated, anonymized overall evaluations of a faculty or department/division. (External company)
3. Integration of the measures from the module and examination survey into the catalog of measures of the study program evaluation (external)
4. Integration of results into the data cockpit (internal)

- **Pass rates:**

1. Individual evaluation of the examinations at the faculty level (internal)
2. Integration of results into the data cockpit (internal)
3. Presentation of pass rates following each winter and summer semester in the Rectorate (internal)

- **Student Survey:**

1. Overall evaluations across degree programs or at the faculty level (internal)
2. Aggregated, anonymized overall evaluations of the University (external)
3. Integration of the measures from the student survey into the catalog of measures of the program evaluation (external)
4. Integration of results into the data cockpit (internal)

- **Graduate Survey:**

1. Overall evaluations across study programs or faculty level (internal)
2. anonymized result reports (external)
3. Individual evaluations in the FactSheet (internal)
4. Integration of the measures from the graduate survey into the catalog of measures of the study program evaluation (external)
5. Integration of results into the data cockpit (internal)

§ 16 Data Protection

- (1) The regulations of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in conjunction with the NRW Data Protection Act apply.
- (2) The data protection officer of RWTH is responsible for monitoring compliance with data protection regulations in accordance with Art. 39 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

- (3) The Dean or the Dean of Academic Affairs is responsible for compliance with data protection regulations at the faculty level.
- (4) All members and affiliates of RWTH who handle personal data or data relating to persons within the scope of these regulations are obliged to comply with the provisions of data protection law in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- (5) Personal data of members and relatives of RWTH may only be collected, processed and stored insofar as this is necessary for the implementation of evaluation procedures. In this case, the scope must be limited to what is necessary for the performance of the task and it must be ensured that the data are not used for purposes other than the performance of the relevant surveys and are not accessible outside the group of persons involved in the performance of evaluation procedures. In cases of conflict, the Rectorate shall decide after receiving the opinion of the data protection officer.
- (6) Personal data shall be anonymized as early as the evaluation procedure permits. The processing of personal data that have been collected is carried out separately from other administrative procedures.
- (7) Personal data may be processed for the purposes of evaluation procedures, depending on the procedure. Information on this can be found in the respective directories of processing activities and the procedural documentation.
- (8) Upon request, the Dean or the Dean of Academic Affairs shall provide information on the personal data stored about the affected person in the context of the evaluation procedures; in this context, the support of the ZHV may be requested. The personal data must be deleted as soon as it is no longer required for the purpose of the evaluation procedure, but at the latest after six years.
- (9) The members of the committees and their representatives are obligated to maintain professional discretion. Insofar as they are not members of the public service, the chair of the respective committee must see to it that they commit themselves to confidentiality.

§ 17
Entry Into Force

These regulations come into force as an Official Announcement of RWTH on the day following their publication. At the same time, the Evaluation Regulations of RWTH dated February 17, 2010 (Official Announcements of RWTH (No. 2010/014, pp. 1- 19) shall cease to be in force.

Issued based on the decision of the Senate dated February 7, 2019.

Rector
of RWTH
Aachen University

Aachen,
dated

March 18, 2019

sgd. Rüdiger

Univ.-Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Dr. h. c. mult. Rüdiger