Report on the basis of evaluations tourism Aalborg Spring 2014

Course evaluations 8th semester
Out of 30 active 8th semester students (the number that took the 8th semester project exam), 24 students have completed at least some parts of the questionnaire. This means that non-response still exists, but is far less problematic than previously and results might generalize across the student population.

As for the POLICY course, last spring half the students spent between 4 and 6 hours a week on the course. This year half the students spent between 7 and 9 hours a week on the course. Last year, the coordinator was critical towards the discrepancies between how much time students spent on the course and what they are expected to spend on a 5 ECTS course. The increase in student work seems to be a major improvement.

The students find both the level and extent of the course appropriate. Most students are positive in their evaluations of different issues. However, one thing that might warrant attention is that 1/3 of the students are indifferent towards the statement on learning outcomes; ¼ are indifferent toward the statement on course materials and 29% are indifferent towards the statement on dissemination (‘formidling’). One thing that is very positive this spring is that students’ qualitative statements indicate that they see and understand why policy is an important issue within tourism.

As for the EXPERIENCES and COMMUNICATION course, last year more than half the students spent 4 to 6 hours a week on the course. This year, only 30% of students spent between 4 and 6 hours, whereas 50% of the students spent 7 to 9 hours a week on the course. Again, this is a major improvement. 20% of the students find the level of the course too low (which could relate to statements indicating that some students already have experience with the subject area) and 15% find the extent too small. Again, students are generally positive in their evaluations of different issues. However, 25% are indifferent towards the statement on learning outcomes and 30% are indifferent towards the statements on course material and dissemination. Compared to last year, there are far less comments on the course covering too many topics and thus lacking depth. In the qualitative comments, students praise Karina Smed’s teaching and point to double lectures as something they dislike.

As for the course CHANGE MANAGEMENT, last year students spend more time on this course than on the others. This year, 47% of the students spent 7-9 hours, 21% spent 4-6 hours and 26% spent 1-3 hours. There are more positive and less indifferent answers in regard to learning outcome, course material and dissemination for this course (11%, 21%, 16% respectively) and students give a series of positive comments about the teacher. However, one thing that seems to deserve further attention is the issue of active participation. A few students make comments such as passing by participation was “totally demotivating. It made 90% of the people just attend to pass” and “maybe there should be some midterm or case study or anything to make students actually follow the class and participate in it rather than just sit there”. Obviously, that some students might define exams in the form of active participation as ‘just sit there’ is problematic. Therefore, the coordinator recommends that the study board discusses what is actually meant by active participation.

As previously, students have the opportunity to follow the APPLIED METHODOLOGY. Last semester only 9 students followed the course (which was a very low number given that 18 new students started in February). Of the 38 students that started in September 2013, 14 followed the course. Although there is no exam activity orECTS in this course for tourism students, half the students spend 1-3 hours a week on this course; 25% spent 4-6 hours; and 25% spent 7-9 hours. Furthermore, students that followed the course were generally positive (with indifference towards learning outcome, material and dissemination being 8, 17 and 17% respectively). As it is cost-free for AAU to let tourism students follow this course, the coordinator recommends that we continue to give tourism students this opportunity also after we implement the new methodology course on the 7th semester.

As for the non-course INNOVATION, last year students spent considerably less time on this activity than the 80 hours they were expected to; 32% stated that they did not have a good learning outcome; students were not too
keen on the learning materials and they voiced criticism in regard to the group (41 students) being too large for such activities; that lack of ECTS credits lowered motivation significantly (comments such as 'it was just about getting over and done with this thing'); that many (of the other) students didn't get involved and didn't do 'their' jobs; that the coordinator became more active during the process than initially suggested; and that the destination was a very bad choice (too cold, no tourists this time of year, they already worked on different activities and innovative ideas etc.). As a result, the coordinator recommended that the entire set-up had to be reconsidered critically. Subsequently, innovation case-work was discussed at a meeting in June and a group was assigned to the task.

This year, the innovation non-course was completely different from previously and included a series of student-active lectures; two solutions camps hosted by Matchmaking and participation in WOFIE. How many hours students have spent on the activity varies considerably: With 26% of students spending 1-3 hours a week and 53% of students spending 7-9 hours a week. Students are generally positive towards the statements on learning outcomes, course materials and dissemination (with 11% being indifferent). Furthermore, apart from 5 comments on 'too few classes'; 'would have liked more lessons'; 'more lectures'; 'more classes' and 'make it longer', all qualitative statements made by students are positive. Therefore, the coordinator recommends that we in 2015 try to continue improving the format used this spring. Finally, as the learning outcomes from this non-course should be actively used when doing semester projects, the coordinator has followed up on the grading of 8th semester projects.

For the 30 students that did the 8th semester project exam, the grade average was 7.76. No students failed the exam. However, it is worth noticing that the grades are very far from a normal distribution (which was the long-term goal when the 7 point grading scale was introduced) as only 3 students got the grade 7 whereas grades below 7 (4 students got 2 and 6 students got 4) and grades over 7 (11 students got 10 and 6 students got 12) are over-represented. The coordinator finds that it is crucial that the study board continues to monitor grades and tries to establish whether segmentation of students into (a) strong performing students and (b) below-average performing students only characterizes this exam or whether it might be a more general trend.

**Evaluations of supervision and project work**

Unfortunately, it is rather difficult to see directly from the EXCEL sheet which evaluations relate to master thesis supervision and which to supervision of 8th semester projects. In total, 16 students have evaluated supervisors. However, 30 8th semester students and 20 thesis students had supervision this spring. Therefore, it seems critical that we, again, inform students that it is crucial that they also complete this evaluation form. Evaluations are generally positive, but one thing that perhaps deserves attention is that a few students argue that evaluations of supervision should take place after the exam.

**Semester evaluations, both 8th and 10th semester**

It is really problematic to draw any conclusions from the results of this survey as 27 students filled out the very first part of the questionnaire (21 8th semester students and 6 thesis students), thereafter number of respondents quickly drops to 13 and 4 students answered the last questions. Part of the explanation for this could be that some questions are for 8th semester students only and others are for thesis students only. Unfortunately, in the format results are listed it is impossible to see exactly which student group answered which questions. What can be derived from this survey is that 12 8th semester students and 5 thesis students answered the questions pertaining to project work. 41% of these students are indifferent towards the group formation process; but as 35% of the students choose to work alone this is hardly surprising. Finally, all students that chose to work in groups were satisfied with group collaborations.

7th, 8th and 10th semester coordinator, tourism, Aalborg
Bodil Stilling Blichfeldt