

Procedure for Periodic Assessment of University Minors

1. Introduction

Over the past years the amount of available Minors has grown organically. An improved quality assurance system for Minors is therefore required at the institutional level. For this reason, a periodic assessment system of new University Minors has been included in the University Minors Policy, adopted on 31 October 2023. Although the blueprint of this assessment system has already been laid out in the new policy, the procedure for the Periodic Assessment of Minors has not been fleshed out yet. We will do so in this memorandum.

2. Blueprint of the periodic assessment

In principle, a University Minor is offered for a period of at least six years, analogous to the degree programme accreditations. After three years, the responsible faculty conducts an interim evaluation and adjustments may be made. After five years, a final evaluation will be conducted in order to make an informed decision about continuing the University Minor. Based on this evaluation, the Board of the University, together with the responsible faculty, decides whether the University Minor will be continued. University Minors may be extended for six years at a time. Existing University Minors will be assessed in stages and assigned a term.

3. How Minors are assessed: the content of the evaluation

The faculties submit an interim and a final evaluation to the Minor coordinator of the University Minors they are responsible for. The central Minor coordinator keeps a record of which Minors should be assessed and requests the responsible faculty to conduct the evaluations. The evaluations will be conducted in the period the Minor is offered and shortly after its preliminary termination date, between April and, at the latest, 1 September.

Both the interim and the final evaluation should include the following components:

1. A short quantitative analysis of the Minor
2. An evaluation among students and teachers of the Minor
3. An evaluation of the content and the quality of teaching in the Minor in terms of learning outcomes and modes of teaching and assessment.

For the final evaluation, the responsible faculty is also requested to reflect on the more strategic themes concerning Minors:

4. The position of the Minor within the complete set of Minors offered and the position of the Minor with regard to the UG's strategy.

These components will be further elaborated below.

3.1 A quantitative analysis of the Minor

In particular, the short quantitative analysis comprises data on numbers of Minor students (registration, participation), number of obtained ECTS, number of students that passed the entire Minor, pass rates, financial figures and/or efficiency numbers, etc. In short, all quantitative information that can shed a light on the successful execution of the Minor. This information can relate to the most recent year as well as previous years. The goal of the quantitative analysis is to gain a substantiated insight into the results and financial efficiency of the Minor.

A general rule for efficient teaching is to have a student number of at least 20. Many smaller Minors are often taught as part of already existing Bachelor course units so this criterion is only relevant when all teaching or substantial parts thereof are only offered for the Minor.

3.2 An evaluation among students and staff

The voices of students and staff are an essential component of the evaluation report of the University Minors. It is important to have an understanding of how the students assess the Minor. Ideally, the Minor course units are assessed separately and the Minor as a whole as well. This can be done through, for example, course evaluations, by conducting a short survey after the Minor is concluded, or by making a report of the discussions held by a focus group. Lecturers may also have a clear opinion on the Minor and its execution. Holding an evaluation meeting with core lecturers of the Minor can provide insight into the quality of the Minor and its execution.

3.3 An evaluation of the content and quality of the Minor

In both the interim and final evaluation, the responsible faculty is also requested to provide a brief evaluation of the quality of the Minor in terms of learning outcomes and modes of teaching and assessment. When designing courses, the mutual alignment between learning outcomes and modes of teaching and assessment is crucial. This is also known as constructive alignment. To achieve this, the most important questions are: Are the described learning outcomes—what the student should be able to do and know after passing the Minor—still up to date? Do the modes of teaching still fit the learning outcomes? Does the mode of assessment fit the learning outcomes and the modes of teaching?

3.4 Position of the minor within the complete set of Minors offered and with regard to the UG's strategy.

Only for the final evaluation the responsible faculty is requested to also reflect on the position of the Minor within the complete set of Minors offered and the position of the Minor with regard to the UG's strategy.

The Minor could supplement the Minors offered in terms of content—there are few to no Minors in this area— and in terms of form: the use of innovative teaching and/or assessment methods, for example collaboration between various disciplines or the merging of different new modes of teaching. Minors can align with the UG vision by, for example, using modes of teaching that align with the UG vision on teaching through active learning. If the content of the Minor aligns with one of the themes of the UG Schools, it can also contribute to the UG's strategic goals.

4. How Minors are assessed: the assessment process

A Minor is offered for six years, which means that the final evaluation serves as input for the decision whether or not to extend this period. The interim evaluation serves as input for possible adjustments to the Minor. The procedure for the assessment of the interim and final evaluation is outlined below.

4.1 Interim evaluation

The responsible faculty submits the interim evaluation report to the central Minor coordinator. The central Minor Coordinator puts the report on the agenda of the University Committee for Education (UCO). The UCO discusses the report and draws up a list of points for improvement, if any. Based on the report and the UCO's meeting, the Minor coordinator draws up an assessment report including recommendations, if any. This assessment report is submitted to the responsible faculty.

4.2 Final evaluation

The responsible faculty submits the final evaluation report to the central Minor coordinator. The central Minor Coordinator puts the report on the agenda of the UCO. The UCO discusses the report and assesses whether the Minor can be offered for another six years or whether it is desirable that the Minor is phased out, based on three components: 1) the quantitative analysis, including an efficiency analysis, 2) the evaluation among teachers and students, and 3) the evaluation of the content and quality of the teaching in the Minor.

Based on the report and the UCO's meeting, the Minor coordinator draws up an assessment report that includes the UCO's advice regarding the continuation of the Minor. This report is put on the agenda of the Education Council that will issue an advice on the continuation of the Minor based on

the position of the Minor within the complete set of Minors offered and the position of the Minor in relation to the UG's strategy. In its decision to continue or discontinue the Minor, the Education Council will also consider the financial and efficiency implications of the Minor within the complete set of Minors offered. The Minor coordinator then draws up a final assessment report that comprises an advice about the continuation of the Minor based on the discussions held by the UCO and the Education Council. The Minor coordinator shares this final report with the responsible faculty and the Board of the University (CvB).

4.3 Decision

The approved Minor Policy states that the Board of the University, together with the responsible faculty, makes a decision on the continuation of a University Minor based on the submitted final assessment report.

In practice, this means that if the responsible faculty and the CvB agree about the continuation or discontinuation of a Minor, the final report will be approved during a CvB meeting and a decision can be made about the continuation of the Minor.

If the responsible faculty and the CvB disagree about the continuation or discontinuation of the Minor, the CvB will approve the final report and put the continuation of the Minor on the agenda of the next Administrative Meeting (BO) with the faculty. During this Administrative Meeting, the arguments for and against continuing the Minor will be discussed, after which the CvB will make the decision whether or not to continue the Minor.