



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

MEDFARM 2020/1402

Evaluation Report

Master's Programme in Forensic Science

Introduction

This evaluation report covers the evaluation of the Master's Programme in Forensic Science, 120 credits, at Uppsala University.

Freestanding courses included in this evaluation are:

- Advanced Course in Immunology, Genetics and Pathology, 15 and 30 credits
- Experimental Immunology, Genetics and Pathology, 7.5 and 15 credits

Strengths and Areas for Development

The statement by the evaluation board describes the Master's Programme in Forensic Science at Uppsala University principal strength being the great commitment and interest of the programme director, teachers and students and that expected learning objectives are reached. The evaluation board also finds that a majority of those graduating from the programme find employment in workplaces that are very relevant to the contents of the programme, which suggests that their knowledge and experience within forensic science are in line with the requirements of the labour market.

In a final summary, the evaluation board states that the programme “has several qualities justifying marketing it as a flagship Master's programme at Uppsala University”.

The evaluation board suggests several possible improvements and development areas. In their report, the evaluators have noted both strengths and weaknesses in the 11 aspects of quality that are included in the self-evaluation, and the common faculty evaluator has submitted comments that are common to all Master's programmes that have been evaluated within the disciplinary domain.

Planned measures and development efforts during 2022 to 2027

The sustainability of the programme

The evaluation board and the faculty level evaluator stress that the sustainability of the programme in terms of responsibility and management is a weakness. To deal with this we are planning to transfer the course leadership of several courses, e.g. degree projects and a new project course, to other teachers in the department. The transfer of responsibility for these has already been initiated and will have been completed by Spring 2024. All courses have two examiners, and responsibility for the course can to a greater extent be divided between the examiners. An important measure for improved sustainability is the planned introduction of the role of assistant programme

director. An assistant programme director should be familiar with the management of the programme to such an extent that a change-over of responsibility can take place smoothly. An assistant programme director will have been selected and introduced by the end of 2025.

Course evaluations

The response rate for evaluations of courses and the programme is low and needs to be increased for the students to have influence over their education. One of our planned measures is to include scheduled time in TimeEdit for the course evaluation. In addition, formative evaluations using Mentimeters, Kahoot and half-way course discussions will be tested and evaluated. Course evaluations will also include some questions about the whole programme in order to achieve continual follow-up of the programme. We will further collect course evaluations and course reports from the two chemistry courses and the law course that are given by other departments. All course reports will be reported to the Master's Programme Committee (MPC). Our work on course evaluations will be ongoing and continuously evaluated until 2027.

International collaboration

The evaluation board points out that the programme could be strengthened by the establishment of collaborations or networks with other similar, or complementary, education programmes. We will approach the disciplinary domain's international office and the student section for assistance in identifying matching programmes for the development of new collaborations. Initially, partners may be sought via networks that are already established at Uppsala University, such as U4, Matariki, Guild and ENLIGHT. Collaboration might involve guest lectures via Zoom, study visits and student as well as staff exchanges. This work will begin during 2023 and be continually evaluated until 2027.

Increased information

The evaluation board has suggested that the information about the programme and further career possibilities for potential and newly admitted students could be improved. We intend to utilise the alumni network more than before to provide increased information for new students. One group of alumni has already initiated a conference (ConForense, planned to be annual) for former students and those currently enrolled. The agenda for 2021 included lectures in various subjects and presentations of former students' doctoral projects or current employments. To provide more information about career possibilities we have recently had a collaboration with the HR department of the Swedish Police. This has led to an information meeting for students who can apply for a traineeship for forensic crime scene investigators with police authority. The Master's programmes have also been featured at the Uppsala Talent Fair (uppsalatalentfair.com). The MPC and the common study counsellor regularly produce and update a booklet on the Master's programmes which could be disseminated more widely. Work on increasing information has therefore already been started and we are continuing with further initiatives. We are planning continual follow-up of information measures until 2025.

Goals and progression

The evaluation board notes that the goals and learning outcomes of the education are taught and examined in an appropriate manner, which is of the utmost importance. However, both the evaluation board and our own self-evaluation stress that increased use of goal matrixes to estimate progression could enhance the quality of the teaching. This would give the students a better overview of the learning objectives of a course and an opportunity to observe their own development, learning process and progression. The programme already contains much feedback, delivered in the form of group discussions and peer reviews, but these elements could be expanded, as could the follow-up of lessons and seminars (before and after), to include questions designed to check that learning outcomes and progression are reached. Exam questions could also be set in the form of essay questions to a larger extent for a check on analytical knowledge and progression. Pedagogical issues and increased use of goal matrixes and progression check-ups will be discussed during the annual teachers' days provided by the department (IGP). These measures have already been introduced for some of the courses in the programme and implementation will continue and be recurrently evaluated until 2025.

Increased course choices

The evaluation board points out that it would be good to have an opportunity for deepening their knowledge in a self-selected subject for students with special interests in a specific subject. To provide such an opportunity we will extend the course offer by a new, elective project course of 15 credits during the period allotted to elective courses. The new course can be performed individually or within a research group, with or without elements of laboratory work, and will therefore also provide opportunities for additional practical training. As an aid to find a topic or degree project a list of degree projects carried out by previous students will be established and updated. We will also provide a list of other courses at UU and other universities that can be chosen during the elective period of the programme. These measures are intended as a guide and support for students when selecting courses or degree projects. In addition, more biostatistics will be included in the programme as additional lectures during 2022, but will also be available as an optional course. New courses are expected to have been introduced by 2026.

Summary of the Action Plan

Based on the improvements suggested in the report of the evaluation board and our own reflections arising from the self-evaluation the following action plan has been developed.

Actions and time plan to be implemented:

- Improve the sustainability of the programme in terms of course and programme responsibility (2022–2025).
- Increase the response rate for course and programme evaluations (2022–2027).
- Establish collaborations or networks with similar education programmes (2023–2027).
- Improve information about the programme for potential and newly admitted students (2022–2025).
- Increase the use of goal matrixes for evaluation of the progression in the teaching (2022–2025).
- Introduce a new project course and include more teaching of biostatistics (2023–2026).

Implementation and follow-up

The various measures will be implemented successively during 2022–2027 and we will follow up the outcomes of the measures annually, in connection with the annual teachers' day at IGP. The proposed measures will be discussed with all teachers in terms of initiation, the status of the actions, outcomes and continued implementation. The students will receive information about the measures and their implementation at the beginning of courses and the programme, as well as via new documents resulting from different actions that will be published in Studium (in English).