

Appendix 5: Student Reflection

1. Context

Ghent University has a long-standing tradition of **student involvement**. This involvement can take different forms: student representatives contribute to and participate in decision-making bodies such as programme committees, and various other councils and committees at faculty and at university central. Individual students make themselves heard in annual surveys (course feedback and programme feedback). In 2016, this involvement was highly and explicitly commended by the institutional review committee.

2. Purpose

To honour this long-standing tradition, and to anchor it even more firmly in our quality assurance policy, Ghent University's Quality Conduct 2.0 (in Dutch: *Eigen Regie 2.0*) provides for so-called Student Reflection sessions. The Student Reflection is a **new quality assurance tool that will take its place along the existing initiatives** mentioned above.

The Student Reflection aims **to critically reflect on all objectives from the monitor** and their implementation is checked against the objective below in the monitor:

DS-0034: "The study programme actively involves students in various commissions and boards, whereby students have a true impact on education policy and quality assurance. The study programme stimulates these students to act as 'representatives' and encourages them to be in close contact with their fellow students. The students also help determine the study programme monitor and assist in defining and executing the quality improvement plan. The programme committee (OC) discusses the results of student reflections that are carried out at least every three years in the presence of student representatives. This is recorded in the monitor."

The purpose of the Student Reflection is threefold:

- introducing into the study programme a **broader and more diverse student perspective** than the one obtained through student representatives;
- generating a **qualitative reflection** on the entire study programme that goes beyond the individual course feedback, and adds additional in-depth information to the quantitative study programme feedback;
- **deepening dialogue within the Programme Committee** and identifying possible points of concern.

The Student Reflection contributes to [Ghent University's Strategic Education Objective No. 4 'Participate'](#). Participating students are invited to reflect critically and to help give shape to education policy, quality assurance and its assessment.

3. **Method**

Ghent University's Quality Conduct 2.0 (in Dutch: *Eigen Regie 2.0*) is based on trust. We therefore **encourage students to take command of the Student Reflection process** as much as possible, all the while, of course, providing the necessary prerequisites to support them in their autonomy.

The following elements are important:

- **programme committee student representatives** are an important preferential partner for reaching and involving a broad and diverse student group. That way, Student Reflection sessions can cover the entire study programme;
- preparing for the Student Reflection, students will always be asked to use as a starting point the most recent **study programme feedback**, and to formulate critical feedback on this. The purpose is to collect **more** in-depth and constructive feedback, identify points of concern, strengths and possible improvement suggestions from a student perspective;
- the Student Reflection consists of **focus group sessions and/or surveys** that are meant as a qualitative addition to the quantitative data from the study programme feedback. Specific care must go out to the **involvement of minority groups** (e.g. students working their way through university, international students, etc...) in order to obtain a sufficiently diverse student perspective;
- the Student Reflection culminates in a **critical and constructive reflection report** that focuses on strengths, points of concern, possible improvement suggestions, all the while taking into account lecturers' individual privacy. This reflection report is included in the **Education Monitor**;
- the Student Reflection takes place **at least every three years** and is part of the screening by the Education Quality Board;
- study programmes are expected to **discuss the Student Reflection on their Programme Committee in the presence of student representatives**. Strategic choices can be motivated or further explained. This discussion is included in the Programme Committee minutes and uploaded to the Education Monitor and, as such, submitted to the Education Quality Board;
- to guarantee high-quality Student Reflection sessions, Ghent University provides **support and training**:
 - together with Ghent University's Student Union, the **Education Department offers bi-annual training sessions** for student representatives who will organize the Student Reflection. These training sessions zoom in on the purpose and objective, and offer a set of practical skills: how to prepare for and moderate focus group meetings, how to take minutes, how to draw up a written report, how to interpret data, etc... Additional learning materials are made available as well;
 - **the faculties' quality assurance staff** can offer practical support, e.g. by way of scheduling the sessions, booking rooms, informing the students via UFORA;
 - Ghent University's Student Union proposes to recruit **student co-ordinators** to co-ordinate and/or monitor the Student Reflection process in the faculties. The Student Union is

responsible for recruiting the student co-ordinators. Student co-ordinators will act as contact persons for student representatives from the different study programmes. If student representatives find themselves unable to carry out the Student Reflection, and/or the faculty quality assurance staff are unable to provide support, the co-ordinators, in consultation with local student representatives and the faculty's quality assurance staff discuss all the options. If necessary, they take over from the local student representatives. **To promote mutual learning**, student co-ordinators will be asked to attend focus group sessions in faculties other than the one they have been assigned.