

SVF-3901 Student Evaluation Report, Spring 2006

The student evaluation of SVF-3901 Master's Thesis was performed through a) two rounds of questionnaires answered by students electronically in QuestBack and b) the Student Staff Liaison. c) A final evaluation meeting of the subject on June 6th, 2006. The following report sums up the most important results from such student assessments and points to conclusions that are to be taken in consideration in the subsequent phases of the MPCT evaluation period 2005-06.

I. QuestBack Evaluation of SVF-3901

1. Explanation

The students registered in SVF-3901 anonymously filled out electronically a QuestBack form with a deadline for June 30th, 2006.

Scale : Excellent = 5, Very Good = 4, Good = 3 ,
Average = 2, Low = 1

Form

Question/Grade	1	2	3	4	5
The thesis					
How well did the program provide preparation to write a master's thesis?					
To what extent did your supervisor(s) provide you with the guidance you needed?					
To what extent were the resources you needed to write your thesis available?					
The program as a whole					
How well were your expectations met by the program?					
How relevant did you find the content of the program in relation to its description?					
How well connected are the subjects with each other?					
The administration of the program was					
How would you rate the quality of the organisation of the program in relation to progressive build up of knowledge?					
How well does the program open up for career options for you?					
How satisfied were you with the evaluation methods?					
How would you rate the MPCT program in general?					

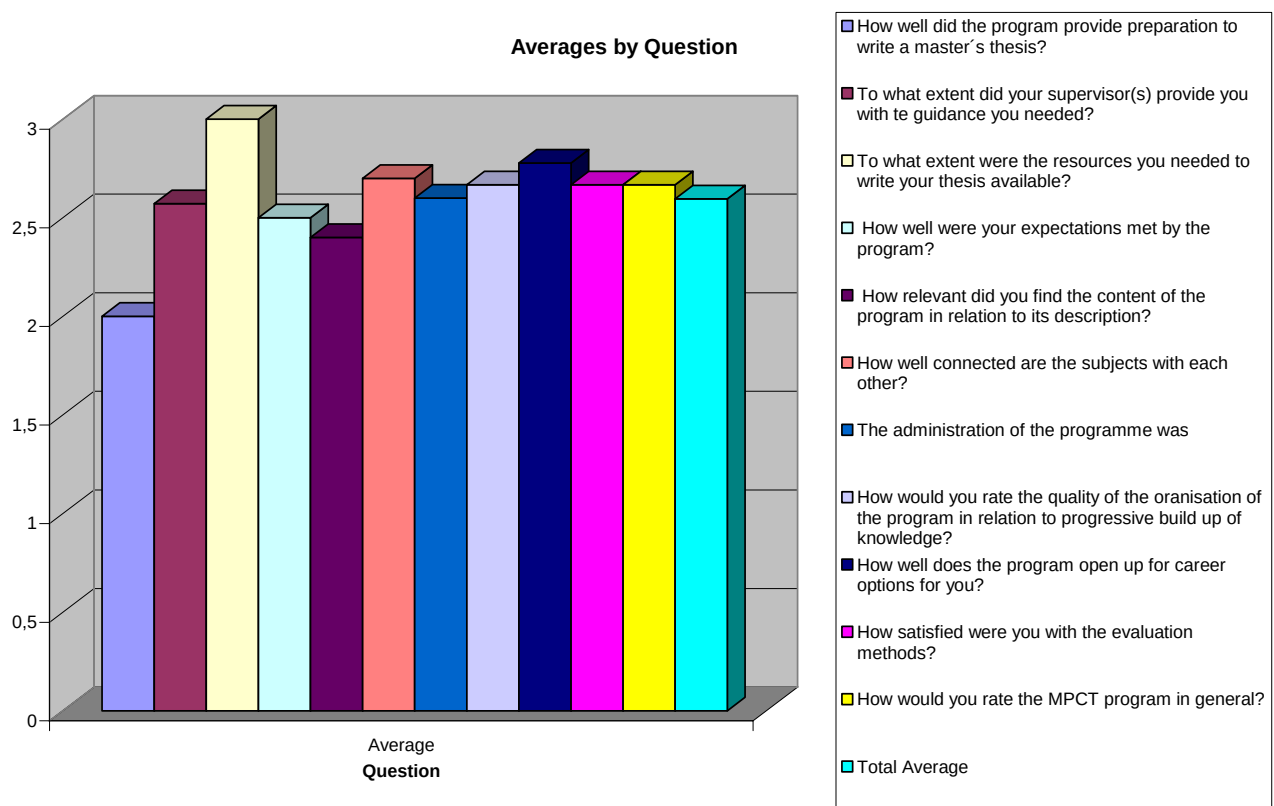
Comments:

2. Form-Evaluation Results

2.1. Lectures

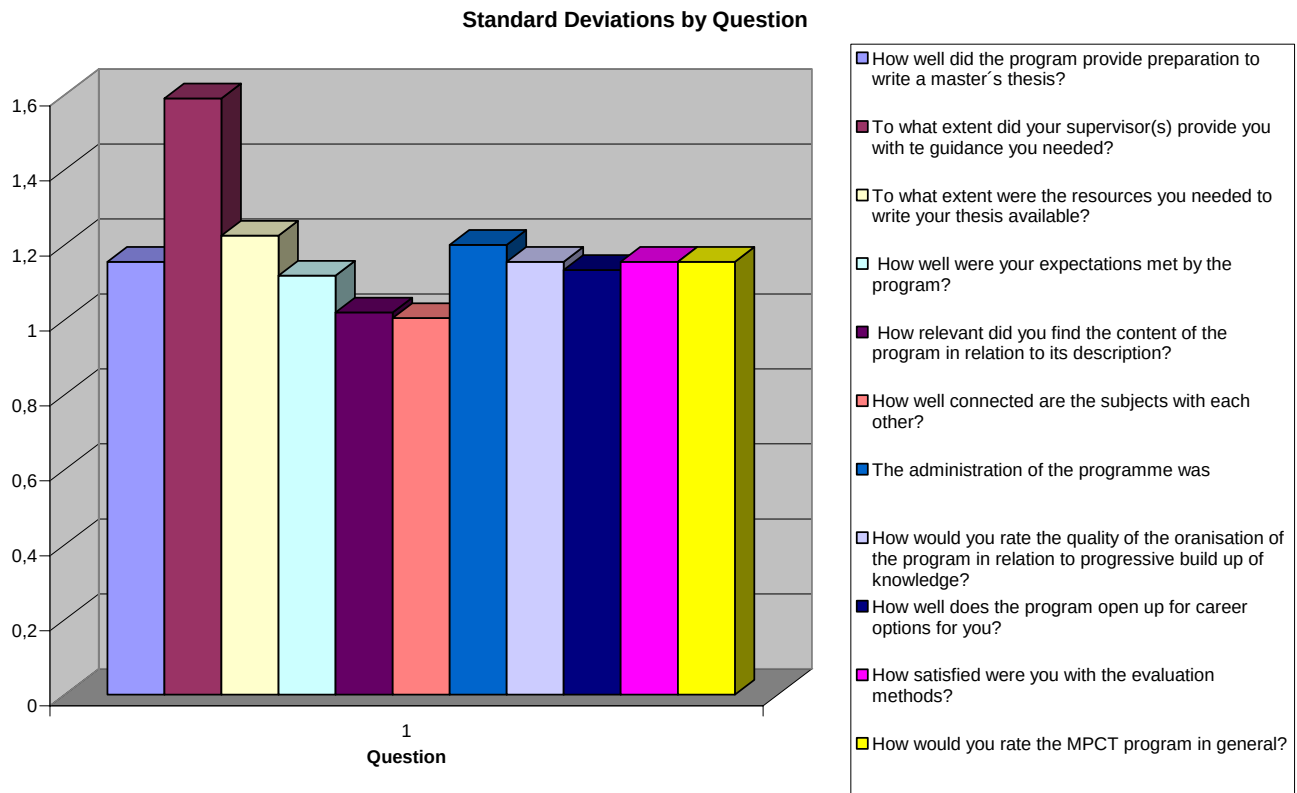
A total of 10 students of 24 answered the electronic QuestBack questionnaire on the 40-study point subject representing their work with the master's thesis. Students gave SVF-3901 an overall average grade of 2,6, in a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is bad and 5 is excellent. This is the overall average of the specific grade averages each student assigned to the 11 issues raised by the form for the subject. The standard deviation of averages by question is 0,25 and 1,15 for averages by answers provided by students. Figure 1 presents a summary of the results.

Figure 1



In order to present a measurement of the variance in student opinion (disagreement) regarding each of the questions on lecturer performance, Figure 2 presents the standard deviations of student answers to each question in the form.

Figure 2



2.1.1. Interpretation of the Results of the Evaluation

According to the scale and criteria employed, the general opinion of students is that the quality of lectures in SVF-3901 approximates to *good*, with an overall average score of 2,6 and a standard deviation of the averages by question of 0,25. This information can be used to verify hypotheses on students' opinions about the course:

Table 1. Verification of Hypotheses on Students' Opinions on SVF-3901

Ho: The subject is bad	FALSE
Ho: The subject average	FALSE
Ho: The subject is in between average and good	True
Ho: The subject is good	FALSE
Ho: The subject is very good	FALSE
Ho: The subject is excellent	FALSE
Confidence Interval	95%

The student answers to the forms also serve to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Those elements with a grade higher than the average are regarded as strengths and those with a grade lower than the average are considered weaknesses.

Strengths of the subject / program: The extent to which resources to write the thesis are available ($\mu = 3$ and $\sigma = 1,22$); how well connected the subjects are to each other ($\mu = 2,7$ and $\sigma = 1,00$); the progressive build up of knowledge in the program ($\mu = 2,66$ and $\sigma = 1,15$); how the program opens up for career options ($\mu = 2,78$ and $\sigma = 1,13$); the MPCT program in general ($\mu = 2,67$ and $\sigma = 1,15$).

Weaknesses of the subject / program: How the program provided preparation to write a master's thesis ($\mu = 2$ and $\sigma = 1,15$); how the expectations of students were met by the program ($\mu = 2,5$ and $\sigma = 1,11$); the relevance of the content of the program in relation to its description ($\mu = 2,4$ and $\sigma = 1,02$).

3. Comments

The changes in academic staff (new director - who later left, new coordinator) there was a lack of continuity in the guidance from CPS staff. The advice I got was also pointing in different directions. My supervisor has never asked about how I'm doing unless I contact her. Neither has she ever asked for anything from me (in writing to do with the thesis). It would be good if the supervisor's role were better 'supervised' from the CPS, ie. Maybe with guidelines, a course or whatever, to insure better quality (not academic quality, it's fine). There might also be reasons to discuss giving the students milestones, ie. deliveries that has to be completed by a certain time. (Chapters etc.)

Before going on fieldwork we did not receive any information on how to write a masters thesis, no information on the purpose of doing fieldwork, or how to use theory in a thesis, nothing! This lack of preparation led me to be late with my thesis because I spent many months after coming home trying to figure out how to use information from fieldwork.

I rather use comments than rating:

A good preparation for thesis work was the presentation and classes in methodology provided by Diane Lister and Alberto Valiente. I cannot clearly see that I use what I learned last year in my thesis, but it could be unconsciously there still. The course in methodology SVF 3025 was not that relevant for the method I chose, but probably for others. It could be good with more guidance when working out problem of research, finding relevant theory, analysing data... at least for me. Maybe some kind of volunteer, but guided group work/ seminar could be good. (As also provided in the presentation sessions 3023 but maybe more of it for those who wanted. Of course this kind of work (help each other finding/ discussing ideas) could be organised by students themselves, but after my experience with trying to gather a "kollokvie -groups" it can be difficult when the program is mostly based on independent work and in second year people are even more independent...

It has been confusing that peace studies is interdisciplinary while my supervisors knowledge is mainly from one discipline. What theory to choose? It is overwhelming sometimes

In the thesis work I have somehow felt that it was expected more from me as an independent student than I was able / skilled to. This also includes my supervisor. It could be a result of my lack of academic experience as my earlier studies were more practical.

Practical resources and literature have been available (a very good reading room, enough computers and a good library with helpful people). And also the coordinator(s) at peace-studies has (have) been extremely helpful.