

## EMNERAPPORT – INSTITUTT FOR BIOMEDISIN

ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT – DEPARTMENT OF BIOMEDICINE

Emnekode: <i>COURSE CODE:</i>	<b>BMED380</b>	Semester / år:	<b>Autumn 2019 – Spring 2020</b> <b>Autumn 2020 – Spring 2021</b> <b>Autumn 2021</b>
Emnenavn: <i>COURSE NAME:</i>	<i>Seminar Series</i>	<i>SEMESTER / YEAR:</i>	
Emneansvarlig: <i>COURSE COORDINATOR:</i>	<b>Beate Stern</b>	Godkjent:	Undervisningsleder IBM
Rapporteringsdato: <i>DATE OF REPORT:</i>	<b>March 21, 2022</b>	<i>APPROVED:</i> (admin.)	23.03.2022

### INNLEDNING / INTRODUCTION:

Kort beskrivelse av emnet, inkl. studieprogramtilhørighet. Kommentarer om evt. oppfølging av tidligere evalueringer.

*SHORT COURSE DESCRIPTION, INCLUDING WHICH STUDENTS/CANDIDATES MAY ATTEND. COMMENTS TO CHANGES BASED ON PRIOR EVALUATIONS.*

The Seminar Series (5 ECTS) is a course open for students who fulfil the pre-requirement of, at a minimum, a Bachelor degree in Biology, Molecular Biology, or equivalent. In the Master's Programme in Biomedical Sciences it is listed as an approved optional course.

The goal of the course is to provide the participants with an overview of different disciplines in bioscience and to give them training in listening to scientific presentations in English, as well as in interpreting, reflecting over, writing and discussing scientific information using the English language.

In the course the students follow the weekly seminars held at the Department of Biomedicine. The course lasts for 2 consecutive semesters. In exceptional cases and if the application is accepted by the course coordinator, a student can finish the course in his/her 3rd semester. Students can enrol in the course both in the autumn and spring semester.

The last Evaluation Report covered the Autumn 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, adjustments to the course were required. Therefore, it seemed reasonable to deviate from the standard of an annual reporting (i.e. Autumn19/Spring20 and Autumn20/Spring21) and rather summarise the experiences made during the entire pandemic period. The current report, thus, covers 5 semesters, Autumn 2019 to Autumn 2021. It presents an overview of the students having participated in the course, their status, achievements and feedback. Further, it describes the measures taken to ensure the continuation of the course and the resulting consequences for the future.

In total 25 students completed the course in the last 5 semesters, and 6 students had completed their 1st semester at the end of the Autumn 2021 semester. Thereof:

- 16 Master's students in Biomedical Sciences
- 3 Master's students in Pharmacy
- 5 PhD candidates from the Faculty of Medicine
- 1 PhD candidate from the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences
- 5 students attending The Medical Student Research Programme
- 1 Medical student

For the description of the course, please visit <http://uib.no/course/BMED380>

For previous evaluation reports, please visit <https://kvalitetsbasen.app.uib.no/popup.php?kode=BMED380>

In the last course evaluation, a point of criticism was that speakers often do not provide sufficient background information about their topic, making it difficult to follow their talks. We have thereupon included a request in our "checklist" for the chairpersons asking them to make sure that their respective speakers (i) give a general introduction at the start and (ii) align their talk to a diverse audience, comprising students, postdocs and faculty. In most cases this had the desired effect.

Another point brought forward was to arrange personal meetings to interact with the course coordinator/chairperson to analyse selected seminars, and with selected speakers. The latter could be an informal discussion before or after the seminar to talk about science, career choices or any topic of interest. Due to the pandemic this could not yet be

implemented, but will now be taken into consideration. The intention is to team up with the Bergen Biomedical Research School and re-activate their Meet-the-Speaker programme.

Further, to address a “disappointing aspect” (as mentioned in a survey, see below), namely the late starting time of the course on Thursdays: since the timing of the course is linked to that of the seminars which was determined taking several factors into account, an earlier start is currently not up for debate.

#### STATISTIKK / STATISTICS (admin.):

Antall vurderingsmeldte studenter: <i>NUMBER OF CANDIDATES REGISTERED FOR EXAMINATION:</i>	<b>25</b>	Antall studenter møtt til eksamen: <i>NUMBER OF CANDIDATES ATTENDED EXAMINATION:</i>	<b>25</b>
Karakterskala <i>GRADING SCALE</i>	«Bestått/Ikke bestått» «PASS/FAIL»	<b>Bestått / PASS:</b> 25	<b>Ikke bestått / FAIL:</b> -

#### KOMMENTARER TIL KARAKTERFORDELINGEN / COMMENTS TO THE STATISTICS:

Emnerapporten utarbeides når sensuren etter ordinær eksamen i emnet er klar. For muntlige eksamener er da resultatfordelingen endelig, men for skriftlige eksamener kan endelig resultatfordeling avvike noe om evt. klagebehandling ikke er fullført.

*THIS REPORT IS PREPARED AFTER ORDINARY EXAMINATION. FOR ORAL EXAMS, THE RESULTS ARE FINAL, FOR WRITTEN EXAMS, THE FINAL GRADING DISTRIBUTION MAY DIFFER SLIGHTLY IF CANDIDATE COMPLAINTS/APPEALS HAVE NOT BEEN PROCESSED.*

The course is awarded with pass/fail; there are no grades given.

A measure for the learning outcome is that the second reports having been submitted by the students were in all cases as good as or better than their first ones (on average 10% improvement) and reached on average 18.9 out of 20 points. Remarkably, 4 students received 20 points for both reports. Evaluation of the reports is based on the following criteria: 1) Organisation of the report and layout, 2) Level of scientific understanding, 3) Did the student make many mistakes? and 4) Overall language skills demonstrated.

#### SAMMENDRAG AV STUDENTENE SINE TILBAKEMELDINGER / SUMMARY OF EVALUATIONS GIVEN BY THE STUDENTS

Spørreundersøkelse via Mitt UiB, annen evaluering, tilbakemelding fra tillitsvalgte og/eller andre.

*COURSE EVALUATION ON MITT UIB, OTHER EVALUATIONS, RESPONSES FROM THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES AND/OR OTHERS.*

Of the 25 students who completed the course, 10 gave their feedback in the survey of the course. Below (i) the results of the multiple-choice questions and (ii) the answers to the “short answer questions” in the survey are listed. Further, an extract of comments students made (iii) in the “Evaluation” section in their reports and (iv) in emails after having completed the course.

(i) Survey, multiple-choice questions:

- *Do you find the academic contents of this course to be:*
  - Adequate: 6
  - Complicated: 4
- *How do you rate the educational level of the course?*
  - Sufficient: 3
  - High: 6
  - Very high: 1
- *How do you evaluate the total workload of the course?*
  - Adequate: 10
- *How do you consider the general organization/structure of the course?*
  - Adequate: 3
  - Good: 4
  - Excellent: 3

- *What do you think about the lecture giving advice on how to write a seminar report and improve your scientific and English writing? (erroneously not included in all surveys)*
  - Useful to some extent: 1
  - Useful: 1
- *What do you think about writing the reports and getting feedback in one-to-one discussions? (erroneously not included in all surveys)*
  - Useful: 2
- *Was the free choice of selecting a seminar for writing a report good and did this improve your understanding of the subject area?*
  - Yes: 4
  - Yes, very much so: 6
- *Portfolio assessment (i.e. report submission) is an appropriate exam format for this course.*
  - Disagree: 1
  - Agree: 9
- *Based on the learning outcomes listed in the course description, my outcomes have been:*
  - Adequate: 2
  - Good: 5
  - Very good: 3

(ii) Survey, short answer questions:

- *Regarding the seminars in general, what was good, what was bad?*
  - Good to understand how scientific work is presented and an insight into scientific research culture.
  - Good: Informative, Interactive!
  - Du lærer hvordan forskning kan bli presentert, som er veldig bra.
  - Some of the seminars were very difficult to follow, but it is expected. Some other were very interesting and well presented.
  - The quality of the speakers varied of course. While it is nice to see/hear a good talk and usually more educational, it is also really helpful to hear a sub optimal one. This way one learns which errors to avoid when giving a presentation oneself and what might constitute a good presentation.
  - As a master student, I learnt a lot about how to make good powerpoint slides, how to present and explain the obtained data and also to get familiar with different accent of people speaking English since it is not my first language and it was hard for me to understand the talk of non-native speakers at the beginning. Generally, I found the course interesting and helpful to get familiar with different topics.
- *What did you appreciate about the course?*
  - Everything basically. Getting the opportunity to hear a broad variety of talks, the opportunity to participate in scientific discourse, the exam format, the feedback, and the flexibility of the course in the face of the corona virus situation.
  - An insight into the scientific world and how to present the results.
  - Du lærer mye om det temaet du skriver rapport om, og det er ei veldig nyttig øvelse å kunne skrive om kva du har blitt forelest om.
  - The possibility of learning about different research areas and getting to experience lecture seminars.
  - Insight into exciting new research. Learning about how to present research to other researchers.
  - I appreciated the possibility of learning new methods and enriching my knowledge regarding different areas.
  - I appreciate the fact that it enables us to get knowledge on different topics and from different fields as well.
  - The good variety of the seminar topics, and the comments that we get on our reports which is so helpful since Ian is a native English speaker and he reads the reports in detail and makes great comments on them.
  - I learned a lot and really appreciate the exercise. It is highly helpful to receive thorough advice where writing is concerned.
  - Very understanding and friendly course coordinator. Seminars were well timed and maintained. Choice of choosing which seminar to write a report on gave great flexibility in choosing topics which aligned with research interests.
- *What did you find disappointing about the course? Do you have any suggestion on what to improve?*
  - The time is not good. It is really hard to be alert at Thursday 14.30 in the dark auditorium.
  - Litt seint på dagen.
  - I did not experience any disappointment in the course.
  - I really don't. This is a great course.

(iii) Reports, Evaluation section:

- I am grateful that the seminars managed to continue even with social distancing and the Zoom seminars have so far been working great.
- This is my first ever attended online seminar, so I didn't know what to expect. Zoom was easy to handle and use. I am glad that the seminars were able to continue despite the Covid-19 situation, giving us the chance to get information about recent and ongoing research directly from the person who is working on it.
- I found the presentation extremely interesting, and the presenter was very good at conveying the message of the research.
- Though I have not had much experience in cancer research, I really enjoyed this seminar and have learned a lot both by attending the seminar and writing this report. The speaker presented the topic well and I enjoyed how he brought in examples from papers he and colleagues have written with examples from his own research into the presentation.
- The presentation was particularly riveting due to the speaker's ability to grasp the listener's attention and make us participate by e.g., choosing two people to draw on the chalk board. He also included several recordings in his presentation, which once again caught our attention. Further, he talked in an ideal pace, and his language was easily understandable.
- In general, the presentation was interesting, as it showed how a clinical trial study can be performed.
- There was a lot of research to present, so the content was very dense, but that is unavoidable when presenting an entire study in 45 minutes. Only the most important aspects were included, and it was easy to follow along. The PowerPoint slides were good and included only the most relevant figures and text.
- This is a very difficult topic, but ... because the session was recorded, I was able to rewatch it a few weeks later. This was very helpful, because I was able to read some papers and get a better understanding of the topic. Even though I would prefer to attend the seminars in person, rather than watching on a screen, the opportunity to rewatch presentations and pause to look at figures is a huge advantage made possible by the digital format.
- I was interested in this seminar as personalised medicine is a fascinating concept to me and is something I believe research should always gear towards.
- I can say that this seminar was inspiring for my own work and that I learned a lot from it.
- The seminar was excellent. The speaker was enthusiastic about his presentation.
- I found it difficult to some extent to differentiate between the speaker's results and results from other research groups. I think this line could have been clearer.
- In particular, I learned how to pull in the audience with the opening and make them stay invested in the presentation until the end.
- I enjoyed that the topic of the talk put research into a bigger context rather than just assessing one minor part of the field. It gave good insight into how research culture itself is evolving, and I found it enlightening.
- The speaker touched several different subjects throughout his talk, including cardiology, immunology and bacteriology and provided a clear link between the subjects he and his colleagues sought to explore further. The speaker also emphasized the fact that he was a clinician apart from being a bench-side researcher, elevating the relevance of his work even more as the bench-to-bedside factor becomes clearer. In conclusion, I appreciated the lecture and found myself more familiar with this subject after attending the lecture.
- Being new to this field, it is crucial to be provided with some background information. I think the speaker did this in a good way in his presentation.
- The manner of the presentation during the digital seminar was adequate. The content of the presentation was relevant and exciting ... and after attending her lecture I found myself more familiar with the topic.
- Due to the ongoing happening, I found this lecture very interesting. The Covid-19 pandemic has become a natural part of our daily conversation and to receive an overview including the newest findings is appreciated. Regarding the presentation, I liked that the speaker reflected around the results and that she presented different aspects of the pandemic
- Covid19 is probably the most talked about topic the last year. To hear about it from someone who is working to understand and hopefully cure this disease, is very interesting. That's why I really enjoy this seminar series.
- Despite the very interesting topic and results presented, the speaker does not impress with his presentation skills and fails to convey the relevance of his discoveries. His talk is hard to follow if one is not already familiar with his field, which is really a shame in the light of his scientific output.
- The speaker gave a very clear presentation and nicely emphasized the main aspects of the studies presented during the talk. The presentation was neither too short nor too long and included all relevant information such as insights into the methods applied, and enough background information to spike the listener's interest. The

slides were well designed and conveyed all relevant information. Overall, I was very impressed with the speaker's capabilities.

- The speaker was very lively and carried everyone along at the same pace. She presented her work in a manner that showed that she loves and enjoys what she does, and every question raised after the presentation was answered convincingly. She was also open to suggestions and observations from both the students and her colleagues.
- In my opinion, the presenter provided brief and concise context for the study before eloquently framing the scientific problem and adequately justifying the scientific approaches used. As staple in all prominent research presentations, he also highlighted the scientific relevance of key findings in his study and offered balanced arguments for further scientific discussion.
- In conclusion, the seminar provided a good insight on the topic but it was also an oversimplified unidirectional approach to it.
- I thoroughly enjoyed this seminar even if I have not had any experience in cancer research. The presentation was clear and very informative.
- The speaker started off the seminar reassuring us that there would only be one equation! That was a good way to catch the attention of the audience. However, the topic was complicated and required much reading. But the speaker showed much enthusiasm and made it both exciting and understandable.

(iv) Sent by email:

- Thank you so much, I really did enjoy the class. I will definitely keep attending the seminars!
- Jeg har trivdes veldig godt, takk for bra kurs :)
- I have gotten the feedback from Professor Ian Pryme. His corrections have been noted with great appreciation and I made lots of improvement compared to that of last semester. Thank you once again for your guidance in this course.
- I have truly enjoyed the course and will continue to join the seminars for as long as possible.
- The seminars are very informative and interesting so I will continue to attend more whenever I can!
- Ellers vil jeg si takk for iår, det var et godt kurs med mye læring hver eneste uke fra så mange ulike felt.
- Takk for et innholdsrikt semester.
- Thank you as always for this brilliant course.
- Looking forward to attending more of BBB seminars!
- Syntes BBB seminarene har vært veldig lærerik og kommer definitivt til å følge med på seminarer fremover.
- The course was great and a good initiative.

#### **EMNEANSVARLIG SIN EVALUERING OG VURDERING / EVALUATION AND COMMENTS BY COURSE COORDINATOR:**

Faglæreres vurderinger av emnet. *TEACHER COMMENTS.*

Eksempel: Kommentarer om praktisk gjennomføring, undervisnings- og vurderingsformer, evt. endringer underveis, studieinformasjon på nett og Mitt UiB, litteraturtilgang, samt lokaler og utstyr.

*EXAMPLE: COMMENTS ABOUT PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS, IF NECESSARY. FUTURE CHANGES/CHANGES IN PROGRESS, STUDY INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET AND MITT UIB, LITERATURE ACCESS, LOCALES AND EQUIPMENT.*

The period from the Spring 2020 semester onwards was marked by the pandemic. When the university campus and facilities for teaching closed down March 12, 2020, most seminars until summer were cancelled/postponed. We considered Zoom as a digital platform, and towards the end of the semester 2 seminars could be run in this format. Both technically and with respect to the number of participants (all BMED380 students joined) this was a success. In order for the students to complete the course, the following adjustments to the course requirement were made: (i) the number of required seminar participations was reduced from 25 to 22; (ii) the students were given the possibility to submit additional reviews, with each review compensating for 5 seminar participations; (iii) the students could choose to stretch the course over an additional semester. These measures, which applied to all students being in their 1st or 2nd semester in spring 2020, could already be discontinued in autumn 2020, since thenceforth the course programme offered again weekly seminars. Whenever possible, they were arranged "in person", the majority, however was taking place on Zoom. Also a hybrid format was tried out, but not favoured for the future since it splits the audience and discussions are hampered. The distribution was as follows:

Autumn 2019 (pre-pandemic): 18 seminars in person

Spring 2020: 6 seminars in person, 2 seminars on Zoom

Autumn 2020: 2 seminars in person, 11 seminars on Zoom, 5 seminars hybrid

Spring 2021: 18 seminars on Zoom

Autumn 2021: 4 seminars in person, 10 seminars on Zoom, 3 seminars hybrid

It should be noted that most speakers we invited from abroad preferred to come to Bergen rather than giving a remote talk, and some asked to be re-invited later. We therefore had an excess number of local/national speakers during the pandemic (39 from Bergen/Oslo/Trondheim/Tromsø). Still, there were 12 countries represented (Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA) and a broad range of topics was covered (including cancer-, neurological- and cardiovascular research, cellular metabolism, biological psychiatry, virology, molecular- and structural biology, gene therapy, nanotechnology and bioinformatics). Three presentations were directly related to coronavirus/COVID-19.

In my opinion the desired learning outcomes of the course, as defined under “Knowledge”, “Skills” and “Competences” in the course description, have been achieved. This can be nicely demonstrated by the reports submitted by the students at the end of each semester, which are of consistently good to very good standard. Further, the benefit of the feedback each student receives on the report (in personal meetings, if possible, or in written) is proven by the fact that the respective second reports show clear improvements over the first ones (according to stringent criteria, see above). Importantly, the change to mostly digital seminars has not been a major issue, although disadvantages were pointed out. This emanated from conversations with the students and the following answers to the question “*How have digital teaching methods and restrictions on education on campus affected your learning and your study life?*” asked in the survey:

- *Its been good to see that there are good solutions to the pandemic situation.*
- *Positive if you can't come to campus (illness and so on) - Negative because less social interactions.*
- *I think in the case of this seminar course, the digital meeting is beneficial since it is easier for anyone to attend from anywhere. At the same time I find digital lectures to be more difficult to follow, compared to physical ones.*
- *Higher barrier to ask questions.*

Study information for the course is available on the webpage of the BBB Seminars (abstract, homepage of the speaker, chairperson details) and the course page at Mitt UiB (messages, guidelines, lecture notes). Further, in many cases speakers are willing to provide copies of their PowerPoint presentations (or parts of it) or allow the recording of their talks (when given on Zoom) upon request.

In autumn 2020 the venue for the seminars was changes from auditorium 4 to auditorium 1 or 2 at BBB, to allow for more space. All hygiene measures were followed and all attendees had to register.

#### **MÅL FOR NESTE UNDERVISNINGSPERIODE – FORBEDRINGSTILTAK / PLANNED CHANGES FOR THE NEXT TEACHING PERIOD – HOW TO BE BETTER:**

A clearly positive outcome of the challenges we faced the last 2 years is that both teachers and students have gained more confidence and expertise with the digital platforms that can be used. These helped us to continue the course (almost) uninterruptedly and will provide us with more flexibility in the future. Although we favour face-to-face interactions with the speakers and highly rate the social networking aspect of personal gatherings, we will also schedule occasional Zoom seminars. Speakers from far ends of the world or who cannot/don't want to travel (due to time constraints or for pandemic/political/moral reasons) can then still be included.

Finally, it should be noted that there will be a shift in leadership. Harald Barsnes, Associate Professor at the Department of Biomedicine, will take over the responsibility for the BMED380 course from 1st April 2022, due to my retirement. Harald will be assisted by Adam Truskewycz, PostDoc at the institute. A big thanks to both of them for ensuring the continuation of the course.

For Prof. Ian Pryme and me as the initiators of the course, and for me as the course coordinator over many years, the positive feedback of numerous participants has been highly encouraging, and it was a pleasure to be in charge of this dynamic and multifaceted event programme.