

# PhD-candidates evaluations of a systematic review and meta-analysis course

Hilde T. Myrhaug<sup>1,2</sup>, Malene W. Gundersen<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Health Sciences, OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway <sup>2</sup>Division of Health Services, Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Norway <sup>3</sup>Department of Education and Library, University Library, OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

## BACKGROUND

As more PhD-candidates choose to write systematic reviews as part of their dissertation, a greater demand for courses on synthesizing research has arisen. At the Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet) two 5 ECT courses have been held and evaluated the last two years.

The aim of this poster is to describe how the courses were carried out with focus on the search strategy, the selection process and the PhD-candidates evaluations of these sessions from the two courses.

## METHODS

The courses included five full day sessions over a period of four months (Figure 1). Each session began with an introduction to the topic by a lecturer, and was followed by hands-on exercises and small group discussions.

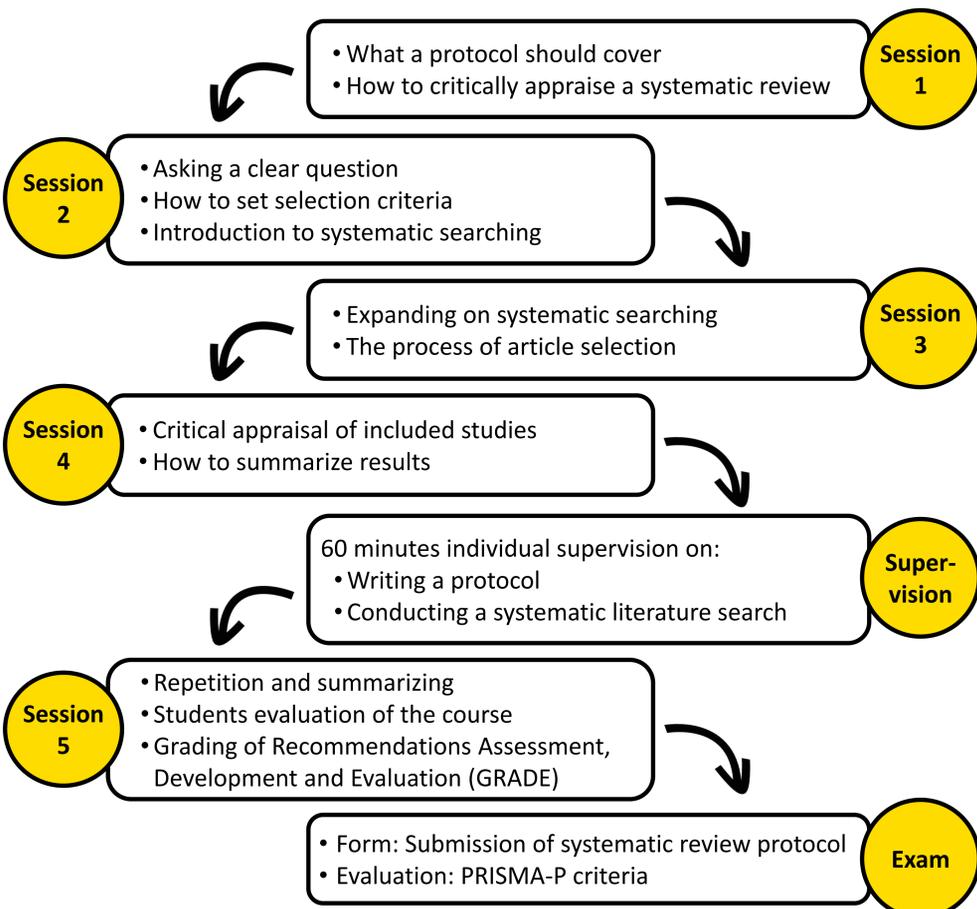


Figure 1: The course progression over four months including five sessions, supervision and exam.

At the end of the fifth session, the candidates were encouraged to fill in an evaluation form consisting of three parts:

- **Part 1** consisted of six questions related to the learning outcomes and questioned to what extent the pedagogic approach contributed to the attainment of knowledge and skills. This was among others specified as: “The PhD candidate can: plan and write a protocol of a systematic review, formulate a focused research questions, plan a literature research, and conduct a systematic and explicit selection process of the identified articles.” This was evaluated on a scale from 1 to 4 (1=“to a small extent” and 4=“to a very large extent”).
- **Part 2** included seven statements evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5 (1=“I disagree” and 5=“I agree”). The results from two of the statements are included in this presentation: “The teaching methods of the course matched the learning outcomes” and “Overall, the course fulfilled my expectations.”
- **Part 3** included evaluations of each of the five sessions and addressed the perceived content, relevance and presentation of the sessions on a 1 to 5 point scale (5=“Very good”).

We report the evaluations related to sessions 2 and 3.



Photo: John Anthony Hughes/HIOA

## RESULTS

Thirty-two candidates signed up for the two courses, 23 completed the courses by getting their protocol accepted, and 15 responded to the evaluations.

To introduce systematic literature searching, a total of 6 hours was spent on lecturing and hands-on searching during the second and third session. The candidates got an introductory lecture on the principles of literature searching and did exercises in building literature searches.

In the third session, 2.5 hours were used to introduce candidates to article selection, including an introduction lecture and followed by a hands-on exercise. The exercise simulated a screening process by first screening ten titles including abstracts, followed by full text assessment of a relevant article from the former screening process.

The sessions were highly rated by the candidates (Figure 2), as the mean results were in the upper quartile of the range for all the three parts in the evaluation.

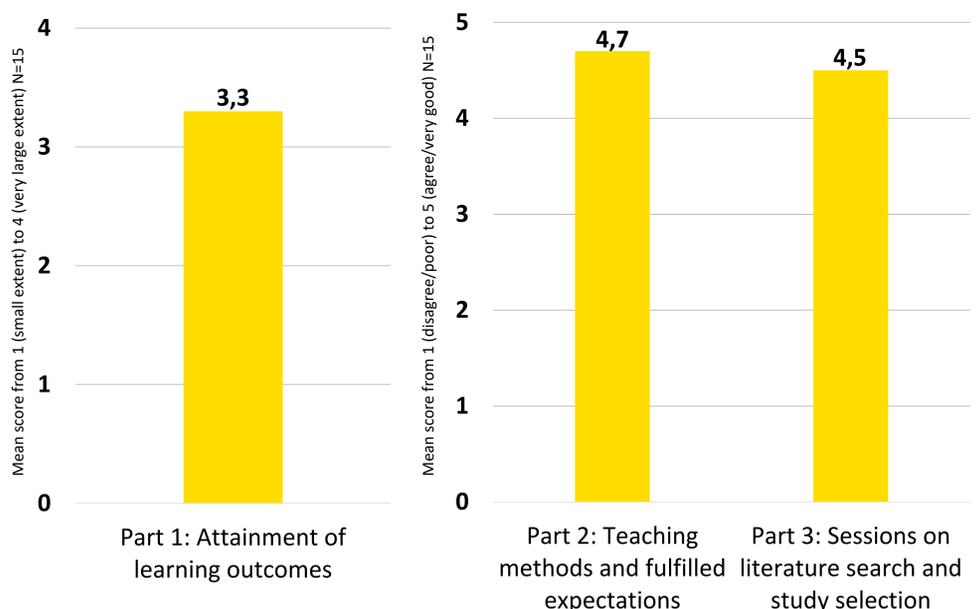


Figure 2: The mean score for sessions 2 and 3 from all three parts of the evaluation.

## LIMITS

The low response rate of 47 % might be due to this being a non-compulsory PhD-course where attendance was not taken.

## CONCLUSIONS

Through lectures, hands on exercises and group discussions, the candidates' evaluations suggested that the pedagogic approach was beneficial to attain the learning outcomes of the course.

## CONTACT

✉ Hilde T. Myrhaug

Faculty of Health Sciences, OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway  
[hitimy@oslomet.no](mailto:hitimy@oslomet.no)