Department of Histology and Embryology, Faculty of Medicine in Pilsen, Charles University
Zbyněk Tonar, September 30, 2025

Dear students,

we received quite a lot of entries in the student survey, for which we thank you.

Some of the themes are recurring, and since the comments in SIS are not public but may be of interest to more of you, we will share our responses with you.

The reactions are basically threefold:

1. We are already working on some constructive suggestions.

2. We won't meet your request completely, but we obviously need to clarify it

3. And you also share what you like, and that's a motivation for us to continue

You can find responses to your feedback from the past year as well as from previous years on our website. We wish you much success in your studies and look forward to seeing you in class.

https://histologie.lfp.cuni.cz/en/reactions-to-the-sis-inquiry/.

In Moodle we had to take too many tests. And if you missed one, you had a problem.	We use two types of texts and assessments: ungraded, or formative ones, which we attach to each topic because they are part of the standards of active learning and also serve as practice for the second type – graded, or summative testing. In that case, we have three midterm tests per semester, which we definitely do not consider to be too many. For successful study, it is absolutely essential to build good study habits, and continuous learning belongs to this. Anyone who does not complete these continuous texts still has the option of a comprehensive make-up test, though with somewhat stricter criteria. You may also encounter all text-based questions in the final exam test, so at the same time you are already working on your success in the first part of the exam. The PC test at the exam is only a kind of entry filter, and in reality you will have to know much more.
The course was well organized, and the teachers really tried to support every student. YouTube videos, the Moodle course, and Smartzoom preparations helped a lot.	Thank you. Supporting students so that after two semesters they are able to meet clearly defined criteria and leave with good study habits is precisely the goal to which our teachers devote considerable effort. We are pleased if you notice this. In current literature on higher education pedagogy, there is increasing evidence that a positive identification with a subject leads students to work more effectively and achieve greater success. In other words, if they study a subject they enjoy, in a well-organized environment with transparently formulated requirements, they invest more mental energy into their professional growth as they should. This is also our goal.
I would prefer if drawing preparations and diagram were not compulsory for future students.	Even in the 21st century, it remains true that if you want to explain and describe the structure or development of the human body, the graphic form is in some ways unsurpassable. A large part of medicine is based on the interpretation and internalization of visual information, and on its structured description using the correct terminology in a way understandable to another professional in the field. Drawing your own diagrams also cultivates the skill of observation, which belongs to other universal medical competencies. Even on the most modern teaching platforms we follow, graphical representation of morphological disciplines plays a strong role. The same applies to testing, where we emphasize active understanding and grasp of the subject matter rather

	than mere reproduction. That is why we also take these skills into account. Let me quote another comment from the survey: *"Learning diagrams is annoying, but during the exam I drew on them for theory."*
It would be better to upload diagrams somewhere other than temporary commercial repositories, because there the materials remain available for download for only about a week.	Indeed, we will recommend our teachers instead sharing via SharePoint as part of the university Teams, or alternatively through Moodle.
Each lecturer lectured in a completely different style. But none were bad.	I am glad that more teachers in our department are able to lecture the subject in its scope. This cultivates both us and you, and contributes to the sharing of common standards for testing. Since we have the requirements for completion published in quite a detailed and transparent way, this gives us room for different teaching styles. What they all have in common is a focus on maximizing student benefit. While we do teach, the actual learning, which is what matters most, takes place within you.
Lecturers use QR codes with test questions during teaching. But in the Green Lecture Hall the school WiFi does not work, so I can never participate. And the questions are often not displayed on the board long enough or not shared at all (on mobile after scanning the code). If I do not have a friend sitting next to me, I have no idea what is happening.	We have forwarded this complaint to the IT Center. Last week a technician physically checked the availability and quality of the WiFi and went through the logs from the WiFi controller. Both the Brown and the Green Lecture Halls have the most powerful access points in their category, covering the rooms with 100% signal. They are built for up to 1000 connected clients per AP, so there are significant reserves. According to the logs, 100–130 clients are connected simultaneously in the auditoriums. However, it may happen that under heavy load the system behaves differently. This is beyond our competence as teachers. If the problem is persistent, I suggest addressing it, for example, through the student senators, who can present it to the Vice-Deans for Study Affairs, or at the Dean's Collegium. Since in some parts of the lecture hall there is at times only EDGE connection, we understand that the issue may also be related to students' own data connection. Nevertheless, we will continue to strive for interactivity with students. During the quizzes, it is highly advisable to consult with classmates sitting nearby whose connection is working.
There are too many of us for one class (two groups), and it takes a relatively long time to have our findings checked or confirmed.	This year we are again using demonstrators from higher years so that we can devote enough time to you. But if you feel there are idle moments, use them – compare the structures you have found with labels in the textbook, atlas, or SmartZoom. Ask your classmates. Anything is better than waiting unproductively, which is certainly not what we want.

In the back row during practicals I had trouble hearing the explanations. Please try to articulate more and speak loudly to the people.	The vast majority of our teachers are attending or have already completed a course in teaching competencies. The ability to express oneself clearly belongs to these as well. Do not be afraid to speak up during class; it is perfectly fine to raise your hand and say, *"Please louder,"* or something similar.
There was a problem with the credit before Christmas; not all students were given the opportunity, unlike in other groups.	We do everything organizationally possible, but it may not always work out. Please do not consider obtaining the credit before the official credit week as an entitlement. Some timetable days are disadvantaged by holidays, for example, and then a given group has less time. Please do not interpret this as fairness or unfairness on our part. Regarding exam opportunities, thanks to the great commitment of our teachers, we have ensured that, apart from the pre-term exam (where it is truly impossible to accommodate everyone during teaching), none of our exam dates were overfilled. Students therefore had a wide choice of when to actually take the exam.
The lecturer mistakenly assumed that students first read the materials at home before the lecture. I hope lectures will change in this regard and it will not be expected that students come to lectures already prepared.	We are trying to make lectures more interactive so that less time is spent with teachers transmitting information one-way to students. This is probably the least effective teaching method. Mere reproduction of content that is already uploaded to Moodle is also not entirely desirable. In line with global trends in medical education, we are moving toward greater activation and involvement of students. Yes, this is at the expense of listener comfort and places higher demands on both sides. At the moment we are mapping the study workload within the course so that it is realistic. Of course, the main learning outcomes must always be delivered during the class, here I agree with you. But we will continue to emphasize that you will gain much more from a class if you come prepared. This is a universal experience at any level of education.
Would it be possible to have some official set of diagrams for the exam? YouTube does not always match, for both embryology and general histology.	Excellent suggestion. The discrepancy was only apparent, and arose from the fact that some diagrams are suitable for explanation and initial familiarization with the material, but we do not test them exactly in that form, because the core of our exam is not for you to reproduce the teaching exactly as it was presented. On the department website, in the section *For Students – Credits and Exams*, you now have three large PDFs available for download with the binding form of diagrams from general histology and embryology, as well as sample descriptions of preparations for special histology.
Did the teachers' requirements differ between groups?	I would divide it this way: In terms of content, everything is the same and binding for all, see the *For Students – Credits and Exams* section of the website. Organizational conditions may differ slightly between groups, depending on semester length. Further differences may come from the degree of goodwill that teachers offer beyond their working hours – sometimes the goodwill of one is then interpreted as the organizational shortcoming of another, but please distinguish between the two. I would also emphasize that we have newly published for you the criteria by which we grade practical as well as theoretical examinations. I recommend these also as excellent guidance for semester-long preparation, so that you know what level of

	performance to train: what is required for an A, what suffices for a B or C, and what is already insufficient. This is mainly for the exam, but similar criteria also apply to the credit testing.
The extreme difficulty of the practice tests – we often have no information for them, and even if we did, it is an unnecessarily huge amount of information, unusable either in practice or for the exam.	The practice tests are identical to the exam tests. Since students have them available a year before taking the exam, it turns out they serve more as an entry filter for the exam rather than as an insurmountable obstacle. In line with test construction standards, several categories are represented here, not only targeting the memorization of facts and terms but also aiming at higher cognitive goals. This function is fulfilled especially by Single Best Answer questions, which simulate the use of theoretical knowledge in solving simplified problem-based questions and scenarios. There are also image-based questions, with tasks derived from preparations that students have been microscoping over two semesters. The validity of the tests is supported by their alignment with the intended learning outcomes, according to the principles of so-called *constructive alignment*, which is the standard in competence-oriented teaching and assessment. We very carefully monitor the use of individual pieces of knowledge in related disciplines of the curriculum, and we do not create test questions that would be purposeless or unusable for further study of medicine. For test items, we assess both the difficulty index and the discrimination index of each question. In this way, we ensure a high degree of comparability of difficulty between different test variants mixed from the item bank. In developing and refining our tests, we regularly improve through seminars led by leading experts in higher education assessment. Therefore, I must respectfully disagree, and we can demonstrate that the tests we use meet current standards at quite a high level.
For the exam, the YouTube diagrams were actually enough, so I would say that for those who were not very interested in embryology, there was basically no reason to attend lectures.	I understand this perspective, which I also perceive as a certain compliment regarding the quality and accessibility of our online resources. On the other hand, attending lectures also has its benefits. Your goal should not only be to reproduce exam material but also to learn patterns of reasoning, to practice argumentation when solving simplified problems, to formulate and justify your decisions during the interactive parts of lectures, and to discuss them with your colleagues and teachers. Attendance also helps to give your learning regularity and rhythm according to the timetable. All of this contributes to building habits that will support you throughout your studies – habits that are difficult to establish through self-study on YouTube and Moodle alone.