

Student Evaluation Surveys

Students are the principle clients of the education system and surveys of their opinions are one of the most important sources of evidence about quality in higher education. They can provide very useful suggestions for improvement that should be considered in the quality cycle for improvement as applied to individual courses, programs, and institutional planning.

There are a number of general principles that should be followed if student surveys are to be as useful as possible.

- It must be made clear to students that all survey responses are anonymous.
- Course evaluation surveys should be distributed and collected by someone other than the course instructor.
- Surveys should include common questions to enable them to be used for comparisons within departments and colleges and institutions and between institutions. (The use of common questions does not prevent the addition of optional additional questions appropriate for different courses, programs or institutions.)
- Some open ended questions should be included to permit respondents to comment on additional matters of concern.
- In addition to a number of individual items relating to matters considered important, surveys can include one or two summary items that can be used as general quality indicators.
- To be used for benchmarking quality between institutions the surveys should be distributed in similar ways and at similar times and comparisons made between comparable institutions.
- Questions should be consistent over time (normally at least three years) so that valid trend data can be obtained.
- The validity of responses depends on having a reasonable response rate. Normally at least 50% is essential. To encourage participation:

- Surveys should not be overused.
- Use should be made of the responses, and summary reports and indications of action taken in response made available.
- The surveys should not be too long. (a maximum of 20 to 25 items plus a small number of open ended items is usual)

Recommended Surveys

Three surveys are recommended:

1. Course Evaluation Survey (CES) A course evaluation survey that can be distributed at the end of a course. It is recommended that this survey be distributed in each course once each year and that it be distributed in at least one course taught by each instructor at least once each year. .

The survey does not directly assess the quality of teaching by individual instructors. However the evaluation of the course is seen as a reasonable measure of the quality of teaching in a way that minimizes personal issues that could inhibit responses from students.

The survey asks questions about a number of aspects of each course. The final question is intended to provide a summary question that might be used as a general quality indicator.

2. Student Experience Survey (SES) This is intended as a general survey that might be distributed to all students part way through their program—mid way through the second semester of the second year in a four year program is recommended.

The survey deals with the student's life at the institution including both major elements of the program in which they are enrolled and a number of general items relating to services and facilities. As for the SCE the final question is intended as a summary question that might be used as a general quality indicator.

3. Program Evaluation Survey (PES) This survey is intended for use at the time students have finished their program and are about to graduate. It is recommended that it be distributed shortly before final year classes are finished so their opinion of the total program at that stage can be assessed.

The questions include a number of items about the program itself together with some items similar to those in the SES that deal with their life as a student at the institution. As for the other surveys the final question is a summary item that might be used as a general quality indicator.

Response Scale

It is recommended that each item in the surveys be responded on a five point scale. The recommended scale is:

- 5 Strongly agree (with the statement)**
- 4 Agree**
- 3 Neutral (or undecided)**
- 2 Disagree**
- 1 Strongly disagree**

The numbers shown here are not included on the survey forms. However those numbers should be used for summarizing responses from students and developing average responses to each item.

The survey forms have been prepared in a form that could be used for scanning. However the forms would need to be re-formatted to suit the requirements of any machine scoring system used in an institution.

Course Evaluation Survey (CES)

Course Title _____

Program _____

Semester _____

Year _____

Feedback from students is very important in trying to improve the quality of courses.

This is a confidential survey. Do not write your name or identify yourself in any way. Your responses will be combined with the responses of others in a process that does not allow any individual to be identified and the overall opinions will be used to plan for course improvements.

Please respond to the following questions by completely filling a response for each of your answers.

Do this
these ways $\sqrt{\quad}$ \times \bullet

Do not mark in any of

Use a pencil or blue/black pen only
green or yellow

Do not use red,

Make heavy marks that fill in your response
highlighters

Do not use

- Strongly agree means the statement is true all or almost all of the time and/or very well done.
- Agree means the statement is true most of the time and/or fairly well done.
- True sometimes means something is done about half the time.
- Disagree means something is done poorly or not often done.
- Strongly disagree means something is done very badly or never or very rarely done.

Strongly Agree

Agree

True Sometimes

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Questions about the start of the course:

1. The course outline (including the knowledge and skills the course was designed to develop) was made clear to me.
2. The things I had to do to succeed in the course, including assessment tasks and criteria for assessment, were made clear to me.

3. Sources of help for me during the course including faculty office hours and reference material, were made clear to me.

Questions about what happened during the course:

4. The conduct of the course and the things I was asked to do were consistent with the course outline.
5. My instructor(s) were fully committed to the delivery of the course. (Eg. classes started on time, instructor always present, material well prepared, etc)
6. My instructor(s) had thorough knowledge of the content of the course.
7. My instructor(s) were available during office hours to help me.
8. My instructor(s) were enthusiastic about what they were teaching
9. My instructor(s) cared about my progress and were helpful to me.
10. Course materials were of up to date and useful. (texts, handouts, references etc.)
11. The resources I needed in this course (textbooks, library, computers etc.) were available when I needed them.
12. In this course effective use was made of technology to support my learning.
13. In this course I was encouraged to ask questions and develop my own ideas
14. In this course I was inspired to do my best work.
15. The things I had to do in this course (class activities, assignments, laboratories etc) were helpful for developing the knowledge and skills the course was intended to teach.
16. The amount of work I had to do in this course was reasonable for the credit hours allocated.
17. Marks for assignments and tests in this course were given to me within reasonable time.
18. Grading of my tests and assignments in this course was fair and reasonable.
19. The links between this course and other courses in my total program were

made clear to me.

Evaluation of the Course

- 20. What I learned in this course is important and will be useful to me.
- 21. This course helped me to improve my ability to think and solve problems rather than just memorize information.
- 22. This course helped me to develop my skills in working as a member of a team.
- 23. This course improved my ability to communicate effectively.

Overall Evaluation

- 24. Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this course.

Open Ended Items

- 25. What did you like most about this course?

- 26. What did you dislike most about this course?

- 27. What suggestion(s) do you have to improve this course?
