

COURSE EXPERIENCE SURVEY (CES)

Information for Staff

Prepared by Strategy, Planning and Performance

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

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ABOUT THE CES

Enhancing the student experience and student satisfaction through addressing issues raised in student feedback is a key strategic objective for the University of Newcastle. The Strategy, Planning and Performance (SPP) team administers the Course Experience Survey (CES) to gather student perceptions of their experiences in individual courses. This includes onshore and offshore Semester, Trimester and seasonal (Summer/Winter) courses. Ongoing feedback from students on their course experiences helps highlight what is being done well and further areas for focus.

Prior to 2020, feedback on courses and teachers was captured in the Student Feedback on Courses (SFC) and Student Feedback on Teachers (SFT) surveys, however utilising two different survey types was leading to some students receiving an overwhelming number of survey requests each term. The need was seen to combine the two survey processes into one, as well as reduce the number of survey questions, to reduce student survey fatigue and provide academic staff with direct, actionable feedback.

From 2020, the CES replaces the SFC and SFT survey. In the CES, students are asked about the course generally, then are prompted to select any teachers in the course that they would like to provide feedback specifically. For each teacher they select, students complete a series of questions comprising the teacher feedback.

Teacher lists are obtained through the Syllabus Plus database and are sent to Course Coordinators for verification prior to their inclusion in the CES. Students may choose to provide feedback for as many or as few teachers as they like and also have the option of skipping the teacher feedback section altogether.

IMPROVING RESPONSE RATES

A high response rate for the CES is valuable for robust analysis of the data. While SPP promotes the CES using a number of channels (e.g. digital signage, social media, email etc.), the most effective way to drive response rates is for **staff to actively encourage students** to take part in the survey.

Here are some ways you can help improve CES response rates:

- **Early notice:** it is a good idea to let your students know early in the term that they will be asked to complete course feedback later in the term. There is no need to over-emphasise this - just let them know that providing feedback from time-to-time is part of being a university student.
- **Let students know when the CES is open:** key CES survey dates are included in this document – tell students in class that the CES is open.
- **Let students know how to access the survey:** Students can access their surveys 3 ways:
 1. by checking their student email account (NUmail) for emails from 'The Student Feedback Team' or 'Course Experience Survey'. Please note that each student receives a personalised link and there is no universal link that can be shared.
 2. by clicking the surveys tile in the myUoN student portal (myuon.newcastle.edu.au)
 3. by checking the Surveys window of the Blackboard home page
- **Allocate time in class for students to complete their CES:** the CES should only take 2-5 minutes to complete and can be accessed via smartphones, tablets and laptops.
- **Emphasise the importance and value of student feedback:** Let your students know that you (and the University) value their input and tell your students how you have used feedback on teaching and courses to make changes to improve the student experience.
- **Put an announcement on your course Blackboard page:** under 'My Course Announcements'.

CES QUESTIONNAIRE

The CES questionnaire was designed by SPP and the Student Course Evaluation Working Group using externally validated questions and statements employed in the government endorsed Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) surveys.

Course Experience Survey		
No.	Question	Identifier
1	Overall, the quality of my learning experience in [course name] was: Excellent (5), Good (4), Satisfactory (3), Poor (2), Very poor (1)	OverallCourse
If the student selects Satisfactory, Poor or Very poor then they are asked additional question:		
To see where we may need to improve, can you please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:		
a	It was made clear right from the start what was expected of students in [course code]	Expectations
b	The course was well structured/organised	Structure
c	Compared to other courses, the workload for this course was manageable	Workload
d	Course assignment or project descriptions, including information about requirements (rubric), were clear	Criteria
e	Course projects, assignments, tests, and/or exams improved my understanding of the course material	Assessment
f	I have developed relevant knowledge and/or usable skills through studying this content	Knowledge
g	The resources (textbook, readings, online resources etc) contributed to my learning of the subject matter	Resources
2	What were the best aspects of the course?	Comment
3	Are there any changes which could be made to improve the course?	Comment
If the student selected Poor or Very poor in question 1; they answer 2.1 and 3.1 instead of 2 and 3.		
2.1	Please provide more detail to allow us to make improvements where possible.	Comment
3.1	Please describe the positive aspects of the course that we could continue to implement.	Comment
4	Overall, the quality of my experience with [teacher name] was: Excellent (5), Good (4), Satisfactory (3), Poor (2), Very poor (1)	OverallTeach
If the student selects Satisfactory, Poor or Very poor then they are asked additional question:		
To see where improvements may be needed, can you please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:		
a	I felt that [teacher name] cared about my individual outcomes and success in this course	CaredAboutMe
b	[teacher name] explained concepts clearly	ExplainedThings
c	[teacher name] seemed helpful and approachable	Approachable
d	[teacher name] was enthusiastic about the course material	Enthusiastic
e	[teacher name] seemed well prepared and organised	Organised
f	[teacher name]'s feedback on course assignments, projects, tests, and/or papers provided guidance on how to improve my performance in the course	Feedback
5	What did you value most about [teacher name]'s teaching?	Comment
6	Are there any changes [teacher name] could make to improve your learning experience?	Comment

Questions asked of all students

Questions asked of students who select Satisfactory, Poor or Very Poor

Questions asked of students who select Satisfactory, Good or Excellent

ALTERNATE QUESTIONNAIRES

We recognise that the standard set of CES questions may not be suitable for all courses. Alternate questionnaires are available for courses that don't follow a standard structure, for example placement courses are surveyed under the Placement Experience Survey (PES). The PES is designed for courses where placement is the main focus and therefore the CES is not suitable. The PES survey is targeted at courses with 4 or more weeks placement experience. Please contact surveys@newcastle.edu.au if you would like your course included in the PES instead of the CES, or if the CES doesn't 'fit' the structure of your course.

KEY 2021 CES DATES

2021 Term	Teaching Staff Information Required	Survey opens	Survey closes
Summer 1 (6100)	18 th January	1 st February	19th February
Summer 2 (6111)	18 th January	1 st February	19th February
Trimester 1 (Sing) (6115)	8 th March	29 th March	2nd May
Trimester 1 (6125)	8 th March	5 th April	2nd May
Semester 1 (6140)	4 th April	10 th May	1st July
Winter (6160)	13 th June	5 th July	14th July
Trimester 2 (6155)	20 th June	19 th July	15th August
Trimester 2 (Sing) (6145)	27 th June	26 th July	29th August
Semester 2 (6180)	29 th August	4 th October	21st November
Trimester 3 (6185)	3 rd October	1 st November	28th November
Trimester 3 (Sing) (6175)	24 th October	22 nd November	23rd December

NOTE: DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Reporting

QUANTITATIVE REPORTS FOR COURSE FEEDBACK

Quantitative results for course feedback (Question 1) are reported through a Power BI dashboard. Individual pdf reports will no longer be produced for each course and school at the completion of each term. The Power BI report will be refreshed with updated results after each term, allowing users to view results at various levels and across time in one convenient dashboard. Course Coordinators will be able to access the report once results have been finalised, with the report viewable in the [SPP BI & Reporting Hub](#). **If you require immediate access to the report, [please click here](#).** Requests are typically approved within 24 hours.

Please note that you may have to [sign in and view the report in Power BI Online](#) on the first attempt, after which the embedded SharePoint version will become functional - your Power BI login is the same as your standard UON login.

SFC pdf reports from 2019 and earlier remain available in the Faculty Quality Assurance (FQA) folder and on the [University website](#) with a login.

QUALITATIVE/COMMENT REPORTS FOR COURSE FEEDBACK

Qualitative (comment) reports for course feedback (Questions 2, 2.1, 3 and 3.1) exist within a PowerBi Report located on the [SPP – Course Feedback](#), under '[Course Experience Survey Qualitative Feedback](#)' Qualitative Reports will be made available on the fully graded date of term (if processed). Processing times vary due to the variable volume of comments received. Access to the comments is restricted to selected faculty staff.

Each faculty sets their own access policy, however generally the Heads of School, Assistant Deans of Teaching and Learning, Program Convenors, School Executive Officers, Quality Assurance Officers or other staff with responsibility for quality assurance (as approved by the Head of School) should have access. Academic staff should use these channels to access CES comment reports.

ACCESS TO QUALITATIVE DATA

Role	Course Feedback	Individual (Teacher) Feedback
Teacher / Tutor / Lecturer	All course results	Own feedback only
Course Coordinator	All course results	All teachers in course
Program Convenor and Deputy Program Convenor	All non-elective courses in program/s	All teachers in non-elective courses in program/s
Head of School / Executive Officer	All courses in College	None
Faculty PVC / Faculty Manager / Associate Director / QATLs / ADT&Ls	All courses in College	None
Specialist access for research, peer mentoring, quality assurance reviews	Access on special request	Access on special request




TEACHER FEEDBACK

ENSURING FEEDBACK ON TEACHING

Teachers will be linked to courses using timetabling data, and Course Coordinators will be asked to verify the details. In some cases where timetabling data is not up to date, and/or where Course Coordinators do not provide updated details, teachers may not be linked to a course correctly. If you would like to ensure you are included in the survey to receive teaching feedback, it is possible to nominate yourself using the [ServiceUON form](#).

TEACHER PHOTOS

When completing the CES, students will be shown a list of teachers associated with the course and asked to select any that they would like to provide feedback. To assist students with identifying their teacher, teachers may choose to use a photo in this part of the survey:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Lloyd Blaxland	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emma Dawes	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stephanie Pease	

Teachers can give permission to use their photo using the [ServiceUON form](#). You may choose to use either your staff ID photo or another photo of your choosing. If permission is not given, or the form is not submitted, the University logo will be used in place of a photo.

CES CONTACTS

For CES related enquiries, please contact surveys@newcastle.edu.au

Nick Thorp	Feedback Engagement Officer	4921 6437
Emma Dawes	Survey Insights Analyst	4921 6522
Steph Pease	Senior Survey Insights Analyst	4911 7723
Meagan Morrissey	Manager: Student & Staff Insights	4985 4046

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Communicating results of student surveys back to staff and students, deciding on actions to take and reporting back on outcomes are important parts of the feedback cycle. This section presents guidelines for communicating with staff and students around these areas.

1. OVERVIEW

- i. It is important that student feedback is presented to staff as a developmental tool for them to improve the programs and courses they coordinate and teach.
- ii. The positive aspects of the survey should be emphasised; the negative aspects should be presented as opportunities for improvement.
- iii. For feedback to be effective it needs to be responded to in a timely way, with the development of appropriate actions, and the closure of communication loops with all those involved, as soon as practical.
- iv. All survey data, and mechanisms to feedback summary results to staff and students must be handled discreetly and sensitively whilst ensuring any issues raised are appropriately addressed.

2. REPORTING TO STAFF

- i. Prepare a departmental and/or discipline-/subject-specific summary of the key themes of the survey for sharing with teaching staff to be delivered initially at a staff meeting rather than by email.
- ii. Prepare faculty wide summaries identifying recurring themes. Use this to encourage faculty-wide discussion and collaboration and, where appropriate, to enable an integrated and holistic approach to addressing issues and sharing exemplary practices.
- iii. Celebrate those courses that have rated highly and note the positive aspects most commented on by students.
- iv. Limit distribution of detailed course-specific information to those who need to see it, particularly where sensitive issues have been raised in a course.
- v. Where there are genuine issues that need addressing, organise a discreet conversation with the appropriate staff first before any course-specific comments are distributed. This will enable you to talk through issues in a calm and safe manner and assess their validity before proceeding.
- vi. Should a significant issue have arisen and if appropriate, consider adjusting or rephrasing comments that might cause offense, anxiety or controversy, without undermining the meaning/intention of the comment.
- vii. If a valid issue arises from the evaluations, put in place an action plan to ensure that the issue is resolved prior to the next delivery of that course.

3. REPORTING TO STUDENTS

- i. It is important that the feedback loop is closed by communicating with students about their feedback and how it will be used to inform revisions to a program/course in a timely manner.
- ii. The closing of the feedback loop needs to occur in ways that ensures the safety of any student who contributed to the survey.
- iii. The feedback to students needs to emphasise the positive aspects as much as the negative aspects of any student evaluations.
- iv. Faculty-wide forums could be held with students and staff on an annual basis, for the PVC or others to comment to students on any faculty-wide actions/innovations that have arisen as part of this feedback
- v. Program-wide feedback sessions could be held with students and staff on a semester basis to feedback on actions arisen as a result of students' feedback, as well as other developments within the program.
- vi. Student representatives should receive summaries of actions to give them the opportunity to feedback to the student groups.
- vii. Posters could be distributed through a school and/or faculty bullet-pointing how the faculty/school is responding to student feedback, as well as other developments within the program. These could also be placed on Blackboard.
- viii. In preparing the course outline for the next offering, record a summary of student feedback and a brief report on the actions taken in response.
- ix. Email those students who were enrolled in a course a summary of what changes have been implemented as a result of feedback.
- x. Student focus groups may be held and or other means employed where additional/clarifying information would be useful and/or is required.
- xi. Students should not be challenged, either as groups or individuals, regarding the content and nature of their feedback.

4. REPORTING BACK ON OUTCOMES

Provide response to Strategy, Planning and Performance for the purposes of developing a scope of university responses. This will enable opportunities for cross faculty dialogue and collaboration, and the sharing of practices and resources.