

Student Evaluation of Courses and Teaching - Procedures



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Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to these procedures and are critical to its effectiveness:

Agreement percentage represents the proportion of respondents who selected either the Agree or Strongly Agree response option; i.e. the count of Agree and Strongly Agree responses divided by the count of all responses on the 4-point scale Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree.

Course Feedback Report (CFR) means the report completed by the Course Coordinator after reviewing feedback collected via eVALU8. The CFR is the result of critical reflection on the feedback and the development of strategies for the implementation of identified improvements to the course and teaching within the course.

Early Evaluation means instances where eVALU8 surveys are deployed earlier than the Main Evaluation Period.

eVALU8 survey means the instrument used for the eVALU8 survey process.

eVALU8 survey process (eVALU8) means the mechanism which provides students with an opportunity to evaluate each course and the teaching at the course level by means of a standardised survey instrument; the eVALU8 survey.

eVALU8 results means all feedback collected via the eVALU8 survey process, including both qualitative and quantitative formats.

Extraordinary Evaluation means deployment of eVALU8 surveys outside the Early or Main Evaluation Period at the request of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), or Head of School.

Main Evaluation Period means the time frame for deployment of eVALU8 surveys other than Early Evaluations and Extraordinary Evaluations. The Main Evaluation Period commences two weeks prior to the end of the teaching period, as identified in the University's academic calendar and closes one week after the conclusion of the teaching period's examination period (where relevant) or one week after the conclusion of the teaching period (where no examination period is specified). This time frame enables students to reflect on the full course and teaching experience in their eVALU8 responses.

Threshold value means the minimum value(s), as specified in these Procedures, which provides a point of reference to recognise exemplars and identify aspects of the quality of courses and teaching in need of review to determine appropriate support.

1. Purpose of procedures

These procedures specify the requirements and processes associated with the student evaluation of courses and teaching. These procedures are to be read in conjunction with the Student Evaluation of Courses and Teaching - Academic Policy.

Staff are encouraged to use a range of additional evaluation strategies to collect student feedback at other points in the cycle of course delivery and teaching, and to review this feedback in conjunction with eVALU8 results. The Centre for Support and Advancement of Learning and Teaching (C-SALT) provides support.

2. Purpose of evaluating courses and teaching

The purpose of conducting evaluations of courses and teaching is to:

- (a) provide a mechanism for students to provide feedback regarding the quality of key elements of a course and teaching within the course;
- (b) gather evidence that may be used to demonstrate quality teaching and curriculum design, and inform institutional curriculum review and improvement activities with the aim of improving students' experience of teaching and learning at the University;
- (c) facilitate the routine evaluation of a course and its teaching to assure the University that the course is contributing to learning in the program as intended and that the learning outcomes are consistent with those stated for the course;
- (d) encourage staff to engage in scholarship of teaching by reflecting, in the light of student feedback, on the course design and delivery and the development of new or improved approaches to learning and teaching;
- (e) develop structures to support staff in the institutional curriculum review and improvement activities and the scholarship of teaching;

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, Centre for Support and Advancement of Learning and Teaching

FIRST APPROVED

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Active

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(f) gather evidence as part of the Performance Planning and Review (PPR) process and performance management discussions with course teaching staff;

(g) gather evidence as part of reporting requirements to professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

3. Approaches to evaluating courses and teaching

3.1 The eVALU8 survey process provides students with an opportunity to evaluate each course and the teaching in that course by means of a standardised survey instrument; the eVALU8 survey.

3.2 The eVALU8 survey collects feedback on a core set of quantitative elements of a course and teaching that may be used for intra-university and inter-university benchmarking. Students can also provide qualitative comments which may assist in interpreting the quantitative responses and provide reinforcing or diagnostic feedback on aspects not necessarily covered by the survey's core quantitative items.

3.2.1 A student is expected to provide constructive feedback about courses and the teaching within courses through their participation in quality improvement activities such as eVALU8 and other surveys. A student is expected to respond in a constructive manner, focusing on learning and teaching issues, avoiding content of a personal or inappropriate nature.

4. Deploying eVALU8 surveys

4.1 The Strategic Information and Analysis Unit (SIAU) administers the operations of eVALU8, including the production and dissemination of reports.

4.2 eVALU8 surveys will be automatically released for relevant courses offered in each teaching period, unless otherwise instructed by these Procedures. Students at all study sites including managed campuses where the course is offered will be invited to complete eVALU8 (see Section 6 for exclusions).

4.3 eVALU8 surveys are online surveys accessible via web links embedded in emails and the Learning Management System.

4.4 Survey participants will be based on students recorded in the Student Information System as being currently enrolled in the course as close as possible to the time of deployment of the survey. Students who have withdrawn from a course after the census date for the teaching period are excluded from participating in the associated eVALU8 survey.

4.5 The majority of eVALU8 surveys will be deployed in the Main Evaluation Period.

4.6 A Course Coordinator or their relevant Head of School may request an Early Evaluation. An example of a situation in which early deployment of eVALU8 may be appropriate is where a course finishes prior to the end of the teaching period, as identified in the University's academic calendar. Information regarding the process of requesting an early evaluation will be advised by the SIAU.

4.6.1 It is the responsibility of the Course Coordinator to request an early evaluation by the advertised due date. Where an early evaluation is not requested the evaluation will be deployed in the Main Evaluation Period.

4.6.2 Requests for Early Evaluation require the approval of the relevant Head of School. SIAU will progress requests for Early Evaluation for approval by the Head of School on behalf of Course Coordinators.

4.6.3 The time frame for Early Evaluations is determined as follows:

4.6.3.1 In the case of courses for which the duration of course delivery is greater than two weeks, eVALU8 will be deployed by SIAU two weeks prior to the conclusion of teaching as identified in the request for an early evaluation and where the request is received with sufficient notice, or as soon as practicable upon request.

4.6.3.2 In the case of courses for which the duration is fewer than two weeks eVALU8 will be open for student completion following the conclusion of teaching.

4.6.3.3 Early Evaluations deployed under Section 4.6 will close one week after the conclusion of the teaching period's examination period (where relevant) or one week after the conclusion of the teaching period (where no examination period is specified) as identified in the University's academic calendar.

4.7 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or Head of School may request the deployment of an Extraordinary Evaluation.

4.7.1 Extraordinary Evaluations will be deployed by SIAU as soon as practicable upon request and will be open for student completion for a period of two weeks.

4.8 Completion of eVALU8 by a student is taken as consent (as outlined in a statement at the start of the survey) for the University to make use of the results including the possible use by staff for research and publication purposes. Results from eVALU8 may be combined with other enrolment and demographic data to enhance reporting and analysis to further inform quality improvement (e.g. program reviews). In all cases, the confidentiality of the participants who provide eVALU8 responses to the University will be maintained.

5. Promoting eVALU8 surveys

5.1 SIAU coordinates the University-wide promotion of eVALU8 surveys using a variety of print and digital media and provides student-facing staff with resources to encourage student participation.

5.2 Course Coordinators and related teaching staff are expected to promote the surveys to enrolled students in person and online. SIAU provides guidance and resources to assist staff in promoting the surveys.

6. Courses excluded from eVALU8 requirements

6.1 In-country, Study Overseas, enabling and thesis-based courses are excluded from the eVALU8 requirements.

6.2 Courses with fewer than five currently enrolled students will not be evaluated using the eVALU8 survey process. Course Coordinators are required to implement alternative strategies to collect student feedback with guidance available from C-SALT.

6.3 A Head of School can make a request, based on exceptional circumstances and including a rationale, to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) that a course other than those identified in Section 6.1 be excluded from the eVALU8 requirements on a temporary or permanent basis.

7. Release of eVALU8 results

7.1 eVALU8 results will be treated confidentially. In reporting eVALU8 results, student confidentiality is protected by results being reported in an aggregated format.

7.2 Staff to whom eVALU8 results are released are expected to ensure that the results are used in a manner which accords with the purpose of evaluating courses and teaching detailed in Section 2. Use of eVALU8 results must respect the rights, privacy and dignity of staff and students involved in the eVALU8 survey process.

7.3 All aggregated quantitative results for each eVALU8 survey item for all courses evaluated will be published on MyUSC, subject to Section 7.4.

7.4 eVALU8 results will be withheld from release where the number of responses to an evaluation is fewer than five. This restriction on the release of eVALU8 results is based on consideration that a small number of responses may not be a reliable measure of student sentiment and to preserve student confidentiality. Where there are fewer than five responses, the Head of School will provide the Course Coordinator with a summary of the quantitative and qualitative results within two weeks of the release of the eVALU8 Results Report.

7.5 eVALU8 results are released after the official release of student grades for the teaching period.

7.6 Course Coordinators receive an eVALU8 Results Report for the courses they coordinate. The report includes aggregated quantitative results for each eVALU8 survey item and students' raw qualitative responses.

7.6.1 Qualitative responses provided by students will be reviewed for breaches of the USC Student Conduct – Governing Policy by Heads of School and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) prior to the release of results reports. Breaches of the USC Student Conduct – Governing Policy will be reported by the Head of School and dealt with as per policy. The final decision regarding whether a change to student comments will be made rests with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). Where a change to a comment is approved, the eVALU8 Results Report will include the final approved comment.

7.6.2 The Course Coordinator will review eVALU8 results with course teaching staff at all study sites where the course was offered in the teaching period, including Third Party Managed Campuses. This review will include sharing the quantitative results for each eVALU8 survey item and a summary of the emergent themes identified from the qualitative results. The Course Coordinator must suppress any references to individuals in student comments in this collaborative review. Where specific reference to an individual is made, the Course Coordinator will discuss the student comment(s) with the individual to acknowledge good teaching practice or mentor the individual to improve aspects of their teaching practice. Course Coordinators will reflect on input from course teaching staff when completing the Course Feedback Report (CFR).

7.7 The Chief Academic Officer at Third Party Managed Campuses has access to aggregated quantitative results for each eVALU8 survey item. This access is only for courses offered at each site managed by the individual Third Party.

7.8 Access to students' qualitative responses is limited to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students), Head of School and the Course Coordinator (for courses they coordinate).

7.8.1 Additional staff may be nominated by the roles detailed in Section 7.8 to have access to students' qualitative responses. Approval of access for additional staff rests with the Head of School to which the course belongs.

7.9 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students), and Head of School may, at their discretion disseminate eVALU8 results, including quantitative and qualitative results, ensuring the removal of any reference to individuals in student comments, to:

- (a) relevant School and University Committees;
- (b) staff other than the incumbent Course Coordinator who were involved in the development or coordination of a course;
- (c) panel members appointed to review programs and courses, and;
- (d) professional, statutory, benchmarking partners and regulatory bodies to demonstrate quality and meet compliance reporting requirements.

7.10 A report on aggregated eVALU8 results for each eVALU8 survey item for all courses evaluated will be provided to a standing committee of Academic Board by SIAU biannually.

7.11 The University may include broad reference to eVALU8 results via the University website, media releases and promotional materials and activities as approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

8. Reviewing and responding to eVALU8 results

8.1 The University aims to achieve robust collection of student feedback on the quality of its courses and high levels of student satisfaction. To support this goal, all courses are expected to attain a minimum threshold value of at least 75% agreement to the survey item "Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this course" (Overall item).

8.2 The Course Coordinator is expected to engage in a scholarly process of critical reflection, interpretation, and implementation of improvements to both the teaching of the course and the course itself using eVALU8 results and feedback from other evaluation strategies, together with other measures of the course, such as student grades.

8.2.1 C-SALT will provide resources to assist in the reflection and improvement cycle. This process is documented in the form of the Course Feedback Report (CFR) to be completed by the Course Coordinator for each course evaluated. The CFR requires a summary of actions and improvements arising from the consideration of eVALU8 results and other available information, to be formulated for approval by the Course Coordinator's Head of School. The CFR requires that Course Coordinators address both issues that were raised that will result in changes to the course and issues that were raised but will not result in change and the reasons for this action.

8.2.1.1 In cases where the threshold value is not reached, Course Coordinators will respond to additional components of the CFR and discuss these aspects during the Performance Planning and Review (PPR) process.

8.2.1.2 In cases where eVALU8 results reflect high levels of student satisfaction Course Coordinators will be recognised by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

8.2.1.3 In cases where fewer than five responses to an eVALU8 survey are received, the Course Coordinator is required to complete a CFR using the summary of results provided by the Head of School.

8.2.1.4 In reference to Section 6.2, in cases where an alternative strategy to collect student feedback has been conducted for a course with fewer than five enrolments, the Course Coordinator is to complete a CFR based on available student feedback following the approach detailed in Section 8.2.1.

8.2.2 The Course Coordinator is expected to complete the CFR within two weeks of the release of the eVALU8 Results Report for their course(s). Following approval by the Course Coordinator's Head of School, CFRs are provided to Program Coordinators.

8.2.3 The CFR together with the summary of actions and improvements as approved by the Head of School will be published for access by students.

8.2.4 Where changes are proposed for a course, the Course Coordinator is responsible for initiating the approval process as identified in the University's Program Accreditation and Course Approval - Governing Policy and the Course Approval, Change and Discontinuation - Procedures.

8.3 The Program Coordinator utilises eVALU8 results, CFRs and the summary of actions and improvements from required courses in their program to engage in a process of critical reflection, interpretation, and implementation of improvements to the program. The Program Coordinator provides the Head of School with a Programmatic Summary Report (PSR) of the key actions and improvements for all required courses in their program.

8.4 The Head of School utilises eVALU8 results, CFRs and PSRs to review course and program design and delivery with the Course and Program Coordinators.

8.5 The Head of School or delegate also utilises eVALU8 results, CFRs and PSRs and the summary of actions and improvements from courses within their remit to engage in a process of critical reflection, interpretation, and implementation of improvements to courses and programs and to provide a standing committee of Academic Board with biannual reports on eVALU8 outcomes and resulting actions.

8.6 The standing committee of Academic Board utilises the reports for the purposes of policy development, identifying priorities for funding and support and developing strategies for learning and teaching.

END

NOTE

Staged implementation of the Procedures from 7 January 2019. For further information contact: Staff: CSALT@usc.edu.au Students: studentfeedback@usc.edu.au

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Academic Promotion - Operational Policy
Course Approval, Change and Discontinuation - Procedures
Coursework Curriculum Design - Academic Policy
Coursework Curriculum Design - Procedures
Performance Management - Operational Policy
Performance, Planning and Review (PPR) - Procedures
Program Review - Procedures
Staff Code of Conduct - Governing Policy
Student Conduct - Governing Policy
Student Evaluation of Courses and Teaching - Academic Policy

LINKED DOCUMENTS

Student Evaluation of Courses and Teaching - Academic Policy

SUPERSEDED DOCUMENTS

Student Evaluation of Teaching and Courses (SETAC) - Procedures

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015