

FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
**STUDENT COURSE EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE (SCEQ) ANALYSIS OF OPEN
RESPONSE COMMENTS 2003**
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

1 Degree course experience

NB: *As requested by the Faculty, responses relating to the degree course experience received from the Undergraduate students have been analysed by degree.*

1a Bachelor of Architecture

SCEQ 2003 OR Q 37¹ What are the best aspects of your degree course?

Students appreciate some aspects of the curriculum (2003: 38%)
(2002: 23%; 2001: 31%)

- Design, great design tutors, experimentation with design. This has been lacking in previous years but there is still room for improvement
- The integrated design projects are challenging but useful
- Choice of courses (electives) to develop personal interests

Lecturers and tutors are viewed favourably (2003: 19%)
(2002: 25%; 2001: 5%)

- The academic staff – quality lecturers internationally known and respected
- Excellent teachers still practicing in Architecture – they pass on both their current and past experience
- Quality of design tutors

Students appreciate good learning environment/ community (2003: 17%)
(2002: 8%; 2001: 10%)

- The support of my peers, because we work long hours and it is encouraging to have a group of students who are always willing to help each other
- Amount of time spent at uni creates a good sense of community
- Sense of community with students

Students are happy with the standard of teaching received (2003: 10%)
(2001: 18%)

- A lot of practical teaching in class – easy to understand
- Lecturers are very inspirational and many of them have interesting, varied views
- Lecturers are willing to listen to students concerns

¹ Number of comments received: 2003 – 48; 2002 – 40; 2001 – 39

SCEQ 2003 OR Q 38² What aspects of your degree course could be improved?

Students are critical of some aspects of the curriculum (2003: 28%)

(2002: 24%; 2001: 32%)

- Course structure is incoherent as interdisciplinary clashes between design and design sciences are talked about with the students. Repetition of subjects from one year to the next in an attempt to maintain old values.
- The balance of theory and practice could be more equal – currently more theory than practice
- Not enough of the courses overlap each other – integration of all courses insufficient

Students are unhappy with the workload (2003: 19%)

2002: 7%; 2001: 14%

- Massive workload. Too many electives need to comply (26 units is too higher weighting)
- Workload is too heavy. Time management on part of course coordinators terrible
- Planning of assessment. There is constant assessment which is very demanding and still a huge amount all due in last week

Students are dissatisfied with the physical facilities provided (2003: 17%)

(2002: 7; 2001: 14%)

- Computing facilities. There are too many people and courses in our building straining the availability of facilities
- Need more computer terminals. Especially during semester
- In Architecture you are always being told to get off computers for tutorials for some other class

Students are dissatisfied with the quality of the teaching staff (2003: 13%)

(2002: 20%; 2001: 18%)

- Some of the design tutors have questionable motives for their time as teaching, too many tutors have heavily lacking teaching skills
- If lecturers were more organised and knew what they were doing it would be easier for us
- It was obvious that some of the lecturers brought in from industry were not briefed on what to teach us

1b Bachelor of Design (Architecture)

SCEQ 2003 OR Q 37³ What are the best aspects of your degree course?

Students appreciate some aspects of the curriculum (2003: 29%)

(2002: 35%; 2001: 37%)

- The good attempt at cohesion and integration across the units of study – knowledge is logically and relevantly built up
- This degree covers many different areas that can be applied outside of that particular area. This is good because it achieves broad knowledge
- It is a good balance between something analytical and creative

² Number of comments received: 2003 – 47; 2002 – 41; 2001 – 44

³ Number of comments received: 2003 – 116; 2002 – 104; 2001 – 60

Students appreciate good learning environment/ community (2003: 22%)
(2002: 12%; 2001: 12%)

- Contact with like minded people to establish friendships and contact network for a lifetime
- I enjoy the fact that students studying in the same years are in the same lecture theatres and study most of the subjects together.
- Being part of an energetic academic community with fresh and unconventional ideas.

Students appreciate the practical aspects of the course (2003: 17%)
(2002: 31%; 2000: 13%)

- The design practice sessions are great, well planned and discusses with students, they make you think and discuss work progress
- The studio days – get the most face to face work with tutors. Spend time doing practical and interesting things
- Our design studios are extremely interesting and provide the hands-on and involved aspect of this course that I love

Students appreciate group work (2003: 12%)
(2002: 7%; 2000: 17%)

- We work as a group, a team, so we are learning from each other
- Group work – helps to work in a group and listen to other people's ideas
- Doing a lot of group work – makes you work well in a team and get to know a lot of people

SCEQ 2003 OR Q 38⁴ What aspects of your degree course could be improved?

Students are critical of some aspects of the curriculum (2003: 25%)
(2002: 39%; 2001: 32%)

- Maybe streamlining of some subjects in Design Studies so that some students could accelerate. Very basic learning in first year and thus very boring
- There is not enough emphasis on the development of ideas and the relationship of theoretical study to learning and education. Teaching on computer based software is completely insufficient
- Not enough emphasis on the computer side of design (e.g. CAD)

Students are unhappy with the standard of teaching received (2003: 21%)
(2002: 18%; 2001: 21%)

- Some lectures, though they have interesting content, are not presented in a stimulating way. Aspects of the lectures that could be improved are that some lecturers simply read straight from notes on overheads – if you think you will be able to get notes off the web, you will not bother concentrating
- Some of the lectures are a bit outdates or not made interesting
- Lecturers need to have better control of a noisy lecture room. Lecturers need to be prepared in a way that keeps the attention of students; this could be done by having notes on an overhead for students to copy. this tends to draw students away from talking much I've noticed

⁴ Number of comments received: 2003 – 112; 2002 – 101; 2001 – 53

Students are unhappy with their workload

(2003: 15%)

(2002: 13%; 2001: 15%)

- The workload is extremely high and very competitive, this produces a good standard of work but with a lot of stress
- The amount of work/ assignments should reflect the number of credit points for electives too much work for only 4 credit points
- The workload way too high. Reduction in the amount of work would be greatly appreciated

Administration and organisation of the course needs improving (includes timetabling)

(2003: 13%)

(2002: 15%; 2001: 6%)

- The scheduling of classes. Especially in first year, where we have 2 x 4 hour lecture blocks on Thursday and Friday mornings make it difficult to concentrate for such an extended period
- Organisation of the course. We are often shuffled around when we have lectures
- Administration could be better; a better planned timetable without as much variation would allow students to become more involved in university life in general.

1c Bachelor of Design Computing

SCEQ 2003 OR Q 37⁵

What are the best aspects of your degree course?

Students appreciate some aspects of the curriculum

(2003: 39%)

(2002: 37%; 2001: 52%)

- The course has improved a lot over the course of 3 years, as my year will be the first to graduate. The best aspects are that the course coordinators listen to students needs and act on them, such as introducing new courses that have been in high demand
- Final year was great in terms of subject matter, electives and organisation.
- The course is very interesting with the sorts of electives it provides. It provides a whole base of knowledge to all aspects relating to the degree

Students appreciate the practical components of the curriculum

(2003: 20%)

(2002: 10%)

- Able to demonstrate my talent in design. Use practical skills rather than just theoretical
- The practical work that really lets you show the skills you have gained relevant to the area of study
- The interactivity and hands-on experience that is offered. This is a much preferred form of learning than heaps of theory and not taking

Lecturers and tutors are viewed positively

(2003: 17%)

(2001: 13%)

- A lot of the staff hold a PhD or are in the middle of researching – a plus when it comes to such a dynamic industry like design computing/ architecture
- Knowledgeable lecturers and teachers
- Working with active researchers gives me the opportunity to learn the latest up to date things regarding the study

⁵ Number of comments received: 2003 – 23; 2002 – 41; 2001 – 41

Students are happy with the standard of teaching received (2003: 15%)
(2002: 5%; 2001: 9%)

- Having some good lecturers – who really motivate students to do their won work – and some of them are really well prepared for their lectures
- The teacher student relationship is excellent because of the enthusiasm of the teacher and his way of presenting these materials in lectures
- Most lecturers are good at explaining things

SCEQ 2003 OR Q 38⁶ What aspects of your degree course could be improved?

Students are dissatisfied with some aspects of the curriculum (2003: 56%)
(2002: 36%; 2001: 56%)

- Some of the core subjects don't seem relevant to the degree such as Software Development 1. It seems out of context with other subjects taken
- They should teach us how to draw and the basics of illustration. It is a DESIGN degree after all
- The ambiguity of subjects, their organisation and coordination. We should not have to do core subjects that are irrelevant to our degree. Electives are hard to choose, are always full and there is not enough variety of electives to choose from

Students are unhappy with the standard of teaching received (2003: 17%)
(2002: 24%; 2001: 17%)

- Certain lecturers do no more than read out notes already available on the internet.
- The teaching. It is obvious that some teachers don't put any effort in at all while others are completely dedicated to teaching us
- Some units were boring – we could have been taught in a more interesting way

Students would appreciate the provision of clearer expectations from lecturers (2003: 12%)
(2002: 19%; 2001: 17%)

- Units expectations could be improved, often we are not sure what is needed to be produced, we don't have a clear scope on the project standard and size, it will be better if the overall 'project frame' is given for us to refer to
- For some of the units we were not sure what was expected for assignments and projects
- Students have been confused over one assignment in semester two and this is partly due to the lack of communication of what is expected from this particular task.

Students would appreciate a work experience component in their course (2003: 10%)

- Provide all students with work experience for one semester. I think I should be put in a working environment to familiarise ourselves with the economy and the workload
- I know that this degree does not have a work experience program for my degree. This is very bad for when I finish the degree because the profession for this course requires students to have work experience
- Industry related subjects and more involvement in the workforce is mandatory for this degree to survive

⁶ Number of comments received: 2003 – 41; 2002 – 42; 2001 – 18

2 Experience of student administration and student support services

Experiences of student administration and student support services are similar across all students, and not dependant on degree course. Therefore these comments have not been separated by degree.

SCEQ 2003 OR Q 67⁷ What are the best aspects of the student administration and student support services?

Staff are helpful, friendly and efficient (2003: 53%)

(2002: 53%; 2001: 53%; 2000: 53%)

- Student administration is always willing to find out the answers to particular questions that you have
- Our Faculty student centre was extremely helpful in trying to understand enrolment difficulties and provide help in directing me to other faculties (e.g. for timetable changes)
- Our Faculty student administration was the best, the staff there are really understanding and helpful, plus, some of the staff were super nice

Students appreciate ability to access services online (2003: 15%)

(2002: 6%; 2001: 4%; 2000: 13%)

- Probably the fact that you can check your enrolment details via the net
- Changing timetables online is good because you don't have to go to the services centre and wait for 30 minutes to change the timetable
- That they are easily accessible online where plenty of information is available

Students appreciate Intranet and Internet services (2003: 9%)

(2002: 10%; 2001: 8%)

- Use of the Intranet is the best aspect of this university. The fact that any student can borrow books from the library, check exam results, change your own detail, enrolment gives the student a huge benefit
- It is very efficient that such a service as MyUni is online and working
- USydNet services are great, being able to get administrative things done over the Internet is very handy and very practical

Students appreciate availability and existence of services (2003: 8%)

(2002: 3%; 2001: 4%; 2000: 3%)

- They are available if and when needed
- Somewhere to go when you need help and answers all your questions
- Widely available on campus

Other aspects mentioned include:

- Accessibility and convenience of services (2003: 6%) (2002: 4%; 2001: 4%; 2000: 5%)
- Variety of services available (2003: 2%) (2002: 6%; 2001: 7%; 2000: 8%)

Specific services mentioned by name include:

- Library staff and services (2003: 6%) (2002: 10%; 2001: 13%; 2000: 18%)
- Health Service (2003: 3%) (2002: 1%; 2001: 1%; 2000: 3%)

SCEQ 2003 OR Q 68⁸ How could student administration and student support services be improved?

⁷ Number of comments received: 2003 – 131; 2002 – 134; 2001 – 141; 2000 - 40

Opening hours should be changed (2003: 25%)
(2002: 25%; 2001: 1%; 2000: 25%)

- I found that with the limited hours that the Faculty student services were open, I had a little bit of trouble accessing it as a full-time student
- The student services at Architecture are hardly ever open and their opening times vary from day to day so they are hard to remember
- Architecture students services have very limited opening hours and don't even open on Fridays

Staff could be more knowledgeable, helpful and efficient (2003: 23%)
(2002: 19%; 2001: 28%; 2000: 19%)

- Often problems seem to be referred to other people and administrations because people either do not want to deal with issues themselves, or do not understand how the issue should be solved.
- Having more knowledgeable and caring assistants available. Less 'passing the buck'; and giving me the run around
- More user friendly, accessible, have a better or more knowledgeable staff at hand

Computer Access Centres (2003: 16%)
(2002: 8%; 2001: 23%; 2000: 22%)

- Computer labs – sometimes too many students and not enough computers. Some computer facilities need to be upgraded
- Madsen computer labs could do with new computers, or at least new keyboards
- Not enough computers in Architecture

More staff should be employed, particularly at peak periods (2003: 11%)
(2002: 7%; 2001: 8%; 2000: 8%)

- More staff to increase efficiency
- More staff especially when it comes to enrolment and HECS payments
- More people working and helping at peak times

Other aspects mentioned include:

- Services should be advertised more (2003: 8%) (2002: 8%; 2001: 9%; 2000: 14%)
- Require ability to enrol online (2003: 6%) (2001: 2%)
- Unhappy with Intranet/ Internet (2003: 4%) (2002: 2%; 2001: 4%; 2000: 3%)

Other services mentioned by name include:

- Library staff and services (2003: 4%) (2002: 5%; 2001: 4%; 2000: 11%)
- International Office (2003: 3%) (2002: 2%; 2001: 1%; 2000: 3%)

⁸ Number of comments received: 2003 – 120; 2002 – 124; 2001 – 115; 2000 - 36