

FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
STUDENT COURSE EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE (SCEQ)
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
ANALYSIS OF OPEN RESPONSE COMMENTS: 2005

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ), is designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data about students' perceptions of the quality of teaching and learning in their degree courses, as well as their perceptions of student administration and support services. As part of the questionnaire students are asked to provide comments on the best aspects of their university experience (degree and administration) and those that could be improved. Based on the responses to these questions, this document seeks to provide an analysis of the areas of best practice, and opportunities for improvement, in the experiences of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Architecture in 2005.

The following summary of the areas of best practice and opportunities for improvement in the students' degree experience are for the whole student body. As requested by the faculty, the main body of the report contains an analysis by respondents in individual degree program. Since the experiences of student administration and student support services are similar irrespective of degree program, the analysis of this area of the student experience in the Faculty of Architecture has not been divided by degree.

Degree experience: areas of best practice

The aspects of degree experience which attracted most positive comments from undergraduate students were:

	% of comments received	
	2005	2003
Curriculum: practical aspects of the course	23%	14%
Learning community: learning environment	21%	19%
Curriculum: content and structure	19%	33%
Learning community: tutorials and seminars	15%	8%
Learning resources: physical facilities	12%	7%
Good teaching: standard of teaching received	11%	10%

Degree experience: opportunities for improvement

The areas of degree experience which undergraduate students considered most in need of improvement were:

	% of comments received	
	2005	2003
Curriculum: content and structure	32%	32%
Good teaching: standard of teaching received	21%	17%
Good teaching: useful and timely feedback	15%	7%
Clear goals and standards	14%	4%
Appropriate workload	10%	14%
Curriculum: practical aspects of course	9%	5%

Student administration and student support services: areas of best practice

The aspects of student administration and student support services which attracted most positive comments from undergraduate students in 2005 were:

	% of comments received	
	2005	2003
Customer service: quality	25%	53%
Library services	9%	6%
Web communications: online access to services	7%	15%
Services provided: accessibility and convenience	6%	6%
<i>No other aspects or services were mentioned in more than 6% of comments</i>		

Student administration and student support services: opportunities for improvement

The aspects of student administration and student support services which undergraduate students considered most in need of improvement in 2005 were:

	% of comments received	
	2005	2003
Customer service: quality	16%	24%
Administration and organisation: general (incl.Faculty)	14%	
Customer service: opening hours	12%	25%
Web communications: intranet/ internet	11%	4%
Student centre	9%	5%
Customer service: staffing levels	8%	11%

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1 Introduction

The Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ), is designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data about students' perceptions of the quality of teaching and learning in their degree courses, as well as their perceptions of student administration and support services. As part of the questionnaire students are asked to provide comments on the best aspects of their university experience (degree and administration) and those that could be improved. Based on the responses to these questions, this document seeks to provide an analysis of the areas of best practice, and opportunities for improvement, in the experiences of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Architecture in 2005.

In 2005, an average of 80 % of students from all degrees who responded to the SCEQ respondents provided comments on their degree experiences. 69% of respondents provided comments on the best aspects of their experiences of student administration and student support services, whilst 53% provided comments relating to areas in need of improvement.

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

2 Arrangement

1. Degree experience: Bachelor of Design
 - Analysis of comments referring to best aspects
 - Analysis of comments suggesting improvements
2. Degree experience: Bachelor of Design Computing
 - Analysis of comments referring to best aspects
 - Analysis of comments suggesting improvements
3. Degree experience: Bachelor of Architecture
 - Analysis of comments referring to best aspects
 - Analysis of comments suggesting improvements

Within the above sections, responses are ranked according to the percentage of comments received for each aspect. Sample comments are provided for the six aspects that received the highest percentage of comments. For comparison, results for the previous years qualitative analysis¹ are provided in brackets after the 2005 results.

4. Experience of student administration and student support services: all students
 - Analysis of comments referring to best aspects
 - Analysis of comments suggesting improvements

Within this section, responses are ranked according to the percentage of comments received for each aspect. Sample comments are provided for the six aspects that received the highest percentage of comments. For comparison, results for the previous years qualitative analysis are provided in brackets after the 2005 results. Experiences of student administration and student support services are similar across all students, and not dependant on degree course. Therefore this section has not been separated by degree.

Only aspects that received more than 5% of comments in 2005 are included in this report. To preserve student confidentiality, sample comments are only provided if there are six or more comments relating to that aspect in the responses. Comments that may possibly identify the student are not been included in the sample comments. Comments are transcribed exactly as they appear in the original documents.

¹ i.e. 2001 – 2003. The SCEQ was not administered in 2004.

3 Analysis of the comments: taxonomy and process

The manual analysis and evaluation method used by the University is based on an in-house taxonomy which allows for standardisation of reporting across the university and ease of comparison with the SCEQ quantitative analysis reports. Within the taxonomy, the main categories are based on the SCEQ items, and sub-categories based on their characteristics. Additional categories, based on the frequency of occurrence in students' comments over the past four years, are also included. Categories for the analysis of comments relating to administration and support services are defined using the most commonly mentioned aspects e.g. quality of customer service, opening hours, staffing levels, online access to services; and names of individual services e.g. Counselling, Library, Student Centre.²

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation and feedback• Academic Board policies• Curriculum• Skills development• Learning community• Learning resources• Overall satisfaction• Good teaching | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear goals and standards• Appropriate assessment• Appropriate workload• Elearning• Research-led teaching• Student progression and retention• Cultural diversity• Equity |
|--|---|

Categories used in the analysis of SCEQ Open Response comments

This taxonomy is under constant revision as the need to sub-divide categories becomes apparent. For example, until 2005 the category *Online learning and resources* was used to record all comments mentioning students' experiences of elearning. In 2005, the increase of elearning across the university, and the review of its use, has necessitated the sub-division of this category into the following elements: *Online resources; Elearning: uptake by students/ staff; Learning management systems; Support provided; and Face to face vs. online learning.* NB: The SCEQ included specific questions on elearning for the first time in the 2005 survey. These additional qualitative analysis topics reflect these changes.

Each comment received is analysed according to the SCEQ Taxonomy, with those including more than one aspect being counted in each aspect mentioned.

Students undertaking double degrees were asked to identify which degree/s they were commenting on in their answer. Where this has occurred the comment is counted in the results for the applicable faculty; where this has not occurred, the comment is counted in the results for both faculties.

It should be noted, however, that the absence of favourable comments on a particular aspect of learning and teaching does not reflect that this is not an area of best practice. Rather that the students are happy with their experiences, and prefer to focus on commenting on areas in need of improvement. Since 2000, more comments have been received from undergraduate students in reply to questions asking students to list areas in need of improvement than those asking for areas of best practice.

² A copy of the SCEQ Taxonomy is provided as a separate attachment.

4 Degree experience: Bachelor of Design

4.1 Analysis of comments referring to the best aspects³

Curriculum: practical aspects of the course (2005: 24%)
(2003: 17%; 2002: 31%; 2000: 13%)

- Studio time, it allows for discussion and analysis of our design ideas with tutors and other students. More time could be given to this type of activity as it is very helpful.
- Design practice as the small groups and whole day of classes enables a personal learning environment.
- Studio based learning with tutors in architectural practice. Helped me to develop and understand the design process and explore notes of inquiry into design.
- It's very hands-on - I've learnt a lot by having a go at various tasks, such as drawing and model-making. The design groups have been really helpful - they promote collaborative learning with other students.

Learning community: tutorials and seminars (2005: 22%)
(2003: 10%; 2002: 7%; 2001: 12%)

- Tutorials - feels more like practical work experience type learning rather than the usual lecture / exam.
- The best aspect of architecture is the tutorial groups, where we have access to the help and opinions of one tutor for approximately every fifteen students. smaller groups make it much easier to actually work one on one and develop our own individual designs.
- the tutorials in our design studio - because we are attended to personally by our tutor and given helpful advice one on one.
- we have tutorials two days a week for communication and design. these are by far the most relevant and best aspects of our course as architecture students quite honestly gain very, very little, if anything, from conventional lectures.

Curriculum: content and structure (2005: 18%)
(2003: 29%; 2002: 35%; 2001: 37%)

- I am also really enjoying the history of architecture it put the rest of what we are learning in a historical context and the lecture is very good and engaging. I also love that first yr is pass or fail because it means that those of us like me who have had no experience in drafting of architecture have a year to develop skills as we progress to second year on a even playing field
- Practical learning as well as theoretical learning, inspiring lecturers with helpful advice on moving forward being in first year, I have been given a broad understanding of each aspect of my course.
- the content of the course. it is well selected in terms of relevance which makes it more interesting for student, hence allowing more confidence.
- The best aspects of my course, Bachelor of design in Architecture, would have to be the ability to explore and create my own designs and ideas and have them be put forward and presented. This freedom is really encouraging and effective not only in my learning experiences but also in a social aspect. It gives you confidence and a feeling that your thoughts matter.

³ Number of comment received: 2005: 103; 2003: 116; 2002: 104; 2001: 60

Learning community: learning environment **(2005: 18%)**
(2003: 22%; 2002: 12%; 2001: 12%)

- The weekly interaction with the same students as this creates a comfortable learning atmosphere.
- We have our own space at uni to work / engage with others, learn from what fellow students are doing. Good sense of community.
- interactivity between tutors and students, feel a sense of closeness as there are a relatively small group of students doing this, we are constantly seeing each other.
- Best aspects of my degree course - being in a small faculty, where you are able to make close friends for 3 or more years. It makes you want to come into uni each day, knowing that you will have people to laugh and talk to.

Good teaching: standard of teaching received **(2005: 13%)**
(2003: 8%; 2002: 3%; 2001: 10%)

- The teachers that are enthusiastic and knowledgeable enough in their field of study to explain in simple, everyday terms, the new concepts being taught. Teachers that can relate the new concepts to everyday objects, events or ideas really help students remember and understand what is being taught. Those teachers who are only capable of explaining things in technical/academic jargon are probably not suited to teaching and should only participate in research.
- Practical learning as well as theoretical learning, inspiring lecturers with helpful advice on moving forward being in first year, I have been given a broad understanding of each aspect of my course.
- The subject is very interesting to me and I am keen to learn about it, therefore I enjoy the lecturers and tutors who are good communicators of their knowledge and skill. I also enjoy the interface with Architecture professionals in the studio tutorials.
- Having lecturers and tutors that are totally into what they are teaching

Learning resources: physical facilities **(2005: 11%)**
(2003: 8%; 2002: 9%)

- The resources available (as in the amount of computers, the book variety in the library, and the large studios available for us to do our work) - this is good because we can all have access to the necessities of our course.
- Ability to use all the facilities resources for assignments etc.
- The faculty building. It is well equipped.
- Good studio facilities, good library (excellent)

Other aspects mentioned included:

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>
Curriculum: flexibility, diversity, variety	8%	6%	2%	3%
Skills development: graduate generic attributes	10%	4%	2%	3%
Good teaching: useful and timely feedback	8%	9%	5%	8%
Learning resources: library	11%	2%		

4.2 Analysis of comments suggesting improvements⁴

Curriculum: content and structure (2005: 30%) (2003: 25%; 2002: 39%; 2001: 32%)

- the course isn't structured nearly enough and i often find it hard to know what's going on. the lecturers and other staff don't seem organized
- more time given to explaining basic INTEGRAL concepts of design such as environmental concerns, structural systems, construction systems (though this has begun to be more covered in semester two, though it is still not enough) more thorough teaching is required, not just lectures in which it is hard to listen, learn and ask questions tutorials with one teacher and 30 students is not helpful either,
- My subject involving information technology was rushed so that I could not understand the details working with each computer program taught. The workload is heavy, and much time is invested in preparing each assignment and presentation.
- More thorough studies of real buildings i.e., from design to detailing to actual building. Maybe collaborative project for the entire year. More information on sustainability 0 not just vague concepts and recycled content from previous semesters.

Good teaching: standard of teaching received (2005: 23%) (2003: 21%; 2002: 18%; 2001: 21%)

- The teaching ability of many of the tutors. I resent being taught by senior students instead of qualified lecturers. The communications tutorials are too big. You have a 5th year student (who has no teaching qualifications or experience) trying to impart complex skills to a group of 35 first year students, most of whom have never worked on a CAD program, or (last term) had any drafting or model making experience. Some of the Design Tutors have no teaching skills either, are inconsistent in their expectations and vague in their instructions. They do not explain why they are asking you to do something a certain way so that the learning process makes sense. Some tutors will ask you to do certain work and then never look at it. Some of the lecturers, however talented and skilled they may be, are not good teachers. They do not communicate their knowledge effectively. XX, for example, clearly is very knowledgeable, but spent the 90 minutes of lecture time reading through his notes.
- The lectures can be improved because sometimes they are completely irrelevant to the course and some lecturers are either really boring or hard to follow.
- staff are not actively engaging in student's learning - staff seldom understand stress and workloads students are facing
- some people don't spend as much effort as others, and they tend to drag the teaching quality. Couldn't teachers focus more with a group of enthusiastic students?

Clear goals and standards (2005: 15%) (2003: 4%; 2002: 3%; 2001: 4%)

- The clarity of our course, including assessment dates and work expectations are often confused and result in poor grade responses due to the ambiguity of the process.
- The criteria that is expected of us - sometimes it is too subjective and there is no set or preferred structure made to succeed.
- A clearer explanation of what is expected in tasks, mainly an example of the standard of work would be useful. As some of the tasks set are not things I have been required to do before.
- More guidance in respect to what we should know by the end of each semester.

⁴ Number of comment received: 2005: 106; 2003: 112; 2002: 101; 2001: 53

Curriculum: practical aspects
(2003: 4%; 2002: 1%; 2001: 4%)

(2005: 12%)

- I found it difficult designing a project in semester one because I had very little idea of what was expected. I would have preferred to have spent more time learning theory to create a more sound context for my project and my overall understanding of what to do.
- The design practise lessons on Tuesday's require students to just do an assignment when given. Little feedback or advice is given on how to start or approach an assignment.
- Make hands on teaching methods for IT and other technical skill orientated subjects in the course. I think TAFE style of instruction would be good for subjects like construction, design computing.
- More practical experience - I think learning through practical building/construction in order to understand construction - how buildings are put together - this would be very useful.

Learning community: tutorials and seminars
(2003: 6%; 2001: 2%)

(2005: 11%)

- Some tutors expect more or less work of different tutorial groups. I found my semester one tutor gave us more constant work but in return spent a lot of time (outside class) helping and motivating us. He had a much more personal interest in each student, that enabled us to develop our skills a lot more than some others. I find the inconsistencies among the tutors can benefit some students but also disadvantage others.
- The running of the Design Studio because it is hard to design while at University so you are there all day just to see the tutor for 15 minutes. So there is quite a bit of wasted time.
- A lot of time is wasted waiting around to speak to the tutors, as we have very large tutor groups. Sometimes i can be waiting around for hours to receive a maximum of 10min feedback. If this time was more effectively used then i would be much happier with the course. This can be seen particularly on presentation days.
- More tutorial time in an Architecture degree the students only get roughly half a day per week with tutors (because of funding cuts) meaning the majority of work and learning has to be done independently.

Good teaching: useful and timely feedback
(2003: 6%; 2002: 6%; 2001: 6%)

(2005: 10%)

- The feedback from lecturers no receiving marks, any sort of feedback on exams, assessments submitted as well as overall course coordination so students don't turn up continually uninformed that class has been cancelled, rescheduled etc. Email warnings would be effective.
- The time spent with each individual student is limited and therefore it makes feedback difficult to process and to understand what essentially need be done in one's own work. Also The interaction between staff and students should exist more.
- I think there could be a lot more feedback for assignments, exams, projects etc. At the moment I don't feel that there is enough feedback and it is difficult to gauge where I have made errors and what the correct answers are, if I have done enough work, and where improvements could be made. Greater feedback would help me to gain a sense of where I am at with my learning, and how I can build upon it.
- More feedback provided on assignments. Standard of work and how to achieve it should be more clearly and consistently outlined.

Other aspects mentioned included:

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>
Appropriate workload	8%	15%	13%	15%
Administration and organisation: general comments	8%	13%	15%	6%
Learning community: class sizes	8%	3%		
Communication	8%			
Overall satisfaction: quality of academic staff	7%	3%	4%	2%
Overall satisfaction: quality of degree	7%	2%		
Resource issues	7%	1%	1%	2%
Good teaching: clear explanations	6%	10%	12%	9%
Appropriate assessment	6%	7%	11%	2%
Learning community: learning environment	6%	1%		2%

5 Degree experience: Bachelor of Design Computing

5.1 Analysis of comments referring to the best aspects⁵

Learning community: learning environment (2005: 29%)
(2003: 12%; 2002: 2%; 2001: 26%)

- The small cohort of students makes it easier to learn; we receive more feedback from staff (usually one-to-one) and more feedback from our peers. Because of the small class sizes, we get to know each other (other students and staff) better, creating a better learning environment.
- our degree is small, like a high school class, makes the change over from high school less frightening, and students form fair size groups of friends (4 - 8) whereas in big degrees (like accounting) there are too many people and while people will find friends, it's usually only in groups of 2 or 3
- The best aspects are the people that are in the course. Both the students and the teaching staff, they are all extremely supportive and helpful in all situations.
- There is a great sense of a community within the students and lecturers of this course. It helps foster the exchange of ideas between students where we can learn from within the best of us

Curriculum: content and structure (2005: 26%)
(2003: 37%; 2002: 37%; 2001: 52%)

- A good mix of hands on technical work, with a good background of theory. These gives a broad learning experience
- Content is constantly changed and updated according to the lecturer's research fields, so it's not just static (we're not learning about things from 2 decades ago, or reading old textbooks).
- Design Computing studios (year 1 and probably year 3). Students learn very practical skills and knowledge in the DesComp studios, and so far the assessment has been transparent and clear. Other subjects that introduce usable knowledge and theory, or that familiarise students with often-neglected areas of design/computers/software are also good, in theory.
- The variety of subjects, we know a little bit of everything so we have more choices.

Curriculum: practical aspects of the course (2005: 20%)
(2003: 20%; 2002: 10%)

- The best aspects of my degree are the major group projects, as they allow an idea to evolve throughout the design process. This is achieved in a "team" atmosphere, and makes the project more interesting and involved. This contributes to communication, problem solving, and teamwork skills.
- There's a lot of practical work, making it fun and enjoyable. This motivates me greatly.
- Bachelor of Design Computing. The practical based subjects, as they give all a hands on experience
- Mainly the practical hands on classes such as the studio's. I like these because not only are they an enjoyable time with a lighter atmosphere, but they also allow us to develop our skills.

⁵ Number of comment received: 2005: 35; 2003: 41; 2002: 41; 2001: 23

Learning resources: physical facilities

(2005: 20%)

(2003: 7%; 2002: 7%; 2001: 4%)

- Having good services which relate to my degree is useful. You can rely on the equipment you need and there is good support staff to fix any problems you might run into. It lets you focus on the work you have to get done. The amount of resources to share amongst the faculty is also good. Having tools available at Uni that you need for your course, but are not feasible to buy yourself is helpful. Being allowed the time to spend in the labs you can discover and learn more.
- The students of the degree are also given access to the latest information technology in order to complete our work, which is necessary and considerate of staff.
- Computer Facilities and software: The Faculty provide us with all the softwares needed in our studies as well as good internet connection and good printing facilities.
- Computer facility - very accessible.

Skills development: generic graduate attributes

(2005: 17%)

(2003: 5%)

- Integration of group work throughout all subjects help extend social skills and working as a team, which is important in many real world situation.
- The best aspects of my degree are the major group projects, as they allow an idea to evolve throughout the design process. This is achieved in a "team" atmosphere, and makes the project more interesting and involved. This contributes to communication, problem solving, and teamwork skills.
- It has really taught me HOW to learn without relying on other people. It took me a while to understand that it is up to me to learn software tools on my own but I receive feedback and guidance on good design.
- Oral Presentations..... I would like to get into advertising and marketing and this degree has taught me the art of public speaking and the presentation of a product. it also taught me it doesn't matter how good your product is if you cannot sell it to a consumer.

No other aspects were mentioned in less than 6 comments.

Other aspects mentioned included:

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>
Good teaching: standard of teaching received	11%	15%	5%	9%
Research led teaching	11%	5%		
Curriculum: diversity, flexibility, diversity	11%		2%	
Online resources	9%	7%	17%	13%
Good teaching: useful and timely feedback	9%	5%	5%	
Good teaching: motivating, challenging, stimulating	9%	2%	7%	
Skills development: discipline specific	9%			
Appropriate assessment	6%	5%	5%	13%
Learning community: class sizes	6%		12%	
Curriculum: relevance to work/ career	6%		5%	
Good teaching: group work	6%		4%	

5.2 Analysis of comments suggesting improvements⁶

Curriculum: content and structure

(2005: 42%)

(2003: 56%; 2002: 24%; 2001: 56%)

- I feel that our course is completely unstructured, and feels very aimless most of the time. Subjects we do that seem clear and important from the description are convoluted by the special interests of the person teaching it, and others are quite difficult but seem to be very specialised and unnecessary for undergraduate students. I feel I come out of most courses lacking the skills I expected going into it. I think emphasis has to be put on skill development and concept understanding rather than just exploring whatever the particular lecturer's interest is. What we need to be taught must be in line with what we will need to know and be able to do when working. The year below us are constantly getting better versions of subjects we had before, and it is quite frustrating. Another frustrating aspect is that our course somehow seems to get confused with aspects of an Architecture degree. For example, the 1st years are doing 3D modelling, an computer graphics industry standard program, while we used Microstation and basically did computer aided architectural drafting. We are a completely separate degree, we just happen to share the same Faculty (the name of which, incidentally, does not even acknowledge us).
- There simply aren't enough electives. Students have to go to other Faculties to fill up their credit points. Some take graduate electives, which I think is ridiculous; undergraduate students should be kept away from graduate subjects (1. because they remove options for further study, and 2. because the learning levels are supposed to be different). Groups of 10 students, or less, should be enough to allow electives to run, and tutors should be provided for these numbers. DesComp is a generalist degree, but I think it would be beneficial to have streams or majors; it helps students work towards a goal, and also allows employers to understand what the degree is. The faculty should also understand which subjects students dislike (there are definitely some none of us liked!) and change the structure. If there's no promise of students going into a particular field, then the 6cpts core subject should instead be offered as an elective.
- Thrown-together aspects, some courses are extremely poorly justified as being core components, elective list for subjects that count towards degree far too short. There are many other courses in the university that have a great degree of relevancy and interest for this course (namely, more software development, English and creative writing, logic, mathematics), but yet we are forced to do unrelated 'Art Worship' courses that have nothing to do with Design Computing.
- Perhaps there can be more theory or discussion towards the factors of design. I feel that as a student in the design using digital media we may benefit from the exposure of design products outside our field, such as industrial products, cars, furniture and have a discussion on why these designs were successful and to what conventions they broke

Good teaching: useful and timely feedback

(2005: 29%)

(2003: 2%; 2002: 7%; 2001: 22%)

- More feedback is needed. This semester (July 2005) I studied 4 courses and haven't received any feedback at all in any subject!!! Not even on previous assignments through out the semester. This was very bad because I couldn't learn from my previous mistakes and avoid them in the final assignments. Also I couldn't know whether I am doing well in a certain course or not!!
- Receiving feedback on assessments - generally none was given in time to help improve marks in later assignments. In some units, i never received any marks whatsoever for assignments, and thus had no idea whether i was doing well or doing badly.
- Results of assignments could be returned as soon as possible so students are aware of how well they are doing before they embark on another assignment.
- The feedback loop between the tutors and students, letting us know where we are at, at times, during the course, if we are falling behind, and which aspects we could further revise in order to create a more in-depth understanding of what the subject is trying to develop within students.

⁶ Number of comment received: 2005: 38; 2003: 41; 2002: 42; 2001: 18

Good teaching: standard of teaching received

(2005: 16%)

(2003: 17%; 2002: 24%; 2001: 17%)

- Some improvements could be made in delivering the content of a subject and depth. The class are at different levels in their competencies on a particular subject, so knowing the class and capabilities should let the lecturer know what to teach and how to teach it.
- Teaching- Cannot stand monotone boring strict lecturers like X.
- We are a completely separate degree, we just happen to share the same Faculty (the name of which, incidentally, does not even acknowledge us). Same goes for some of our lecturers. They have to stop using architecture examples and start using examples from computer design. And if they can recognise that what we are doing needs to be changed, change it for us and not the next year coming through.
- Some lecturers are at different standard; some are adequate but some are exceptional - its the exceptional ones that make the whole learning uni experience amazing. A

No other aspects were mentioned in more than 6 comments.

Other aspects mentioned included:

	2005	2003	2002	2001
Clear goals and standards	11%	10%	7%	11%
Appropriate workload	11%	7%	5%	
Overall satisfaction: quality of degree	11%			6%
Skills development: discipline specific	11%			
Curriculum: flexibility, diversity, variety	8%			

6 Degree experience: Bachelor of Architecture

In 2000, less than 20 students in the B.Arch program provided comments in response to the to the open questions. Since it statistically invalid to convert this low number into percentages, results from 2000 are not included in the comparative results..

6.1 Analysis of comments referring to the best aspects⁷

Curriculum: practical aspects of the course (2005: 24%)
(2003: 4%; 2002: 13%; 2001: 15%)

- The practical knowledge which is provided in this course. It's useful for future career
- The practical experience gained throughout the semester with design projects helps a great deal in putting skills learned to use.
- the day long design sessions throughout the entire degree (this is the old system though as design in the future years will only run for about 9 weeks or so, which is really not enough to delve into enough development in design.
- In the architecture degree course, travelling to different places for site visits and precedent studies makes the course more enjoyable.

Learning community: learning environment (2005: 21%)
(2003: 17%; 2002: 8%; 2001: 10%)

- Interaction with other students because it facilitates learning and the exchange of ideas. Friendly staff - helps learning
- Feel like a community. Everyone in our year going through the same stress and excitement. Studios are the best. Pin up boards to view etc help learning.
- The student community - Architecture is a self contained unit you know all your fellow peers. This is because we have our own library, computer room, workshops. Very important in future industrial relationships.
- B. Arch. Learning in a studio environment is excellent as it fosters bonds between students and staff, builds commradery and allows problems to be solved collectively thus enriching the learning process.

No other aspects were mentioned in less than 6 comments.

Other aspects mentioned included:

	2005	2003	2002	2001
Curriculum: content and structure	15%	38%	23%	31%
Good teaching: motivating, stimulating, challenging	12%		3%	3%
Learning community: tutorials and seminars	9%	6%	15%	10%
Overall satisfaction: quality of academic staff	6%	19%	25%	5%
Good teaching: standard of teaching received	6%	10%		18%
Appropriate assessment	6%	2%		5%
Curriculum: flexibility, diversity, variety	6%		13%	15%
Learning resources: physical facilities	6%		8%	

⁷ Number of comment received: 2005: 33; 2003: 48; 2002: 40; 2001: 39; 2000: 11

6.2 Analysis of comments suggesting improvements⁸

Curriculum: content and structure (2005: 26%)
(2003: 28%; 2002: 24%; 2001: 32%)

- Too much emphasis is placed on the first part of the design process and projects tend to have few realistic constraints. Also the number of electives we are required to take often results in the study of irrelevant subject areas. This unnecessarily increases work load. Students in Architecture often go without sleep.
- The base foundation courses aren't very well-planned. Design is not worth more than the rest. In this degree course tutorials are more important than lectures, but we don't have very good tutors to support our learning. The facilities are lacking. Access to studios, including woodwork not available.
- Could all the subject be organized to study by workshop, case study? The course should decrease lecture time. We need the study environment as close to the career environment as possible.
- i think the second part of the degree is unnecessary.. i learned more at work than i did in the 'b arch' portion of my study. i feel that this second degree could have easily been incorporated into the 'b des arch' degree as i was always part of the 'test' group. the most irritating and i think insulting part of this second degree is that there was new information presented in the electives and i essentially paid 10,000 dollars for a semester of repeated lectures. i was not as upset when this happened in the 'b des arch' but as a second degree i am shocked!!! i understand the university desire to have 6 credit point electives but i had to take practically the same electives twice with very mild alterations... for example a course i took in semester one was a precursor to a course in semester two but by the time i got to semester two the courses were combined and the homework was practically identical to the course i already took.... which means that i never learned the information i was missing out on by not taking the second course and the uni feels comforted by the fact that they have provided these course. i would not be as upset if it happened with only one course but it happened with my entire 'b arch' degree and i sat through repeats of lectures during 'b des' already.

Good teaching: standard of teaching received (2005: 20%)
(2003: 9%; 2002: 7%; 2001: 7%)

- Teaching commitment - staff are struggling to maintain their teaching standards while forced to work additional subjects due to funding issues. Some staff which have been fantastic tutors are no longer able to be employed by the faculty of architecture, or whom are no so overwhelmed with additional classes, seem to have lost all interest / or time for their teaching.
- Have lecturers that want to teach you, rather than giving a post grad lecturer who even tells the year that he doesn't want to be there and gives us one small assignment and hands out an even 55% to everyone in the class. Have only a choice of four tutors for the most important final design semester), some of which you have already had previously been your tutor, which reduces the opportunity to chose some one different.
- The faculty should conduct constant tutor evaluation so to eliminate the employment of bad tutors. The appropriate use of language by tutors in criticisms should be monitored, so students feel encouraged, rather than discouraged.
- Design tutors - 5th year (final year) tutors were hopeless this year, uninspiring and non-communicative.

⁸ Number of comment received: 2005: 35; 2003: 47; 2002: 41; 2001: 44; 2000: 12

Appropriate workload

(2005: 17%)

(2003: 19%; 2002: 5%; 2001: 14%)

- Workload and pressure on students to huge.
- work load at the end of semester is crazy - and there seems to be no differentiation between a 3 or 6 credit point subject - workload unproportional
- The workload is very intense and I think more thought needs to go into the time required to do such large columns of work and into a good distribution of assessments throughout semester, with not all occurring together in the last half of semester.
- Reduce the number of contact hours to give students more time for their work - The correlation between credit rating and assessment load of units because at the moment it is not well balanced. - Facilities of the faculty computers

Overall satisfaction: quality of academic staff⁹

(2005: 17%)

(2003: 13%; 2002: 20%; 2001: 18%)

- Another issue I have noticed is the head design tutor employing close friends as design tutors whom may not be totally appropriate for design teaching in a university i.e.. offering far too much "personal opinion" rather than offering professional, workplace design critique. (I have also encountered problems occurring with parity marking between design groups due to the different focus of each tutor / project).
- The tutors chosen for Design classes should be of higher calibre especially in the first few years, and the classes should be more structured.
- Lecture time with non-University staff. They don't necessarily understand marking procedures and don't give you all the information you require to complete their assignments. Also very disorganised.
- The selection of tutors is one to consider as not all 'act' professionally or they may tend to 'discriminate'.

No other aspects were mentioned in more than 6 comments.

Other aspects mentioned included:

	2005	2003	2002	2001
Clear goals and standards	14%	2%		2%
Learning resources: physical facilities	11%	17%	7%	14%
Good teaching: useful and timely feedback	11%	13%	12%	18%
Resource issues	11%	4%	7%	16%
Learning community: tutorials and seminars	11%			2%
Overall satisfaction: quality of degree	9%		5%	5%
Administration and organisation: general comments	6%	13%	17%	
Learning community: class sizes	6%	4%		
Equity: harassment, racism, discrimination	6%	2%		2%
Appropriate assessment	6%		7%	2%
Communication	6%		2%	
Skills development: discipline specific	6%			
Good teaching: group work	6%			
Learning resources: general	6%			

⁹ Includes: Qualifications (as tertiary teacher); experience (in subject area); English language proficiency

7 Experience of student administration and student support services

7.1 Analysis of comments referring to best aspects¹⁰

Customer service: quality (2005: 25%)
(2003: 53%; 2002: 53%; 2001: 53%; 2000: 53%)

- Excellent approach to customer service. It make me feel part of the university community since the first day.
- if you want something to be done, they will try their best to do it on time.
- Staff are able to solve most problems quite quickly and efficiently
- Efficient and knowledgeable employees working there. As well as providing lots of paper information in a neat organised manner, that often answers queries, saving queue time.

Library services (2005: 9%)
(2003: 6%; 2002: 10%; 2001: 13%; 2000: 18%)

- The architecture library is one of the best aspects as it contains most of the materials I need for my degree, and is in a convenient location. The staff are also very willing to help providing assistance with photocopying, finding relevant material and even translating articles from foreign magazines.
- The Architecture library has been a fantastic resource this year. It is very accessible, well-equipped and the staff are consistently friendly and helpful.
- The number of libraries and the books that they offer. Provides a great resource for research.
- The architecture library is a valuable resource that my fellow students and I greatly appreciate. The staff are always helpful and I use the library almost every day I have classes. Please do not move or take away the library from the students. Removing the library will not assist in our learning, but will deepen the sense that the students feel isolated from the faculty and the university community.

Web communications: online access to support services (2005: 7%)
(2003: 15%; 2002: 6%; 2001: 4%; 2000: 13%)

- Several ways to get the information you need, i.e., online or in person. It is good to be able to manage administration from home via the web.
- Good that you can do a lot online - saves queues/waiting
- The ability to do just about everything online is very good, it lets me do things when I want to do them.
- The online aspects of student administration allow students to be more independent with organising their courses and other aspects. I myself find it much easier to manage my university life via this website than through the student centre.

Services provided: accessibility and convenience of services (2005: 6%)
(2003: 6%; 2002: 4%; 2001: 4%; 2000: 5%)

- Always reliable and accessible.
- They are all readily available to students, very easily accessible.
- The support services are easily accessible and have proved to be very helpful while I have studied at USYD
- They are easily accessible within the campus and the service is good because the staff are friendly and can answer your questions,

No other aspects or services were mentioned in less than 6% of comments received.

¹⁰ Number of comment received: 2005: 150; 2003: 131; 2002: 134; 2001: 141; 2000: 40

7.2 Analysis of comments suggesting improvements¹¹

Customer service: quality (2005: 16%)
(2003: 24%; 2002: 21%; 2001: 28%; 2000: 19%)

- The staff seem ill equipped to handle detailed questions that cant be answered by the website.
- At times the staff are very unenthusiastic and even come across as rude. This does not help any situation
- Staff are sometimes rushed and can't give you too much time.
- By supporting the staff with clear job descriptions and management so that they understand the system within which they work and can then help students to navigate it also.

Administration and organisation: general¹² (2005: 14%)

- administration staff at architecture faculty - very Impatient with students.
- Faculty Administration are not always open at a convenient time which can be frustrating.
- Faculty administration centre needs to be opened more often or at more convenient time. One of the staff is also very rude.
- Because of the modular nature of the administration system (i.e. each faculty having separate admins) this hampers study opportunities between faculties.

Customer service: opening hours (2005: 12%)
(2003: 25%; 2002: 25%; 2001: 17%; 2000: 25%)

- Some services should be available on weekends so that students have the opportunity to access them
- At times lines were long and the waiting periods were extensive so perhaps desks for general enquiries, in places where there are none, should be provided. Longer opening hours or being open on more days may also improve this.
- The opening hours are not very convenient every time I needed to see someone I tend to end up taking myself away from my schedule just to get to the Administration.
- Hours of operation are sometimes a little strange and hard to judge

Web communication: intranet/ internet (2005: 11%)
(2003: 4%; 2002: 2%; 2001: 4%; 2000: 3%)

- It is difficult to locate information on the University website. There seems to be a lot of orphan links and lack of clear organisation of information eg. try find the IT help desk from the homepage.
- The internet service should have clearer instructions on how to navigate the my Uni web pages.
- More better organised information on Myuni website, really confusing with the similar titles and navigating around it. Especially the IT section, finding where to change the password is rather hard and the system is too strict in determining which passwords are allowed, usually making u submit a number of passwords before it allows you to use it. Usually you want to passwords which you can easily remember.
- Usydney is sometimes not working, which can be inconvenient.

¹¹ Number of comment received: 2005: 116; 2003: 120; 2002: 124; 2001: 115; 2000: 36

¹² In 2005, this includes Faculty of Architecture Administration (where specifically mentioned in the comment). These comments were previously counted in Customer Service: Quality

Student Centre

(2005: 9%)

(2003: 2%; 2002: 8%; 2001: 5%; 2000: 3%)

- Waiting times at the Student Centre can be excessive.
- More staff, more polite staff who don't treat you as if you're stupid or doing something wrong. (Actual Student Centre - not Faculty Centre!) Shorter waiting lines!!
- I hope that in the future, the staffs in the Student Centre can be more friendly, not rude to international students and serve a better service to students.
- Student Centre queues are too long, staff too stressed to deal politely with issues.

Customer service: staffing levels

(2005: 8%)

(2003: 11%; 2002: 7%; 2001: 8%; 2000: 8%)

- Some support centres could have more staff to ensure efficiency, around exam times or just before the Student administration centre is always busy, and this is when we want to spend the least time wasting valuable study time.
- Its hard to say. The personal service is very good. The infrastructure and speed to assist people is very poor. Long and slow queues... in pick time in the university, is the tedious part of the service. Perhaps more staff and a big office will fix the problem.???
- Obviously more staff in some areas would make their services more efficient and therefore serve a greater population.
- More staff or better conditions for them so they aren't so grumpy all the time.

Other aspects and services mentioned included:

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>
Library services	8%	4%	5%	4%	11%
Web communications: online access to services	8%	2%	2%	3%	
Services provided: advertisement of services	7%	11%	9%	9%	14%
Computer access centres: faculty	6%				