



**The University of Sydney**

Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning

The Student Experience of Learning and Teaching  
(Postgraduate coursework level graduates)

Course Experience Questionnaire 2002 – 2008  
*Including the focus of written observations received from  
respondents to the 2008 survey*

June 2009

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## Executive summary

Data about the experiences of postgraduate coursework level graduates from the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning is collected through the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) in the year after completion of studies.

Analysis of this data provides a comprehensive picture of trends in the student experience, and the performance of the Faculty in relation to Learning and Teaching Performance Fund (LTPF) Key Performance Indicators (Generic Skills; Good Teaching; Overall Satisfaction), and other related areas (Learning Community; Curriculum; Assessment; Workload; Clear Goals and Standards; and Faculty / Department Student Administration).

Written observations, from respondents to the surveys, about their experiences provide evidence to support the Faculty KPI linked results (percentage agreement scores), and provide detailed information about key issues in the areas of best practice and suggested improvements, during their studies, and upon graduation.

## Key results for 2008

*The following results are an indication of those areas of the student experience that were of significance to graduates once they had completed their bachelor level degree in 2007, and entered the workforce, or progressed to further studies. The KPI linked results reflect the experiences of respondents in relation to specific items in the survey; the qualitative data reflects the analysis of written observations provided by respondents in answer to open ended questions on the best areas of their experience and those that were considered to be in need of improvement.*

### Generic Skills (Section 1; pages 10-12)

#### KPI LINKED RESULTS

The KPI linked CEQ results for Generic Skills have remained in the high 50s since 2005, and currently sit at 58%. The University average for Generic skills is 60%. International students have experienced better outcomes than domestic students over the last two surveys (2007 and 2008).

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### *Areas of best practice*

- 19% of respondents to the CEQ mentioned the acquisition of skills and abilities across four of the five University Graduate Attribute Clusters: Research and Inquiry (8%); Information Literacy (2%); Personal and Intellectual Autonomy (2%); and Ethical, Professional and Social Understanding (8%).
- In the Ethical, Professional and Social Understanding cluster, 5% valued the development of group and team work skills, whilst a further 3% appreciated opportunities to enhance professional skills, and undertake experience in the workplace.
- Sample comment: *"The course taught [sic] me how to analyse and solve the problem, and the course helped me develop my ability to work as a team member"*

##### *Suggested improvements*

- 6% of respondents were dissatisfied with this aspect of their experience
- The majority of comments (5%) referred to the lack of hands-on or practical experience during the course
- Sample comment: *"Not enough practical work to prepare for employment after course, could compare with overseas courses"*

### Good Teaching (Section 2, pages 13-15)

#### KPI LINKED RESULTS

The KPI linked results for Good Teaching have decreased by 10% since 2007, and currently sit at 46%, which is the lowest score since 2004. The University average for Good Teaching is 50%.

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### *Areas of best practice*

- 24% of respondents appreciated the teaching practices across the Faculty
- 13% valued the variety of teaching methods used; the ability of lecturers to make their subjects interesting and to motivate students; and the learning resources provided
- Support, helpfulness, and understanding from academic staff was appreciated by 9% of respondents
- Sample comment: *"Lecturers always available and helpful. Good quality course material always provided"*

#### *Suggested improvements*

- 35% of respondents considered that improvements were necessary in this area of their experience
- 15% referred to the outdated teaching methods used; whilst a further 8% would have appreciated more help and support from some academic staff
- The lack of timely and constructive feedback on work was the focus of 9% of comments received from this group of respondents
- Sample comment: *"The lectures could be more interesting, the lecturers could have been more enthusiastic"*

### **Overall Satisfaction** (Section 3; pages 16-18)

#### KPI LINKED RESULTS

The KPI linked results for Overall Satisfaction have decreased substantially since 2006 (71%) and 2007 (72%). The current score of 56% is lower than the University average of 65%.

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### *Best practice*

- 8% of respondents provided written observation which fell within the remit of Overall Satisfaction.
- All of these related to the knowledge, experience and qualifications of academic staff (lecturers, tutors and guest speakers)
- Sample comment: *"Diversity of high quality input from a range of specialists from within the University of Sydney and external"*

##### *Suggested improvements*

- 15% of respondents suggested improvements in this area of their experience
- 9% expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of staff; whilst 4% referred to the quality of the degree
- Sample comment: *"Some unqualified lecturers in the fields of planning being in charge of some subject that required more skilful lecturers"*

### **Learning Community** (Section 4; pages 19-20)

NB: The CEQ does not include items relating to Learning Community

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### *Areas of best practice*

- 21% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the Learning Community aspect of their experience
- 16% referred to the learning environment, including: the exploration of academic interests through tutorials, studio work and other discussion fora; and the cultural diversity of the student body
- Sample comment: *"You get to meet a broad range of people whom you also learn from"*

##### *Suggested improvements*

- 21% of respondents considered that this area of their experience required improvement
- The majority of these comments (16%) referred to the physical resources provided by the University e.g. buildings, equipment, computers, library services
- Sample comment: *"Resources/facilities. Opening hours of architecture library"*

### **Curriculum (Programme of Study)** (Section 5: pages 21-22)

NB: The CEQ does not include items relating to Curriculum

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### *Areas of best practice*

- 45% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the programme of study offered by the Faculty
- 29% appreciated the structure and relevance of the course
- The flexibility of the course structure was welcomed by 7% of respondents; whilst a further 10% were satisfied with the practical components of the course.
- Sample comment: *"Some courses/subjects were more beneficial than others. The practical subjects where we learnt how to be a 'planner' and 'do planning' were the most helpful, especially in the workplace"*

##### *Suggested improvements*

- 36% of respondents were dissatisfied with the programme of study
- The lack of electives, restricted subject choice, relevance to the current working environment were mentioned by 25% of respondents
- Sample comment: *"It should be more focus in architecture. The fact that it requires tertiary studies only rather than architecture degree opens the course to a wide range of students, in a way that's it's becomes too generic. Nothing is tackled in real depth in order to suit all different professions"*

### **Appropriate Assessment** (Section 6; pages 23-24)

NB: The CEQ does not include items relating to Appropriate Assessment

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### *Areas of best practice*

- 5% of respondents expressed satisfaction with assessment practices across the faculty
- Sample comment: *"Assignments were given to help to gain more knowledge on the subject"*

##### *Suggested improvements*

- 7% of respondents were dissatisfied with the content and type of assessments used in the faculty, and with marking practices
- Sample comment: *"Some courses were not interesting enough and the quality of the work required to pass is minimal. Hence better students get rewarded the same as lazy students. Also working in groups is a good experience but not fair to the individual student on a marks based system. These projects should represent a small percentage of the total marks not entire subjects"*

### **Appropriate Workload** (Section 7; page 25)

NB: The CEQ does not include items relating to Appropriate Workload

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### *Areas of best practice*

- Two respondents were happy with the amount and flexibility of the workload
- Sample comment: *"Good workload for Postgraduate/working students"*

##### *Suggested improvements*

- 2% of respondents deemed the workload to be high
- Sample comment: *"Some subjects irrelevant and too much content to be learnt within a short time period"*

### **Clear Goals and Standards** (Section 8; page 26)

NB: The CEQ does not include items relating to Clear Goals and Standards

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### *Areas of best practice*

- No respondents referred to this aspect of their experience as being of best practice

##### *Suggested improvements*

- 3% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with this area of their experience
- Sample comment: *"Some of the assignments were not clearly defined"*

### **Faculty/ Department Student Administration** (Section 9; pages 27-28)

NB: The CEQ does not include items relating to Faculty/ Department Student Administration

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### *Areas of best practice*

- 3% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the scheduling of classes; and the approachability and helpfulness of administration staff
- Sample comment: *"The evening classes were great, especially when working full-time"*

##### *Suggested improvements*

- 9% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with this area of their experience
- Comments were evenly divided between University and Faculty administration issues; communication between staff and students; and scheduling of classes
- Sample comment: *"General University of Sydney comment: very, very difficult to organise administration issues. Administration hours always during the day does not cater for full-time workers"*

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June 2009

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## Glossary

The following terms and phrases are used throughout the report

<b>CEQ</b>	Course Experience Questionnaire Administered to graduates of previous year e.g. students who completed the CEQ during 2008 completed their studies during 2007
<b>KPI linked results</b>	These results refer to the Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) and the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ). Key Performance Indicators from the AGS and CEQ are used as part of the National Learning and Teaching Performance Fund.
<b>Percentage agreement</b>	CEQ item responses are combined and reported in terms of the proportions of graduates who agreed or disagreed that their experience of their course was educationally positive in the areas of: Generic Skills; Good Teaching; and Overall Satisfaction.
<b>Qualitative data Focus of written observations</b>	Students written observations received in response to open ended questions in the CEQ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What were the best aspects of your course?</li><li>• What aspects were in need of improvement?</li></ul>
<b>Percentage of comments received</b>	The number of times an aspect is mentioned within written observations of respondents received from respondents is presented as a percentage of the total number of comments received from respondents to the CEQ in any particular year.

## Conceptual framework

### Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)

The CEQ is a national survey administered by the independent body, the Graduate Careers Council of Australia (GCA). It is a survey of *graduates* of all Australian universities. CEQ results are reported at least a year after the graduates actually finish their courses.

The Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) CEQ reports use responses obtained from graduates of the University of Sydney who completed their courses in the previous year (i.e. the 2008 reports are for students who completed in 2007). The ITL reports use the GCA data and are therefore usually published shortly after the GCA reports. As an example: the 2008 reports are for graduates who completed their courses in 2007. The data is collected during 2008 and the reports are published in 2009.<sup>1</sup>

Students are asked to respond to statements using a five point Likert Scale to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement. As part of the questionnaires, students are also asked to comment on the following questions:

- What were the best aspects of your course?
- What aspects were in need of improvement?

Quantitative and qualitative data from the CEQ provide evidence of the success of University and Faculty initiatives to improve the overall student experience in general and the student experience of learning and teaching in particular.

### Focus of the Report

Based on the answers to the CEQ, this report seeks to provide an analysis of observable trends in the postgraduate coursework student experience of learning and teaching in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning between 2002 and 2008. The report also provides detailed information on the key issues highlighted in the analysis of the 2008 CEQ qualitative data.

Information is arranged by the Key Performance Indicators (14: Generic Skills; 15: Good Teaching; and 16: Overall Satisfaction) plus additional factors (Learning Community; Curriculum; Assessment; Workload; Clear Goals and Standards; and Faculty/ Department Student Administration) which, taken together, comprise the graduate experience of learning and teaching in the Faculty.

### Focus of written observations from respondents

By examining the foci of the students' comments in the 2008 CEQ, this report seeks to highlight areas that were of best practice in the graduates' experience during their studies at the University of Sydney, together with those that have been suggested as areas of improvement.

The views of the graduates on their overall experience at the University, as received through the open response comments, are a valuable insight into what was important to them; what they considered to be areas of best practice; and what they considered needs improvement. They often highlight issues that relate to the usefulness of their course once they have graduated and/or are in the workforce.

It is important to remember, when looking at the results of the analysis of this data, 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, it could be interpreted that the students were happy with their experiences, and prefer to focus on commenting about areas in need of improvement. For example, very few comments on assessment are received in answer to the question on areas of best practice; whilst very few comments on the development of generic skills feature in those suggesting improvements.

### Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ) 2007

Since it is possible that final year respondents from the 2007 SCEQ might also have responded to the 2008 CEQ, a short report on the results of the analysis of qualitative data from the 2007 SCEQ is included at the end of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> Further information about the CEQ can be found at <http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/ceq/>

## Notes

### 1 Quantitative data analysis

The GCA does not allow surveys collected by phone to be included in any CEQ quantitative analyses. To ensure that the University's KPI reporting matches the GCA criteria, the ITL has adopted the same approach to its analysis of the quantitative data i.e. the KPI linked results shown in this report. The number of responses (n) is based on the number of students who supplied an answer to the Overall Satisfaction item in surveys collected by post and electronic methods only.

*Number of respondents (post and electronic collection) to the CEQ 2004 – 2008<sup>2</sup>*

NB: The "degree" variable has been used to map respondents to faculty for overall and international student results. The "field of study" variable has been used to map respondents to faculty for domestic student results.

	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
Domestic students	16	30	48	45	47
International students	9	8	14	12	26
Overall	29	50	83	58	120

n=the number of respondents who answered the "Overall Satisfaction Item".

### 2 Qualitative data analysis

The analysis of the qualitative data is based on responses to the open questions received from ALL respondents to the CEQ (post, electronic and phone).

*Number of respondents (post, electronic and phone collection) who answered the open questions CEQ 2002 - 2008*

<u>Areas of best practice</u>	CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
Domestic		22	16	30	55	39	107
International		15	9	5	18	8	26
Total	20	37	25	35	73	47	133

<u>Suggested improvements</u>	CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
Domestic		22	14	32	52	38	107
International		10	10	5	19	7	26
Total	14	32	24	37	71	45	133

n=the number of comments received in answer to the relevant 'open response' question

### 3 Reliability of quantitative and qualitative data

The following information on the reliability of statistical data in the above tables should be taken into consideration when reading this report:

**Quantitative and qualitative data:** Where the number of respondents is between 5 and 20 results should be viewed with caution. The minimum sample size recommended for statistical analysis is 20

**Qualitative data only:** Where the number of respondents who have supplied written observations on their experiences is between 5 and 10 results are excluded from the report as they lie within the lower range of statistics that should be viewed with caution. This is indicated in the relevant tables by the phrase *Too few comments*

<sup>2</sup> Data retrieved from the ITL AGS/CEQ website results and reports for the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning on 25.09.08 and 19.05.09 [http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/ceq/tpi\\_report.cfm](http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/ceq/tpi_report.cfm)

#### 4 Illustrative sample comments

Comments are recorded as they appear in the original documents. However, minor spelling, grammatical and transcription errors have been corrected. [sic] indicates that the word appears exactly as provided by the student, and that it is not possible to ascertain an exact interpretation of the original meaning.

#### 5 Analysis and counting of comments

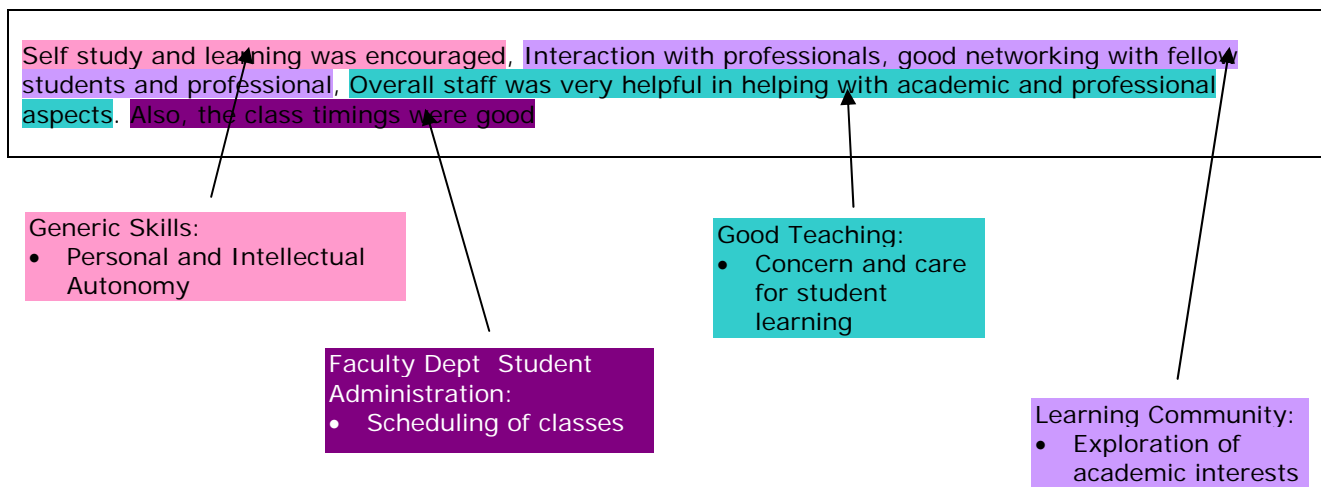
The components of categories and sub-categories used in the analysis of qualitative data are based on:

- Characteristics that define the area of the student experience
- CEQ survey items (Generic Skills; Good Teaching; and Overall Satisfaction only)
- recurring themes in students' comments and have been developed over many years of analysing qualitative data from students' surveys.

Together, they represent the range of features of each aspect which are considered to be essential to student satisfaction with the relevant part of the degree experience and/or overall satisfaction with the course.

Each comment is analysed according to the *Taxonomy for analysing qualitative data from the SCEQ/CEQ<sup>3</sup>*, which is based on the University KPIs for Learning and Teaching. Based on the premise that a comment is what is written by an individual respondent in response to one of the open response questions, and a tally in the statistics being a specific phrase or sentence referring to one aspect of the student experience, the total number of times an aspect is mentioned in any one set of comments is calculated as a percentage of comments received in the year of the survey.

For example, the following comment is counted as ONE COMMENT RECEIVED; but as it is mentioned in Curriculum (Content and Structure); Learning Community (Tutorials; Class size); Generic Skills (Professional skills and experience); Good Teaching (Techniques and Methods); and Faculty Department Student Administration (Practicum organisation), the highlighted phrases within the comment are counted ONCE in each of the relevant categories i.e. 6 aspects in one comment.



<sup>3</sup> Available from Quality Assurance Officer (Learning and Teaching)

# 1 Generic Skills (KPI 14)

## Coverage

The *Generic Skills Scale* is an attempt to take into account the extent to which university courses develop graduate attributes. Graduate attributes that may have been acquired in the process of learning discipline knowledge should endure and be applicable in a broader context. Graduate attributes typically identified in this context include communication skills, the capacity to learn new skills and procedures, the capacity to make decisions and solve problems, the ability to apply knowledge to the workplace, and the capacity to work both in teams and with minimum supervision.

### CEQ Survey items

- 2 The course helped me develop my ability to work as a team member
- 5 The course sharpened my analytic skills
- 9 The course developed my problem solving skills
- 10 The course improved my skills in written communication
- 11 As a result of my course, I feel confident about tackling unfamiliar problems
- 22 My course helped me to develop the ability to plan my own work.

### Qualitative data analysis

There are 5 sub-categories within Generic Skills, against which students comments are analysed. These match the five main University Generic Graduate Attributes. The components of these sub-categories are allied to the skills and abilities for each attribute provided in the University policy framework for Graduate Attributes<sup>4</sup>.

- Research and inquiry (analytical, problem solving, critical thinking, knowledge expansion etc)
- Information literacy (retrieval and use of information)
- Personal and intellectual autonomy (independent learning; planning own work; intellectually curious etc)
- Ethical, social, professional understanding (including group/ team skills; professional skills and experience)
- Communication (written and oral; communicating with others; communicating understanding)

## Summary

### KPI LINKED RESULTS

The KPI linked CEQ results for Generic Skills have remained in the high 50s since 2005, and currently sit at 58%. The University average for Generic skills is 60%. International students have experienced better outcomes than domestic students over the last two surveys (2007 and 2008).

### QUALITATIVE DATA

#### Areas of best practice

- 19% of respondents to the CEQ mentioned the acquisition of skills and abilities across four of the five University Graduate Attribute Clusters: Research and Inquiry (8%); Information Literacy (2%); Personal and Intellectual Autonomy (2%); and Ethical, Professional and Social Understanding (8%).
- In the Ethical, Professional and Social Understanding cluster, 5% valued the development of group and team work skills, whilst a further 3% appreciated opportunities to enhance professional skills, and undertake experience in the workplace.
- Sample comment: "*The course taught [sic] me how to analyse and solve the problem, and the course helped me develop my ability to work as a team member*"

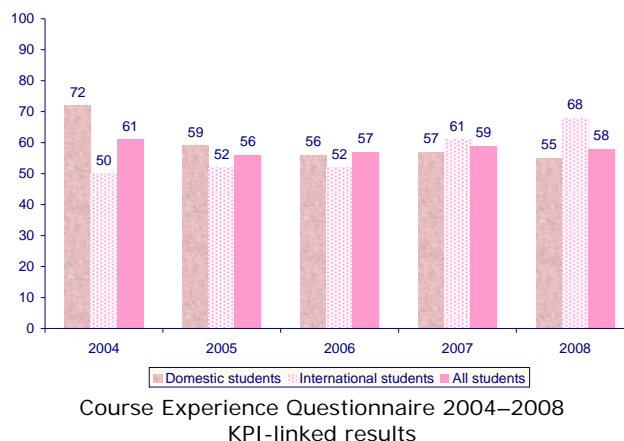
#### Suggested improvements

- 6% of respondents were dissatisfied with this aspect of their experience
- The majority of comments (5%) referred to the lack of hands-on or practical experience during the course
- Sample comment: "*Not enough practical work to prepare for employment after course, could compare with overseas courses*"

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/graduateAttributes/policy\\_framework.pdf](http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/graduateAttributes/policy_framework.pdf)

## 1.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2004–2008

The following tables show the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with relevant survey items for Generic Skills in the CEQ.



## 1.2 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002–2008

The following table includes the percentage of comments received from respondents to the surveys, that can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement under the heading of Generic Skills. The trends provide an indication of graduate satisfaction with the development of University graduate attributes / generic skills between 2002 and 2008.

	CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic	18%	6%	7%	20%	8%	17%
	International	20%	Too few	6%	Too few	27%	
	<b>All</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>6%</b>
Suggested improvements	Domestic	5%	14%	0%	6%	13%	7%
	International	3%	Too few	11%	Too few	4%	
	<b>All</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>13%</b>

## 1.3 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

### 1.3.1 Areas of best practice

	Domestic (n=107 )	International (n=28 )	All (n=133 )
<b>Research and Inquiry</b>			
- Development of problem solving skills	7%	8%	8%
- Development of critical thinking and analytical skills			
- Expansion of relevant knowledge in the subject			
<b>Ethical, social, professional understanding</b>			
- Ability to work in a group/ team working skills	7%	12%	8%
- Development of discipline/ professional skills			
- Presence of work placement/ industry experience in the course			

#### Sample comments: domestic students

- *The course taught[sic] me how to analyse and solve the problem, and the course helped me develop my ability to work as a team member*
- *Hugely increased my analytical/research skills. Introduced the philosophy and language of my now new career. Gave me a very firm grounding*
- *This course reflected what skill set requirement from industry*

#### Sample comments: international students

- *Learned a lot about team work and designing skills. Overall nice experience*
- *It helped me understand and work with different kind of people all around the world, it help me to try out new things, new directions and learn latest technologies*
- *Can train students to develop a critical mind and to work in a team*

### 1.3.2 Suggested improvements

	Domestic (n=107 )	International (n=26 )	All (n=133 )
Ethical, social, professional understanding			
- Discipline or professional skills were not developed	7%	4%	6%
- Work placement/ industry experience in the course required			

#### Sample comments: domestic students

- *More information on how to put the information into practice. A list of contacts for us to work in a related field*
- *No enough practical skills being taught, like learning the software. Too much emphasis on concept*
- *Not enough practical work to prepare for employment after course, could compare with overseas courses*
- *More links to industry e.g. work experience*
- *General organisation, feedback from assignments and practical work experience applications*

#### Sample comments: international students

- *Work experience should be compulsory part of the course*

## 2 Good Teaching (KPI 15)

### Coverage

The *Good Teaching Scale* is characterised by practices such as providing students with feedback on their progress, explaining things, making the course interesting, motivating students, and understanding students' problems. There is a body of research linking these practices to learning outcomes. High scores on the *Good Teaching Scale* are associated with the perception that these practices are present. Lower scores reflect a perception that these practices occur less frequently.

#### *CEQ Survey items*

- 3 The teaching staff of this course motivated me to do my best work.
- 7 The staff put a lot of time into commenting on my work.
- 15 The staff made a real effort to understand difficulties I might be having with my work
- 17 The teaching staff normally gave me helpful feedback on how I was going.
- 18 My lecturers were extremely good at explaining things.
- 20 The teaching staff worked hard to make their subjects interesting.

#### *Qualitative data analysis*

There are 6 sub-categories within the Good Teaching Scale, against which students comments are analysed. Each of these sub-categories may be further broken down into relevant aspects (or components) of the student experience of Good Teaching. The components of these sub-categories are based on the SCEQ survey items together with recurring themes in students' comments.

- Good teaching experiences (interesting, teaching methods, discussions encouraged etc)
- Motivating teaching (enthusiasm, inspiration, passion of teachers)
- Concern and care for student learning (understanding difficulties with work; supportive; approachable)
- Good explanations received (includes English language proficiency of teachers)
- Feedback on work (timely, constructive)
- Research-enhanced learning and teaching (integration of research into curriculum; knowledge of lecturers' research; participation in research projects; scholarship of teaching and learning<sup>5</sup>)

### Summary

#### KPI LINKED RESULTS

The KPI linked results for Good Teaching have decreased by 10% since 2007, and currently sit at 46%, which is the lowest score since 2004. The University average for Good Teaching is 50%.

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### *Areas of best practice*

- 24% of respondents appreciated the teaching practices across the Faculty
- 13% valued the variety of teaching methods used; the ability of lecturers to make their subjects interesting and to motivate students; and the learning resources provided
- Support, helpfulness, and understanding from academic staff was appreciated by 9% of respondents
- Sample comment: "*Lecturers always available and helpful. Good quality course material always provided*"

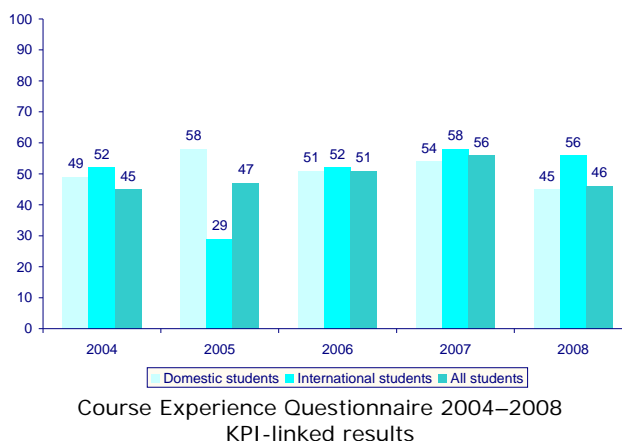
##### *Suggested improvements*

- 35% of respondents considered that improvements were necessary in this area of their experience
- 15% referred to the outdated teaching methods used; whilst a further 8% would have appreciated more help and support from some academic staff
- The lack of timely and constructive feedback on work was the focus of 9% of comments received from this group of respondents
- Sample comment: "*The lectures could be more interesting, the lecturers could have been more enthusiastic*"

<sup>5</sup> The development of research skills is included in Generic Skills: Information Literacy

## 2.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2004–2008

The following tables show the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with relevant survey item statements for Good Teaching in the SCEQ and the CEQ.



## 2.2 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002–2008

The following table includes the percentage of comments received from respondents to the surveys, that can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement, providing an indication of trends in the graduate experience of Good Teaching between 2002 and 2008, as indicated in the responses to open questions in the SCEQ and the CEQ.

	CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic	14%	6%	23%	33%	36%	22%
	International	13%	<i>Too few</i>	28%	<i>Too few</i>	31%	
	<b>All</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>24%</b>
Suggested improvements	Domestic	18%	21%	25%	33%	21%	39%
	International	29%	<i>Too few</i>	26%	<i>Too few</i>	19%	
	<b>All</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>22%</b>

## 2.3 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

### 2.3.1 Areas of best practice

	Domestic (n=107)	International (n=26)	All (n=133)
<b>Good teaching experiences</b>			
- Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques			
- Ability to keep students interested in the subject	9%	15%	11%
- Encouragement to participate in discussions during lectures and tutorials			
- Learning resources are up to date, and relevant to curriculum			
<b>Concern and care for student learning</b>			
- Students felt supported in their learning; help and advice readily available	7%	15%	9%
- Lecturers understood problems and difficulties of students (academic and personal)			

	Domestic (n=107 )	International (n=26 )	All (n=133 )
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#### Sample comments: domestic students

- *Having knowledgeable teachers who were very keen to help people out individually*
- *Lecturers always available and helpful. Good quality course material always provided*
- *Urban Design units with XXX and YYY were helpful and inspirational. Some subjects were very interesting.*

#### Sample comments: international students

- *Self study and learning was encouraged, Interaction with professionals, good networking with fellow students and professional, Overall staff was very helpful in helping with academic and professional aspects. Also, the class timings were good*
- *ZZZ classes. Very interesting. Very informative. Many people didn't like his courses, but his courses were exactly what I was looking for. Other people like me that were wanting to learn production etc also properly enjoyed his courses*
- *The lecturers were well informed and prepared so to make the class both informative and interesting*

### 2.3.2 Suggested improvements

	Domestic (n=107 )	International (n=26 )	All (n=133 )
--	----------------------	--------------------------	-----------------

#### Good teaching experiences

- |  |     |    |     |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| - Teaching methods and techniques used are outdated/need improvement | 18% | 4% | 15% |
| - Discussions of issues during class were not encouraged             |     |    |     |
| - Lecturers were boring; did not engage with students                |     |    |     |
| - Learning materials and resources were outdated                     |     |    |     |

#### Concern and care for student learning

- |  |    |    |    |
|--|----|----|----|
| - Students did not feel supported in their learning; | 7% | 8% | 8% |
| - help and advice was not readily available          |    |    |    |

#### Feedback on work (from staff to students)

- |   |     |    |    |
|---|-----|----|----|
| - Comments on work are not constructive; do not explain where mistakes occur that can be rectified. | 10% | 4% | 9% |
| - Feedback is untimely and not helpful  |     |    |    |

#### Sample comments: domestic students

- *Communication skills of some lecturers and teaching material to be updated (more relevance)*
- *Consultation hours were very restricted. Improvements - no leniency with assessment or choice in grouping of students. No monitoring of progress*
- *For most of my papers, minimal comments were made about my coursework, apart from comments by ZZZ. AAA would hand work back with only a grade on it.*
- *Several lecturers lacked the Interest or passion to make courses stimulating*

#### Sample comments: international students

- *The lecturers in Urban Planning could not give valuable advice/feedback regarding the assignments and thesis*
- *care for the students is extremely poor and not helping them out,*

### 3 Overall Satisfaction (KPI 16)

#### Coverage

This single item asks graduates about their overall level of satisfaction with their degree course.

#### CEQ Survey items

25 I am happy with the quality of this degree course.

#### Qualitative data analysis

There are 4 sub-categories, within the KPI Overall Satisfaction. They represent the range of aspects of the student experience which are considered to have a major influence on the quality of the degree experience, and which are not covered elsewhere.

- Reputation of the University/ Faculty/ degree (including reputation in the professional arena)
- Quality of the degree
- Value for money (cost of course; entry standard of students; level of course content)
- Qualifications (teaching/ subject), knowledge and relevant experience of academic staff

#### Summary

##### KPI LINKED RESULTS

The KPI linked results for Overall Satisfaction have decreased substantially since 2006 (71%) and 2007 (72%). The current score of 56% is lower than the University average of 65%.

##### QUALITATIVE DATA

###### Best practice

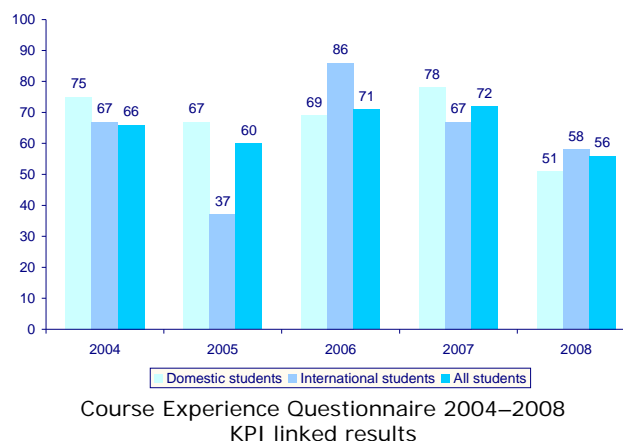
- 8% of respondents provided written observation which fell within the remit of Overall Satisfaction.
- All of these related to the knowledge, experience and qualifications of academic staff (lecturers, tutors and guest speakers)
- Sample comment: *"Diversity of high quality input from a range of specialists from within the University of Sydney and external"*

###### Suggested improvements

- 15% of respondents suggested improvements in this area of their experience
- 9% expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of staff; whilst 4% referred to the quality of the degree
- Sample comment: *"Some unqualified lecturers in the fields of planning being in charge of some subject that required more skilful lecturers"*

#### 3.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2002–2008

The following tables show the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with the survey statement 'Overall I am satisfied with the quality of this degree course' in the CEQ.



### 3.2 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002–2008

The following table includes the percentage of comments received from respondents to the surveys, that can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement, providing an indication of trends in students' overall satisfaction between 2001 and 2007.

	CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic	9%	6%	27%	13%	18%	7%
	International		20%	<i>Too few</i>		28%	<i>Too few</i>
	<b>All</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>15%</b>
Suggested improvements	Domestic		18%	21%	25%	10%	18%
	International			<i>Too few</i>		26%	<i>Too few</i>
	<b>All</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>16%</b>

### 3.3 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

#### 3.3.1 Areas of best practice

	Domestic (n=107 )	International (n=26 )	All (n=133 )
<b>Quality of staff</b>			
- Staff were experienced in modern architectural / planning practices	7%	12%	8%
- Relevant and up to date knowledge of lecturers and tutors in subject area satisfactory			

#### Sample comments: domestic students

- *Diversity of high quality input from a range of specialists from within the University of Sydney and external*
- *Having knowledgeable teachers who were very keen to help people out individually*
- *The variety of specialist guest lecturers with direct professional experience in their field*

#### Sample comments: international students

- *The experienced staff and the lecture involving professional field people of outside University*
- *The lecturers were well informed and prepared so to make the class both informative and interesting*
- *Knowledgeable lecturer*

#### 3.3.2 Suggested improvements

	Domestic (n=107 )	International (n=26 )	All (n=133 )
<b>Quality of staff</b>			
- Staff required training in teaching at tertiary level			
- Staff were not experienced in modern architectural / planning practices	7%	15%	9%
- Relevant and up to date knowledge of lecturers and tutors in subject area			

#### Sample comments: domestic students

- *How some lecture classes where completely useless compared to real work environments. Some courses where not interesting enough and the quality of the work required to pass is minimal. Hence better students get rewarded the same as lazy students. Also working in groups is a good experience but not fare to the individual student on a marks based system. These projects should represent a small percentage of the total marks not entire subjects*
- *Some unqualified lecturers in the fields of planning being in charge of some subject that required more skilful lecturers*
- *Very few lecturers are of the highest calibre. I expected more teaching excellence to be found at USyd than there was*

	Domestic (n=107 )	International (n=26 )	All (n=133 )
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Sample comments: international students

- *The investment of higher quality educational and professional staffs will be the most crucial requirement for this worldwide famous university*
- *More high level and famous teachers are needed*
- *the course coordinator/lecturer lacks technical skills*

## 4 Learning Community

### Coverage

Learning Community concerns student perceptions of the social experience of learning at university. It indicates the student's sense of belonging to a community where learning with other people is a priority. It includes: being part of a group of students and staff committee to learning; exploration of ideas with other people; students ideas and suggestions being listened to during the course; exploration of academic interests with staff and students.

#### CEQ Survey items

The CEQ does not include items relating to Learning Community.

#### Qualitative data analysis

There are 5 sub-categories within Learning Community, against which students comments are analysed.

- Learning environment (exploration of academic interests with staff and students; tutorials; belonging to a community; social experiences; cultural diversity; equity issues; class sizes)
- Location/ isolation (all campuses, hospitals, institutes)
- Induction and orientation programs
- Responsiveness by staff to student feedback on the course
- Physical resources (physical facilities (buildings; computer access; library)

Each of these sub-categories are further broken down into relevant aspects (or components) of the student experience of being part of a community where learning with other people is a priority. Respect for cultural diversity and equity for all students are an important part of this experience; as is being listened to by academic staff. Together with 5: Curriculum, Learning Community is an essential ingredient in forming the students' opinion of their overall satisfaction with the quality of their degree experience.

### Summary

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### Areas of best practice

- 21% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the Learning Community aspect of their experience
- 16% referred to the learning environment, including: the exploration of academic interests through tutorials, studio work and other discussion fora; and the cultural diversity of the student body
- Sample comment: *"You get to meet a broad range of people whom you also learn from"*

##### Suggested improvements

- 21% of respondents considered that this area of their experience required improvement
- The majority of these comments (16%) referred to the physical resources provided by the University e.g. buildings, equipment, computers, library services
- Sample comment: *"Resources/facilities. Opening hours of architecture library"*

### 4.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002–2008

The following table includes the percentage of comments received from respondents to the surveys, that can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement, providing an indication of trends in the graduate experience of the Learning Community between 2002 and 2008.

		CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic		32%	31%	13%	18%	28%	21%
	International		20%	<i>Too few</i>		17%	<i>Too few</i>	19%
	<b>All</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Suggested improvements	Domestic		27%	14%	31%	10%	24%	18%
	International			<i>Too few</i>		11%	<i>Too few</i>	35%
	<b>All</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>21%</b>

## 4.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

### 4.2.1 Areas of best practice

	Domestic (n=107 )	International (n=26 )	All (n=133 )
<b>Learning environment</b>			
- Enjoyed University social life			
- Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty)	17%	12%	16%
- Academic interests were being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials; during laboratory work			
- Happy with size of class			

#### Sample comments: domestic students

- *The small classes allowed us to have a close learning relationship with teaching staff and to understand the course work*
- *Studying with a group of varied diverse students (age, background, ethnicity).*
- *Good learning atmosphere access to the labs with all the resources that we needed*
- *Class discussion; use of Fisher Research, Architecture and Fine Arts libraries; on-line resources and library access*

#### Sample comments: international students

- *Self study and learning was encouraged, Interaction with professionals, good networking with fellow students and professional, Overall staff was very helpful in helping with academic and professional aspects. Also, the class timings were good.*
- *The Faculty resources for my degree (computer, software, etc.) were a great learning tool*

### 4.2.2 Suggested improvements

	Domestic (n=107 )	International (n=26 )	All (n=133 )
<b>Physical resources</b>			
- Library staff and services satisfactory	13%	27%	16%
- Facilities (buildings; lecture rooms; computers; etc) of acceptable standard			

#### Sample comments: domestic students

- *Access to facilities i.e. computer labs. More one-on-one time with the lecturers*
- *Physical comfort in the lecture theatres. Below acceptable standard*
- *Need more access for the Planning Library on the weekends, useless for mature age students*

#### Sample comments: international students

- *Facilities. Pretty poor*
- *Only that the library could have more copies of books or shorten lending time if someone else reserves it (help in finishing assignments on time).*
- *The computer labs were horrible*

## 5 Curriculum

### Coverage

Curriculum concerns student perceptions of curriculum (program structure) used in their degree course. Initiative LT1 in the new University Strategic Plan 2007 - 2010 states that we “Improve academic program structures to achieve greater coherence; provide choice while maintaining flexibility; and ensuring continuing relevance of our courses to students and employers<sup>6</sup>”. Qualitative data from the CEQ is used to help provide evidence of change in this area of the student experience.

#### CEQ Survey items

The CEQ does not include items relating to Curriculum.

#### Qualitative data analysis

There are 6 sub-categories within Curriculum, against which students comments are analysed:

- Content and structure of degree(s) (intensive courses; relationship between Units of Study; content of Units of Study; relevance to work/ career/ industry)
- Online mode of delivery (WebCT)
- Flexibility of degree, including ability to take a range of Units of Study
- Availability/ cancellation of advertised courses
- Combined/ Cross faculty degrees
- Special programs (Talented students *and* Honours programs)

Together with 4: Learning Community, Curriculum is an essential ingredient in forming the students' opinion of their overall satisfaction with the quality of their degree experience

### Summary

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### Areas of best practice

- 45% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the programme of study offered by the Faculty
- 29% appreciated the structure and relevance of the course
- The flexibility of the course structure was welcomed by 7% of respondents; whilst a further 10% were satisfied with the practical components of the course.
- Sample comment: *“Some courses/subjects were more beneficial than others. The practical subjects where we learnt how to be a ‘planner’ and ‘do planning’ were the most helpful, especially in the workplace”*

##### Suggested improvements

- 36% of respondents were dissatisfied with the programme of study
- The lack of electives, restricted subject choice, relevance to the current working environment were mentioned by 25% of respondents
- Sample comment: *“It should be more focus in architecture. The fact that it requires tertiary studies only rather than architecture degree opens the course to a wide range of students, in a way that's it's becomes too generic. Nothing is tackled in real depth in order to suit all different professions”*

### 5.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002–2008

The following table includes the percentage of comments received from respondents to the surveys, that can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement, providing an indication of trends in the graduate experience of Curriculum between 2002 and 2008.

		CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic		45%	50%	53%	38%	38%	48%
	International		33%	<i>Too few</i>		44%	<i>Too few</i>	35%
	<b>All</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>45%</b>
Suggested improvements	Domestic		23%	14%	41%	38%	29%	36%
	International			<i>Too few</i>		58%	<i>Too few</i>	38%
	<b>All</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>36%</b>

<sup>6</sup> See [http://www.usyd.edu.au/strategy/learn\\_teach/initiatives.shtml](http://www.usyd.edu.au/strategy/learn_teach/initiatives.shtml)

## 5.2 Key issues for coursework students (CEQ 2008)

### 5.2.2 Areas of best practice

	Domestic (n=107 )	International (n=26 )	All (n=133 )
<b>Content and structure</b>			
- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	30%	23%	29%
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			
<b>Flexibility, diversity, variety</b>			
- Students appreciate the range of subjects available	8%	0%	7%
- Students appreciate the ability to choose units from other faculties			
<b>Practical components of curriculum</b>			
- Satisfaction with practical components of curriculum	9%	12%	10%
- Appreciated mix of theory and practical			

#### Sample comments: domestic students

- *Exposure to different aspects of Planning, e.g. economic development, urban design, heritage*
- *The practical application of course-work to current issues and projects. The opportunity to prepare and submit a Conservation Management Plan*
- *Some courses/subjects were more beneficial than others. The practical subjects where we learnt how to be a 'planner' and 'do planning' were the most helpful, especially in the workplace*

#### Sample comments: international students

- *Comprehensive course material, Experienced teaching staff (e.g.: XXX, YYY), Graduate Internship course available for the final year student*
- *Learning new methods of interactive design in 3d animation, and 3d design for games*
- *Helpful staff, exposure to practical issues*

### 5.2.3 Suggested improvements

	Domestic (n=107 )	International (n=26 )	All (n=133 )
<b>Content and structure</b>			
- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	24%	27%	25%
- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			
- Do not like intensive courses			

#### Sample comments: domestic students

- *Not enough options to further learning in specific fields. e.g. Digital Signal Processing subject offered but only provided basic understanding - University of Sydney had no option to further this unless I switched back to undergrad*
- *Focused on large cities / mainly Sydney. Regional aspects in the course was minimal*
- *Poor course - lightweight, insufficient content. Omission of e.g. social planning, transport planning*

#### Sample comments: international students

- *The availability of the different courses every semester, I couldn't take one of the courses I was most interested on due to it was only available once a year*
- *It should be more focus in architecture. The fact that it requires tertiary studies only rather than architecture degree opens the course to a wide range of students, in a way that's it's becomes too generic. Nothing is tackled in real depth in order to suit all different professions*
- *More focus on the 3d part, because that's what people are more interested into, when they applied for this coursework*

## 6 Appropriate Assessment

### Coverage

This KPI covers the extent to which assessment measures higher order thinking and understanding; types of assessment; marking of assessments

#### CEQ Survey items

The CEQ does not include items relating to Appropriate Assessment

#### Qualitative data analysis

There are 3 sub-categories within Appropriate Assessment, against which students comments are analysed:

- content of assessments e.g. extent to which assessment measures higher order thinking and understanding; relation of assessments to coursework
- types of assessment (including group work as an assessment practice);
- marking of assessments (weighting; marks; by staff) (*explanation of marking criteria* is included in Clear Goals and Standards).

### Summary

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### Areas of best practice

- 5% of respondents expressed satisfaction with assessment practices across the faculty
- Sample comment: *"Assignments were given to help to gain more knowledge on the subject"*

##### Suggested improvements

- 7% of respondents were dissatisfied with the content and type of assessments used in the faculty, and with marking practices
- Sample comment: *"Some courses were not interesting enough and the quality of the work required to pass is minimal. Hence better students get rewarded the same as lazy students. Also working in groups is a good experience but not fair to the individual student on a marks based system. These projects should represent a small percentage of the total marks not entire subjects"*

### 6.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002–2008

The following table includes the percentage of comments received from respondents to the surveys, that can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement, providing an indication of trends in the graduate experience of Appropriate Assessment between 2002 and 2008.

		CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic		14%	19%	17%	4%	3%	5%
	International		0%	<i>Too few</i>		6%	<i>Too few</i>	8%
	<b>All</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Suggested improvements	Domestic		5%	0%	0%	12%	5%	6%
	International			<i>Too few</i>		0%	<i>Too few</i>	12%
	<b>All</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>7%</b>

## 6.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

### 6.2.1 Areas of best practice

5% of graduates (i.e. 7/133) who responded to the CEQ expressed satisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Work away assignments*
- *no exams!*
- *The ability to complete assignments off campus helped as I was working full time*

Sample comments: international students

- *Assignments were given to help to gain more knowledge on the subject*
- *The projects that were done*

### 6.2.2 Suggested improvements

7% of graduates (i.e. 9/133) who responded to the CEQ expressed dissatisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *some of the assignments were completely out of touch with modern needs*
- *Some courses were not interesting enough and the quality of the work required to pass is minimal. Hence better students get rewarded the same as lazy students. Also working in groups is a good experience but not fair to the individual student on a marks based system. These projects should represent a small percentage of the total marks not entire subjects.*
- *It has to be an exam for each unit at the end of the semester, doing assignment only is not enough to demonstrate someone's skill to his particular subject*
- *Quality and rigour of teaching and assessments*

Sample comments: international students

- *Due to the class having a mix of people (professionals in the field since 20 years) sitting next to a fresh graduate (without any experience in the field) I feel the marking system should be revised. Not fair to mark 2 people with different calibres on the same scale.*
- *also during the course some new ideas/experiments were treated harshly in marking making it difficult to get marks, (this is only some lectures not all) which makes the creative thinking very discouraging.*

## 7 Appropriate Workload

### Coverage

This KPI covers the extent to which students consider they have reasonable workloads. The even distribution of assignment deadlines is also included in this KPI.

#### CEQ Survey items

The CEQ does not include items relating to Appropriate Workload

#### Qualitative data analysis

All comments from students that relate to workload and/or the timing of assignment deadlines are counted under workload, which includes the following areas of the student experience of this topic:

- Reasonable workload
- Even distribution of assignment deadlines
- Pressure of course; not having enough time to understand the topic
- Inability to comprehend subject matter due to sheer volume of work

### Summary

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### Areas of best practice

- Two respondents were happy with the amount and flexibility of the workload
- Sample comment: *"Good workload for Postgraduate/working students"*

##### Suggested improvements

- 2% of respondents deemed the workload to be high
- Sample comment: *"Some subjects irrelevant and too much content to be learnt within a short time period"*

### 7.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002–2008

The following table provides an indication of trends in the graduate experience of Appropriate Workload between 2002 and 2008, as indicated in the responses to open questions in the CEQ.

		CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
	International		0%	<i>Too few</i>		0%	<i>Too few</i>	0%
	<b>All</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Suggested improvements	Domestic		5%	0%	3%	4%	3%	3%
	International			<i>Too few</i>		0%	<i>Too few</i>	4%
	<b>All</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>

### 7.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

The main issues raised by current students related to the amount of work that was required in their courses e.g. the overwhelming workload, especially in relation to combined degrees; the difficulty of getting through all the required readings; and the simultaneous due dates of assignments. The similarity of comments provided on this topic negates the purpose of providing sample comments to illustrate student concerns.

## 8 Clear Goals and Standards

### Coverage

Practices characteristic of this KPI relate to the establishing of clear aims and objectives for a course, and clear expectations of the standard of work expected from students.

#### CEQ Survey items

The CEQ does not include items relating to Clear Goals and Standards

#### Qualitative data analysis

There are 3 components within Clear Goals and Standards, against which students comments are analysed.

- Clear aims and objectives for a course;
- Clear expectations of the standard of work expected from students;
- Clear explanation of the marking criteria used (*marking of assessments* is included under assessment).

### Summary

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### Areas of best practice

- No respondents referred to this aspect of their experience as being of best practice

##### Suggested improvements

- 3% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with this area of their experience
- Sample comment: *"Some of the assignments were not clearly defined"*

### 8.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002–2008

The following table includes the percentage of comments received from respondents to the surveys, that can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement, providing an indication of trends in the graduate experience of Clear Goals and Standards between 2002 and 2008.

		CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic		0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
	International		0%	<i>Too few</i>		0%	<i>Too few</i>	0%
	<b>All</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>
Suggested improvements	Domestic		0%	7%	0%	4%	0%	3%
	International			<i>Too few</i>		0%	<i>Too few</i>	4%
	<b>All</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>

### 8.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

#### 8.2.1 Areas of best practice

No respondents mentioned aspects within their student experience that came under the remit of Clear Goals and Standards as an area of best practice.

#### 8.2.2 Suggested improvements

3% of students (i.e. 4/133) expressed concern about the lack of clear aims and objectives for the course, and required a clearer explanation as to the standard of work required in assessments.

Due to the low number of comments, and to maintain student confidentiality, no sample comments are provided.

## 9 Faculty/ Department Student Administration

### Coverage

Any comments that students make relating to administrative and organisational aspects of their degree experience in answer to questions on degree experience; and how that affects their overall learning experience.

NB: the analysis of qualitative data is limited to comments received in answer to the open questions on the degree experience. It does not include comments received in answer to the open questions on student administration and student support services.

#### CEQ Survey items

The CEQ does not include items relating to Faculty/ Department Student Administration.

#### Qualitative data analysis

There are 4 components within Faculty/ Department Student Administration, against which students comments are analysed. They represent the range of administration and organisation issues which are considered to be essential to student satisfaction with this aspect of their degree experience and/or overall satisfaction with the course, and which are included in student surveys of teaching:

- General comments on the overall quality of Faculty administration and organisation;
- Organisation of practicums/ internships
- Scheduling of classes/ examinations;
- Communication between staff (academic and general) and students;

### Summary

#### QUALITATIVE DATA

##### Areas of best practice

- 3% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the scheduling of classes; and the approachability and helpfulness of administration staff
- Sample comment: *"The evening classes were great, especially when working full-time"*

##### Suggested improvements

- 9% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with this area of their experience
- Comments were evenly divided between University and Faculty administration issues; communication between staff and students; and scheduling of classes
- Sample comment: *"General University of Sydney comment: very, very difficult to organise administration issues. Administration hours always during the day does not cater for full-time workers"*

### 9.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002–2008

The following table includes the percentage of qualitative comments received from respondents to the surveys which can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement, providing an indication of trends in the graduate experience of Faculty / Department Student Administration between 2002 and 2008.

	CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
	International	7%	<i>Too few</i>	0%	<i>Too few</i>	0%	0%
	<b>All</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>4%</b>
Suggested improvements	Domestic	9%	14%	6%	0%	3%	11%
	International		<i>Too few</i>	0%	<i>Too few</i>	0%	0%
	<b>All</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>12%</b>

## 9.2 Key issues for current coursework students (SCEQ 2007)

### 9.2.1 Areas of best practice

4/133 students who responded to the SCEQ provided comments on Faculty Department Student Administration as an area of best practice.

Due to the low number of comments, and to preserve student confidentiality, no sample comments are provided.

### 9.2.2 Suggested improvements

9% of current students (i.e. 12/133) suggested that improvements were needed in Faculty / Department Student Administration. Apart from general comments relating to overall administration, students expressed concern about the scheduling of lectures; the lack of communication between staff and students; and non-user friendly opening hours of Faculty and University administration offices (i.e. for part-time students). No international students commented on this issue.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *General University of Sydney comment: very, very difficult to organise administration issues. Administration hours always during the day does not cater for full-time workers*
- *Administrative processes are unclear, e.g. how to gain credit. I did this on three occasions, each time I was told a different way as to how it was suppose to be done. I also found it frustrating having, limited hours on the Admin Office hours. Again working full time, when I visited the university for a lecturer it often was the only time I came to the university all week and to have the office not open during what are 'office hours' 9-5pm was annoying.*
- *More flexibility e.g. evening classes starting at 6pm or later needed*
- *Some episodes of poor scheduling of guest lecturers that left some hours without tuition. A problem with 'intensive' programme*
- *Constant streams of unnecessary emails. When I at work I don't need an email to tell me they are out of paper, in the IT lab*
- *Sometimes disorganised - lecture cancellations without warning not uncommon*

## Attachment A Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ) : Focus of comments 2007

The following data is included in this report as a guide to the areas which current students (SCEQ respondents) considered to be either of best practice or in need of improvement during 2007, which is the year in which respondents to the 2008 completed their studies.

### Generic Skills

#### *Best practice*

- 20% of comments received expressed satisfaction with the development of generic skills/graduate attributes.
- Comments were evenly distributed across all of the University of Sydney Graduate Attributes

#### *Suggested improvements*

- 4% of comments received expressed dissatisfaction with this area of their experience

### Good Teaching

#### *Best practice*

- 28% of comments received expressed satisfaction with teaching practices across the Faculty
- 12% of respondents appreciated the use of up-to-date teaching methods, interesting and engaging lectures, and the presence of useful learning resources
- Concern and care for student learning accounted for 5% of positive comments; as did passionate, inspirational and enthusiastic lecturers and tutors; and research-enhanced learning and teaching

#### *Suggested improvements*

- 36% of comments received expressed dissatisfaction with this area of their experience
- The lack of current learning resources; out of date teaching methods; understanding of student problems, and timely and constructive feedback on work were the main areas of concern.

### Overall Satisfaction

#### *Best practice*

- 17% of respondents appreciated the professionalism, qualifications, knowledge and experience of academic staff

#### *Suggested improvements*

- 14% of respondents provided comments that could be categorised as belonging to this KPI
- Areas of concern included: financial costs of the course; the entry standard of fellow students; and the relevant experience and knowledge of some academic staff.

### Learning Community

#### *Best practice*

- 27% of respondents expressed satisfaction with aspects of their experience that fall within the remit of Learning Community
- 11% valued the opportunity to explore academic interests with staff and students in tutorials and other discussion fora; whilst 7% appreciated the library services and facilities provided by the Faculty (buildings, lecture theatres, computer access etc)

#### *Suggested improvements*

- 29% of respondents provided comments that could be categorised as belonging to this KPI
- Areas of concern included: tutorials; class sizes; library services, and facilities.

## Curriculum

### *Best practice*

- 44% of respondents appreciated the programme of study or curriculum offered by the Faculty, considering it relevant to their future profession
- The flexibility afforded with combined degrees was appreciated 7% of respondents; whilst a further 6% valued the practical components of the course.

### *Suggested improvements*

- 40% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the content and structure of the curriculum, and its relevance and usefulness to their future profession
- Concern was also expressed about the cancellation or unavailability of previously advertised units of study; and practical aspects of the course

## Appropriate Assessment

### *Best practice*

- 7% of respondents appreciated the types and content of assessment practices used within the Faculty

### *Suggested improvements*

- 9% of respondents provided comments that could be categorised as belonging to this KPI
- Areas of concern included: the types of assessment used, including group assessment; and the perceived inequity in marking of assignments.

## Appropriate Workload

### *Best practice*

- 1% of respondents expressed satisfaction with workload

### *Suggested improvements*

- 2% of respondents considered the workload to be too high.

## Clear Goals and Standards

### *Best practice*

- 2/220 respondents considered this topic to be an area of best practice

### *Suggested improvements*

- 5% of respondents provided comments that could be categorised as belonging to this KPI
- The main area of concern was a perceived lack of clarity regarding the standard of work expected from lecturers when completing assignments.

## Faculty/ Department Student Administration

NB: comments relating to student administration are normally found in the answers to the open questions on Student administration and support services. The following analysis refers only to those comments located in the answers to the degree experience questions.

### *Best practice*

- One respondent considered this topic to be of best practice

### *Suggested improvements*

- 5% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with faculty administration
- The main area of concern related to scheduling or timetabling of classes and exams.