



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Education and Social Work

The Student Experience of Learning and Teaching
(Bachelor level graduates)

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

May 2009

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Glossary

The following terms and phrases are used throughout the report

CEQ	Course Experience Questionnaire Administered to graduates of previous year e.g. students who completed the CEQ during 2008 completed their studies during 2007
KPI linked results	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.
Percentage agreement	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.
Qualitative data Focus of written observations	Students written observations received in response to open ended questions in the CEQ: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What were the best aspects of your course?• What aspects were in need of improvement?
Percentage of comments received	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.

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 – 2008¹

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 local student results.

	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
Domestic students	138	212	199	228	269
International students	0	3	3	6	6
Overall	108	215	184	208	236

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

Reliability of data from international students

2004 – 2006: Less than 5 international graduates responded to the CEQ in 2004 – 2007. Results are therefore excluded as they are unlikely to be reliable.

2007 - 2008: 6 international graduates responded to the overall satisfaction item in the 2007 CEQ. Since the minimum sample size recommended for statistical analysis of CEQ data is 20, the analysis of the quantitative data for this cohort should be viewed with caution.

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

Areas of best practice	CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=		
Domestic		139	36	126	140	119	223
International		0	0	2	0	6	3
Total	153	139	36	128	140	125	226

Suggested improvements	CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=		
Domestic		137	37	127	139	125	217
International		0	0	2	0	5	4
Total	150	137	37	129	139	130	221

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

International students

Separate data for international graduates was not available in 2002.

Less than 7 international graduates who responded to the CEQ in 2005, 2007, and 2008, provided written observations on their experiences. Since this number falls within the lower range of statistics that can be viewed with caution (5-20), the results of the qualitative analysis for international students in these years have been incorporated into the analysis of data from domestic students.

¹ Data retrieved from the ITL AGS/CEQ website results and reports for the Faculty of Education and Social Work on 21.08.08 and 23.04.09 http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/ceq/tpi_report.cfm

3 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.

4 Analysis and counting of comments

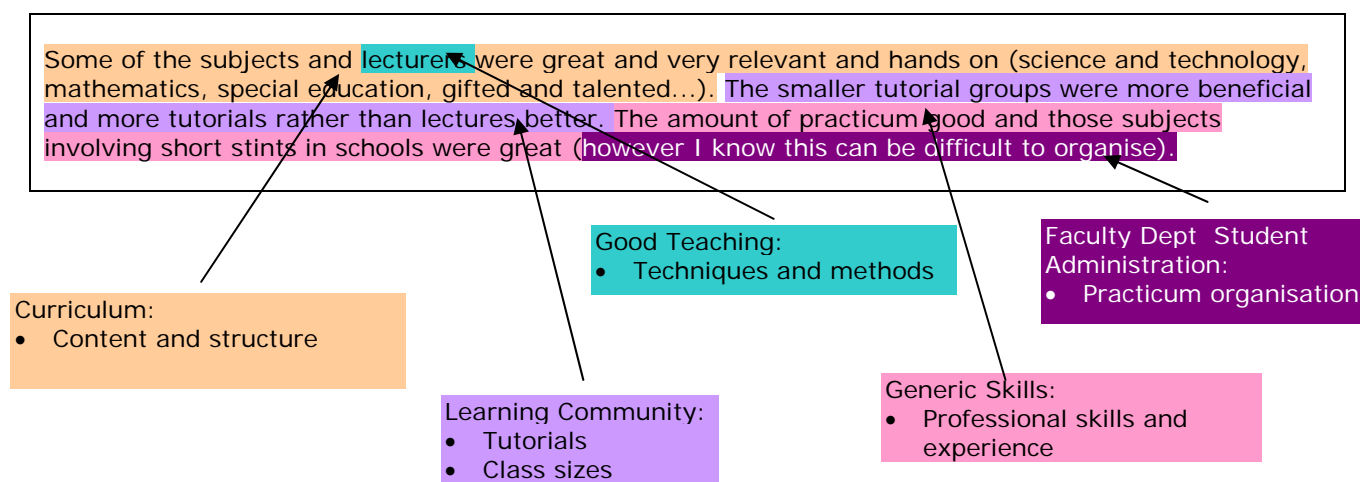
The components of categories and sub-categories used in the analysis of qualitative data are based on:

- 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/CEQ²*, 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.



² Available from Quality Assurance Officer (Learning and Teaching)

Executive summary

Data about the experiences of bachelor level graduates from the Faculty of Education and Social Work 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

Generic Skills

The KPI linked CEQ results for Generic Skills have decreased steadily since 2004, and currently stand at 63%. The University average for Generic skills is 66%. Domestic students experience better outcomes than international students.

Evidence from the qualitative data indicates a high level of satisfaction with the acquisition of the necessary professional skills. The development of these skills, including the opportunities to acquire these through practicums, is the focus of the majority of student comments relating to this KPI, and also for their whole course experience.

Good Teaching

The KPI linked results for Good Teaching have remained reasonably steady since 2004. The current score of 47% is identical to the University average.

Evidence from the qualitative data indicates that the 2007 graduate was more satisfied with the standard of teaching within the Faculty than its predecessors. 2008 was the first year since 2005 where more respondents mentioned aspects of this topic as an area of best practice than those who suggested improvements.

Overall Satisfaction

The KPI linked results for Overall Satisfaction have decreased substantially since 2006 (69%) and 2007 (71%). The current score of 64% is lower than the University average of 67%.

Evidence from the qualitative data suggests that respondents appreciated the quality of academic staff in terms of relevant qualifications, experience and knowledge.

Learning Community

The main focus of comments received from respondents, and which related to aspects of Learning Community, indicates that they constantly value the community feel of the Faculty, the friendships and networks developed with peers, and the opportunities to explore academic interests with staff and students. Since 2002 positive comments on this topic have outweighed those suggesting improvements.

Curriculum (Programme of study)

In 2008 30% of comments received from respondents to the CEQ expressed satisfaction with the content and structure of the programme of study completed during their degree; whilst 44% suggested improvements.

With comments from respondents on this topic continuing to focus on aspects of curriculum as an area in need of improvement, rather than being of best practice, evidence suggests that there is a high level of dissatisfaction with this area of the student experience within the Faculty. More negative comments were received on this topic than for any other area of the student experience mentioned respondents' comments.

Appropriate Assessment

2008 saw the first time, since 2002, where respondents focussed more on the negative aspects of assessment than the positive. Whilst some respondents appreciated group work and those assessments that related directly to the content of coursework; others considered that assignments should be more useful, and considered that group assignments required more time to complete.

Appropriate Workload

With very few comments being received that mention workload, either of best practice or in need of improvement, this area of the student experience continues to be of minor concern once students have graduated. The majority of comments on this topic suggested that staff should communicate more to avoid clashes in due dates for assignments.

Clear Goals and Standards

In relation to comments received which mention aspects of Clear Goals and Standards, 5% of respondents to the CEQ were dissatisfied with the perceived lack of clear aims and objectives, and the need for clarity regarding expectations of the standard of work expected, particularly in relation to assessments.

Faculty/ Department Student Administration

Evidence from the qualitative data indicates that students are becoming increasingly concerned about the quality of faculty/ degree administration and organisation, and the organisation of practicums. Respondents to the 2008 CEQ provided the highest percentage of negative comments on this topic since 2002.

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May 2009*

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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 2009.³

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 undergraduate student experience of learning and teaching in the Faculty of Education and Social Work 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 (7: Generic Skills; 8: Good Teaching; and 9: 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.

³ Further information about the CEQ can be found at <http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/ceq/>

1 Generic Skills (KPI 7)

Coverage

The *Generic Skills Scale* is an attempt to take into account the extent to which university courses add to the generic skills that their graduates might be expected to possess. Discipline-specific skills and knowledge are often crucial to prospects for employment and further study. Nevertheless, the emphasis on generic skills stems from the belief that knowledge quickly becomes obsolete, and generic skills that may have been acquired in the learning process should endure and be applicable in a broader context. Skills 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 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 Attributes⁴.

- 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

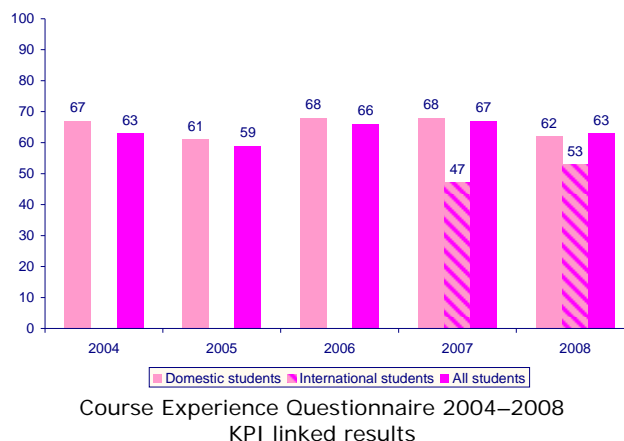
The KPI linked CEQ results for Generic Skills have decreased steadily since 2004, and currently stand at 63%. The University average for Generic skills is 66%.

Evidence from the qualitative data indicates a high level of satisfaction with the acquisition of the necessary professional skills. The development of these skills, including the opportunities to acquire these through practicums, is the focus of the majority of student comments relating to this KPI, and also for their whole course experience.

⁴ 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 student 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	46%	37%	25%	38%	56%	50%	39%
Suggested improvements	17%	28%	24%	29%	23%	20%	18%

1.3 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

1.3.1 Areas of best practice

Percentage of comments received

Ethical, social, professional understanding

- Satisfactory development of discipline/ professional skills 34%
- Presence of work placement/ industry experience in the course

Sample comments

- *Hands on approach and activities which can be taken straight into the classroom*
- *Learnt excellent communication, analytical and writing skills as well as theories and methods of practice. Also learnt a lot about professional development*
- *Most of the courses provided very practical teaching strategies that we can use in our day to day teaching*
- *Studies focussed upon practical work force skills and information needed*
- *Allowed me to explore own skills and become independent learner and acquire skills needed post- study*

1.3.2 Suggested improvements

	<i>Percentage of comments received</i>
Ethical, social, professional understanding	
- Did not adequately prepare for employment	17%
- Work placement/ industry experience in the course unsatisfactory in terms of developing skills	
Sample comments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>More information on practical skills (especially counselling, case work in hospitals and the community) needed to be taught</i> - <i>Need for more practical now I am teaching I feel there are many things I should know which I do not</i> - <i>The course has not really prepared me for the jobs I am expected to undertake on starting school</i> - <i>Too much theory, not enough practical. I have been teaching for 6 months and have had to re-learn everything. University did not teach me to be a teacher at all, only how to use the formal documents and paper work. Should be more practical like an apprenticeship</i> - <i>Definitely my writing skills and using information correctly</i> - <i>Practical skills development. Putting theory into practice</i> 	

2 Good Teaching (KPI 8)

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 learning⁵)

Summary

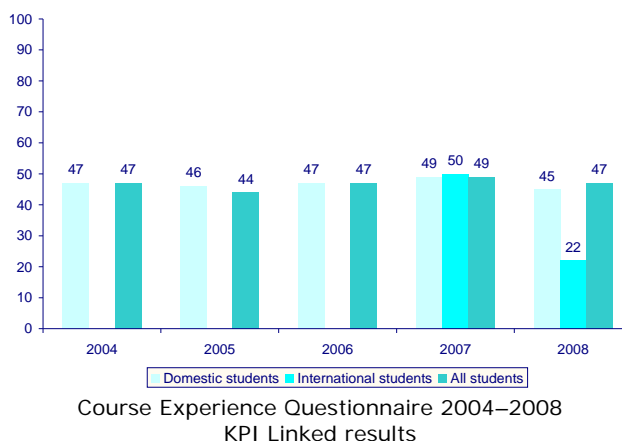
The KPI linked results for Good Teaching have remained reasonably steady since 2004. The current score of 47% is identical to the University average.

Evidence from the qualitative data indicates that the 2007 graduate was more satisfied with the standard of teaching within the Faculty than its predecessors. 2008 was the first year since 2005 where more respondents mentioned aspects of this topic as an area of best practice than those who suggested improvements.

⁵ 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 CEQ survey items for Good Teaching.



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 student experience of Good Teaching 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	30%	28%	39%	29%	20%	21%	24%
Suggested improvements	22%	19%	27%	15%	24%	24%	18%

2.3 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

2.3.1 Areas of best practice

Percentage of comments received

Good teaching experiences

- Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques
 - Ability to keep students interested in the subject
 - Encouragement to participate in discussions during lectures and tutorials
 - Learning resources are up to date, and relevant to curriculum
- 8%

Concern and care for student learning

- Students felt supported in their learning; help and advice readily available
 - Lecturers understood problems and difficulties of students (academic and personal)
- 9%

Sample comments

- *The University life, the staff and their explanation in the course content but also in certain subjects the execution of the content was amazing*
- *2nd half of this course was excellent teaching was conducted in small groups and I found them very efficient there is little that I can't remember from this course. Dr XX was an excellent and supportive tutor and lecturer*
- *Some of the lecturers were outstanding. I also felt the staff were compassionate when working with student who were having difficulties*
- *The individual support of the tutors and lecturers. Certain units were exceptionally engaging in the way they were presented*
- *The provision of hard copy resources was highly beneficial in providing important tools for later employment*
- *Some of the staff demonstrated real empathy and interest in all students and provided interesting and varied opportunities to extend all students*

2.3.2 Suggested improvements

	<i>Percentage of comments received</i>
Concern and care for student learning	6%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students did not feel supported in their learning; - Help and advice was not readily available 	

Sample comments

- *Staff especially coordinator needs to understand the needs of students (especially overseas students) and willing to listen to students*
- *The entire degree needs to be re-vamped, from the content to the teaching staff. With only a few exceptions the staff did not care about the students they taught, or tried to teach*
- *The staff were sometimes unhelpful, unrealistic*
- *Could be more supportive in the difficulties of juggling placement, part time work and study*
- *Not all lecturers and tutors were good communicators or teachers*
- *Field education was beneficial however lacked support from teaching staff for much of the time in both 3rd and 4th years. This impacted on my experience of the course*

3 Overall Satisfaction (KPI 9)

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

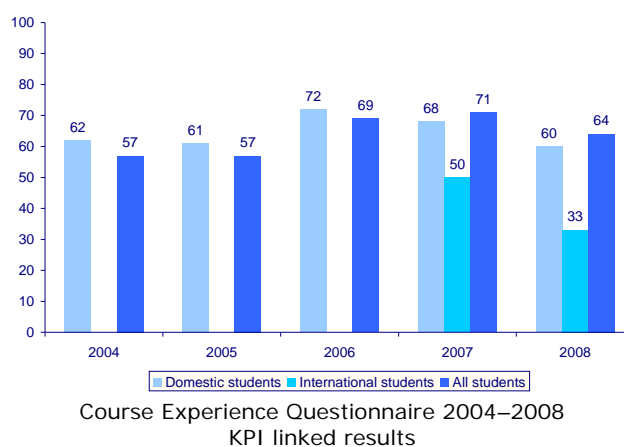
Summary

The KPI linked results for Overall Satisfaction have decreased substantially since 2006 (69%) and 2007 (71%). The current score of 64% is lower than the University average of 67%.

Evidence from the qualitative data suggests that respondents appreciated the quality of academic staff in terms of relevant qualifications, experience and knowledge.

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 2002 and 2008.

	CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2004	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	11%	8%	8%	6%	8%	7%	12%
Suggested improvements	9%	5%	8%	2%	2%	2%	7%

3.3 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

3.3.1 Areas of best practice

	Percentage of comments received
Quality of staff	
- Qualifications of staff in subject matter and in teaching at tertiary level	8%
- Relevant experience of lecturers and tutors in subject area	
- Relevant and up to date knowledge of lecturers and tutors in subject area	

Sample comments

- *My whole experience was exceptional and I'm very sorry it's over*
- *Definitely particular staff members who actively modelled their teaching philosophies, XX, YY and ZZ were outstanding lecturers who need to be commended! The staff also of the sociology department were excellent! Once again I cannot stress how brilliantly XX in particular did her job*
- *Having experts to help you understand situations that may arise and teaching how to teach English!*
- *The curriculum units particularly the drama units because of the teachers of those units, they were very qualified, knowledgeable and experienced*
- *The experts in the curriculum subjects that transferred their expertise to practically when teaching*
- *The depth of experience provided by lecturers and tutors*

3.3.2 Suggested improvements

7% of graduates (i.e. 15/221) who responded to the CEQ expressed concern about the quality of their degree/ course experience: cost of course; entry standard of students; reputation/ quality of the degree; qualification, knowledge and experience of academic staff.

Sample comments

- *Field placement – it is an incredible financial burden to have to be able to complete a full time unpaid field placement whilst attempting to earn enough for a living*
- *Get organised, get more ESL qualified people in, you've lost your best people. Also when experienced Lecturers like XX go on leave = get GOOD replacements not just old teachers or researchers*
- *Lecturers being better trained as teachers. Some lecturers need to change their lectures to meet student needs and not just deliver the same as they have for years*
- *Some students were not suited to the course nor the educational professional – don't know how else you can filter students other than their on paper entry marks*
- *Some part-time tutors were incompetent and thus made my learning experience less enjoyable and effective*
- *The academic staff also need to be improved with some, not all, staff being unreliable, lacking subject specific knowledge and administering subjects that were useless for our degree or not of a sufficiently rigorous standard*

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

The main focus of comments received from respondents, and which related to aspects of Learning Community, indicates that they constantly value the community feel of the Faculty, the friendships and networks developed with peers, and the opportunities to explore academic interests with staff and students. Since 2002 positive comments on this topic have outweighed those suggesting improvements.

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 student 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	15%	18%	25%	10%	9%	20%	17%
Suggested improvements	9%	11%	3%	3%	6%	5%	4%

4.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

4.2.1 Areas of best practice

	<i>Percentage of comments received</i>
Learning environment	
- Enjoyed University social life	
- Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty)	16%
- Academic interests were being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials; group work	
- Happy with size of class	
Sample comments	
- <i>Being able to develop a strong relationship with classmates, which has also provided a strong network now we have entered the workforce</i>	
- <i>Practical learning and supportive environment from other students</i>	
- <i>Sense of community among peers as the course became more specialised, development of analytical skills</i>	
- <i>The enthusiasm and intelligence of the other students brought a lot of interesting discussion during tutorials and lectures</i>	
- <i>In 1st and 2nd year the course-coordinators listened to our feedback and improved/ altered aspects of the course to benefit our learning</i>	
- <i>The smaller tutorial groups were more beneficial and more tutorials than lectures the better</i>	

Learning environment

- Enjoyed University social life
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Sample comments

- *Being able to develop a strong relationship with classmates, which has also provided a strong network now we have entered the workforce*
- *Practical learning and supportive environment from other students*
- *Sense of community among peers as the course became more specialised, development of analytical skills*
- *The enthusiasm and intelligence of the other students brought a lot of interesting discussion during tutorials and lectures*
- *In 1st and 2nd year the course-coordinators listened to our feedback and improved/ altered aspects of the course to benefit our learning*
- *The smaller tutorial groups were more beneficial and more tutorials than lectures the better*

4.2.2 Suggested improvements

4% of graduates (i.e. 9/221) who responded to the CEQ expressed concern about aspects of the Learning Community: tutorials; equity and discrimination; facilities; responsiveness of staff to feedback from students.

Sample comments

- *Tutorials were far to large and didn't give adequate opportunity to discuss, debate or provide further elucidation on the subject*
- *A staff member in work placement second year was known to have a history of discrimination yet she was still put in that work placement and wasn't offered counselling after an incident which occurred*
- *The Indigenous education courses taught through the Koori centre were taught with an air of reverse discrimination towards the white race*
- *More access to computers, at times the education computer room was so full that you had to wait for over an hour for a computer*
- *In 3rd and 4th year our feedback was not always taken on board and at times the staff were in-flexible with our learning*
- *Less lectures and more tutorials (face to face interaction)*

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 employers⁶". 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

In 2008 30% of comments received from respondents to the CEQ expressed satisfaction with the content and structure of the programme of study completed during their degree; whilst 44% suggested improvements.

With comments from respondents on this topic continuing to focus on aspects of curriculum as an area in need of improvement, rather than being of best practice, evidence suggests that there is a high level of dissatisfaction with this area of the student experience within the Faculty. More negative comments were received on this topic than for any other area of the student experience mentioned respondents' comments.

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 student 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	29%	35%	42%	35%	41%	34%	30%
Suggested improvements	41%	51%	65%	60%	45%	50%	44%

⁶ See 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

	Percentage of comments received
Content and structure	
- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	25%
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements	

Sample comments

- *Education; in particular the mathematics curriculum classes. These were the most beneficial in regards to my current job, classes were relevant and interesting*
- *Specific and relevant for my chosen career*
- *The best aspects were the practicum placements and ability to further my knowledge in English and History whilst completing the education component*
- *The content was really interesting. The course was made of issues and subjects that I would not normally read about*
- *The first two years of social work are similar to an arts degree and allow you to explore different subjects which was beneficial to the course in later years. The course as a whole prepared me for the workforce and generally made me a better person*
- *Variety of elective subjects allows you to study particular aspects of an area that you're interested in*

5.2.3 Suggested improvements

	Percentage of comments received
Content and structure	
- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	39%
- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry requirements	

Sample comments

- *All literacy subjects were always disorganised and over assessed. Courses conflicted each other e.g. special education lecturers disagreed with reading strategies taught in English*
- *At times the course was disorganised and not run very well. The course could be streamlined and more focus placed onto the health aspect that we as teachers need to rely on*
- *Education: more relevance to education world today. Too much repetition of content. Focus on teaching of all aspects of the syllabus – I have not been given any opportunity to learn physics and yet I have to teach year 7-10 physics*
- *Little time given to practical application of behaviour management theories. More emphasis needed on practical elements of teaching rather than just learning what we should know*
- *The overall structure of the double degree needs to be reconsidered. Sequential units should be flexible, in that you can make up a failed unit if the need arises, but still should be able to continue with subsequent units in the degree program, so you're not left a year behind. There is no reason for this not to be the case, unless one unit directly interlinks or builds on the failed unit (very rarely the case)*
- *Educations – why was it so easy to pass, I would have to be trying very hard to fail any subject – in 3rd year being combined with 1st year masters of education students – almost single focus of education opportunities – white middle-upper class society. We did a token disability subject, which we were told was a requirement of the department. Where was the aboriginal education, multicultural education, corporate education etc open our eyes to other possibilities with our degree. Not just teaching in white Sydney.*

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

2008 saw the first time, since 2002, where respondents focussed more on the negative aspects of assessment than the positive. Whilst some respondents appreciated group work and those assessments that related directly to the content of coursework; others considered that assignments should be more useful, and considered that group assignments required more time to complete.

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	5%	6%	0%	4%	1%	8%	4%
Suggested improvements	8%	5%	3%	3%	1%	5%	13%

6.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

6.2.1 Areas of best practice

4% of graduates (i.e. 8/226) who responded to the CEQ expressed satisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments.

Sample comments

- *Assessments that were assignment based could be used as practical resources at work*
- *Assignments directly relating to teaching (e.g. units of work)*
- *Forms of assessment other than exams*
- *Group activities/ group work. Variety of assessment tasks*
- *Some projects/ assignments in drama teaching were really awesome – i.e. having to do the IP and GP was terrific*
- *Group work regarding assignments*

6.2.2 Suggested improvements

Graduates (CEQ 2008)	All respondents (n= 221)
Types of assessment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unhappy with types of assessment used, including group assessments 	6%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would like a wider variety of assessment types 	
Sample comments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Assessments in general. Education units didn't adequately assess students knowledge and progress</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Clear and useful assessments</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Some assignments in IBL4 and IBL3 required more time (e.g. group assignments) in order to complete sufficiently</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Sometimes the marking seemed very arbitrary and not standardised</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Group work, setting appropriate assignments for the marks they were worth</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>More assessments need to be undertaken at university rather than a multitude of assignments to be done at home</i> 	

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

With very few comments being received that mention workload, either of best practice or in need of improvement, this area of the student experience continues to be of minor concern once students have graduated. The majority of comments on this topic suggested that staff should communicate more to avoid clashes in due dates for assignments.

7.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002–2008

The following table provides an indication of trends in the students perceptions of 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	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	3%	0%
Suggested improvements	2%	4%	0%	3%	5%	2%	3%

7.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

The main issues raised by graduates related to the amount of work that was required in their courses e.g. the overwhelming workload; 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).

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 student 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	0%	0%	6%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Suggested improvements	4%	1%	0%	4%	2%	2%	5%

8.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

8.2.1 Areas of best practice

No graduates provided comments on the clarity of aims, objectives, expectations, and marking criteria during their course.

8.2.2 Suggested improvements

5% of students (i.e. 11/221) expressed concern about the lack of clear aims and objectives for the course, required a clearer explanation as to the standard of work required in assessments, and would have appreciated guidance on the marking criteria used.

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

Evidence from the qualitative data indicates that students are becoming increasingly concerned about the quality of faculty/ degree administration and organisation and the organisation of practicums.

Respondents to the 2008 CEQ provided the highest percentage of critical comments on this topic since 2002.

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 student 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	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%
Suggested improvements	13%	7%	11%	9%	4%	10%	17%

9.2 Key issues for current coursework students (SCEQ 2007)

9.2.1 Areas of best practice

3/226 students who responded to the CEQ provided comments on Faculty Department Student Administration as an area of best practice.

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

9.2.2 Suggested improvements

	<i>Percentage of comments received</i>
General comments	
- Dissatisfaction with the general administration and organisation of the course	6%
- Unhappy with office staff attitude to students	
Practicum organisation	
- Would prefer practicums to be organised at different times	6%
- Unhappy with the choice of schools used; and with communication between school and practicum office	
Sample comments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Communication between faculties as we were a specific group of students, often with different course requirements</i> - <i>Lack of communication and a feeling of neglect by some staff/ admin</i> - <i>Organisation/ logistics i.e. timetables, room numbers, due dates for assignments (not clearly communicated at times</i> - <i>Some serious attention needs to be given to the disparity of the expectations of the Practicum Office at the University end, and the practicum schools themselves. Some student teachers were teaching from pre-programmed, lesson-by-lesson structures, whilst others (like myself), were expected to program entire units from scratch with little to no assistance, as though they were real teachers getting paid! Clearly, there is no clear, specific information given to the schools about what they should expect. It could be arranged or differentiated by KLA to represent the specific aspects of the teaching area</i> - <i>The practicum coordinator. Too much confusion, 2 schools was placed in didn't know I was meant to be arriving. This may not be the coordinator's fault but greater lines of communication between the university and the school would be an idea. Also, not enough practicums, I have only had 8 weeks prac in a high school and I am now a fully qualified teacher? I hope there is improvement to come for the future students.</i> 	

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

- 29% of comments received expressed satisfaction with the development of generic skills/graduate attributes.
- The majority of these comments (25%) referred to the development of professional skills and opportunities to undertake professional experience during practicums and internships

Suggested improvements

- 8% of comments received expressed dissatisfaction with this area of their experience
- The majority of these comments (7%) were concerned with issues relating to the gaining of professional skills

Good Teaching

Best practice

- 29% of comments received expressed satisfaction with the development of generic skills/graduate attributes.
- 12% of respondents appreciated the support provided by staff, and their availability and willingness to discuss academic and personal problems.
- Appreciation of the use of up-to-date teaching methods, interesting and engaging lectures, and the presence of useful learning resources accounted for 8% of positive comments; as did passionate, inspirational and enthusiastic lecturers and tutors

Suggested improvements

- 27% of comments received expressed dissatisfaction with this area of their experience
- The lack of current learning resources, boring lectures, and out of date teaching methods were the main areas of concern.

Overall Satisfaction

Best practice

- 15/284 or 5% of respondents appreciated the professionalism, qualifications, knowledge and experience of academic staff

Suggested improvements

- 7% 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
- The community atmosphere of the Faculty was appreciated by 11% of respondents; whilst 14% appreciated the opportunity to explore academic interests with staff and students in tutorials and other discussion fora

Suggested improvements

- 8% of respondents provided comments that could be categorised as belonging to this KPI
- Areas of concern included: tutorials; class sizes; and facilities.

Curriculum

Best practice

- 49% 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 by a small percentage of respondents (3%) as was the online method of delivery (2%)

Suggested improvements

- 45% 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 online delivery of content through WebCT (7% of comments received)

Appropriate Assessment

Best practice

- 6% of respondents appreciated the types and content of assessment practices used within the Faculty

Suggested improvements

- 10% 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

- 5/284 or 2% of respondents expressed satisfaction with workload

Suggested improvements

- 10% of respondents considered the workload to be too high.
- Areas of concern included: high volume of work and readings associated with the degree; and simultaneous due dates for assignments.

Clear Goals and Standards

Best practice

- 2/284 respondents considered this topic to be an area of best practice

Suggested improvements

- 14% 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.
- Students would also appreciate a clearer indication of the marking criteria used.

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

- 3/284 or 5% of respondents considered this topic to be of best practice

Suggested improvements

- 16% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with faculty administration
- The main area of concern was the organisation of practicums e.g. location of schools; timing of practicum; number of weeks of practicum during degree course.