



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies

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

Course Experience Questionnaire Report

Includes:

- *Executive summary : key results for 2008*
- *Comparative results: Quantitative data 2005 - 2008*
- *Comparative results: Focus of written observations from respondents 2002 – 2003; 2005 – 2008*
- *Focus of written observations from respondents: 2008*

With attachment:

Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ): Focus of written observations from respondents: 2007

July 2009

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
GLOSSARY	7
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	8
NOTES.....	9
PART A KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	11
1 GENERIC SKILLS.....	12
1.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2005–2008.....	13
1.2 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008.....	13
1.3 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008).....	13
2 GOOD TEACHING.....	15
2.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2005–2008.....	16
2.2 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008.....	16
2.3 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008).....	16
3 OVERALL SATISFACTION.....	18
3.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2005–2008.....	19
3.2 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008.....	19
3.3 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008).....	19
PART B ADDITIONAL AREAS OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE.....	21
4 LEARNING COMMUNITY	22
4.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008.....	22
4.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008).....	23
5 CURRICULUM.....	24
5.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008.....	24
5.2 Key issues for coursework students (CEQ 2008).....	25
5.2.2 Areas of best practice	25
6 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT.....	26
6.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008.....	26
6.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008).....	27
7 APPROPRIATE WORKLOAD	28
7.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008.....	28
7.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008).....	28
8 CLEAR GOALS AND STANDARDS	29
8.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008.....	29
8.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008).....	29
ATTACHMENT STUDENT COURSE EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE (SCEQ) : FOCUS OF COMMENTS 2007	30

Executive Summary

Data about the experiences of bachelor level graduates from the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies is collected through the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) in the year after completion of studies. e.g. graduates who responded to the CEQ during 2008 completed their bachelor level studies in the Faculty during 2007.

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

Written observations, from respondents to the surveys, about their experiences provide evidence to support the Faculty KPI linked results (percentage agreement scores¹), and provide detailed information about key issues in the areas of best practice and suggested improvements, during their studies, and upon graduation.

The analysis of qualitative data reported in this document is based on written observations received from **all** respondents to the CEQ. Faculties are advised that if they are interested, it is possible to supply copies of the written observations in the following groupings²:

- by subject matter: general (Generic Skills) to specific (Professional Skills and Experience)
- by degree/ aggregated degree
- by field of study (CEQ codes)

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 those respondents who answered the open ended questions on the best areas of their experience and those that were considered to be in need of improvement.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI): Generic Skills; Good Teaching; Overall Satisfaction

This section provides a summary of the 2008 CEQ KPI linked results, together with a synopsis of the areas of best practice and suggested improvements mentioned by those respondents to the CEQ who provided written observations on their experiences.

Generic Skills *(Section 1; pages 12-14)*

KPI LINKED RESULTS

The KPI linked CEQ results for Generic Skills have declined considerably since 2007, and currently sit at 64% agreement. This represents a decrease of 10% on the previous year's results. The University average for Generic skills is 60% agreement. Domestic and international graduates experienced similar outcomes.

QUALITATIVE DATA

Areas of best practice

- 29% of comments received from respondents to the CEQ, mentioned the acquisition of skills and abilities across all of the five University Graduate Attribute Clusters: Research and Inquiry (11% of comments received); Information Literacy (1%); Personal and Intellectual Autonomy (3%); and Ethical, Professional and Social Understanding (12%); and Communication (3%).
- In the Ethical, Professional and Social Understanding cluster, 2% of respondents mentioned that the ethical, social and cultural aspects of engineering were covered; 3% valued the increase in group and team work skills, whilst a further 2% appreciated opportunities to enhance professional skills, and undertake experience in the workplace.
- Sample comment: *"Generally, the aspects of academic, social, environmental, ethical and forward thinking engineering were covered to adequate levels and provided a good base for future careers"*

¹ Proportions of graduates who agreed or strongly agreed that their experience of the course was educationally positive in the areas of Generic Skills; Good Teaching; and Overall Satisfaction

² Please contact Rachel Symons (r.symons@usyd.edu.au or 9351 6560) to discuss your requirements.

Suggested improvements

- 10% of respondents were dissatisfied with this aspect of their experience
- The majority of comments (7%) referred to the lack of practical or industry experience during the course
- Sample comment: *"More hands on work required including opening up equipment. Also it would be valuable to go to plants and undertaking some real projects instead of theoretical ones"*

Good Teaching (Section 2, pages 15-17)

KPI LINKED RESULTS

The KPI linked results for Good Teaching have stayed in the 30th percentile since 2005, and currently sit at 35%, which is 2% lower than the 2005 and 2007 scores, and 5% higher than the 2006 score. With scores in the 40th percentile, international students consistently rate their experience higher than their domestic counterparts. The University average for Good Teaching is 50%.

QUALITATIVE DATA

Areas of best practice

- 30% of comments received from respondents indicated that they appreciated the teaching practices across the Faculty
- 20% of comments from respondents mentioned that they 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 5% of respondents
- Sample comment: *"Some subjects had good lecturers that tried to make their topics interesting and engaged the students. They also provided good feedback to assignments and exam results."*

Suggested improvements

- 48% of respondents considered that improvements were necessary in this area of their experience
- 18% referred to the outdated teaching methods used; whilst a further 8% would have appreciated more help and support from some academic staff
- 13% of comments received from this group of respondents mentioned that they were unable to understand the lecturers and tutors, due in part to difficulties with English language proficiency.
- Sample comment: *"Some lecturers found it difficult to explain concepts. As they had probably been teaching the subject for some time, they tended to regard the content as being simple and spent little time explaining it in an easy to understand manner"*

Overall Satisfaction (Section 3; pages 18-20)

KPI LINKED RESULTS

The KPI linked results for Overall Satisfaction have decreased by 8% since 2006 (66%) and currently sit at 58% agreement. The University average for this KPI is 65%. For the first time since 2005, domestic and international students experienced similar outcomes. Between 2005 and 2007, international students were considerably more satisfied with this aspect of their experience than domestic students (+10-12%).

QUALITATIVE DATA

Best practice

- 4% of respondents provided written observation which fell within the remit of Overall Satisfaction.
- Respondents appreciated the calibre of fellow students, the experience, knowledge and qualifications of academic staff, and the overall learning experience.
- Sample comment: *"It was a hard course but when I finished it I felt I had accomplished something"*

Suggested improvements

- 10% of respondents suggested improvements in this area of their experience
- 7% expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of staff (up to date subject knowledge; teaching skills)
- Sample comment: *"The teaching staff definitely need to teach better. Although they are very knowledgeable it's very difficult learning from them most of the time. There are however, some good staff which knows how to teach and provides an effective learning scheme."*

Additional areas of the student experience

Respondents to the CEQ who provide written observations on their experiences, often refer to areas of their experience that are not directly related to the KPI linked numerical items on the survey, but are related to the extended CEQ scales (Learning Community; Appropriate Assessment; Appropriate Workload; Clear Goals and Standards), and Curriculum (Programme of Study). Since these topics may be mentioned in up to 50% of comments received, they are included in this report in order to provide a full picture of issues which were perceived by respondents to the CEQ to be either of best practice or in need of improvement during their period of study at the University.

Learning Community (Section 4; pages 22-23)

QUALITATIVE DATA

Areas of best practice

- 18% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the Learning Community aspect of their experience
- 15% 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: *"Social aspect - the small communal environment of a small department really made students bond"*

Suggested improvements

- 21% of respondents considered that this area of their experience required improvement
- The majority of these comments (12%) referred to the physical resources provided by the University e.g. buildings, equipment, computers, library services; whilst a further 8% would have appreciated more opportunities to explore academic interests, and smaller class sizes
- Sample comment: *"Concrete LAB needs a major overhaul i.e. new equipment, new tools and more materials. Additionally, a structured Industrial Experience Program would be beneficial to all students"*

Curriculum (Programme of Study) (Section 5; pages 24-25)

QUALITATIVE DATA

Areas of best practice

- 45% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the programme of study offered by the Faculty
- 39% appreciated the structure and relevance of the course
- Sample comment: *"A course restructure undertaken during my time at university allowed me to fully appreciate the connection of all of the aspects of my course"*

Suggested improvements

- 32% of respondents were dissatisfied with the programme of study
- Main issues included: the lack of electives, restricted subject choice, and relevance to the current working environment
- Sample comment: *"More electives in 2nd semester of 4th year for Mechatronics course. All were in 1st semester, so forced some to overload, or choose other electives in 2nd semester that we didn't want to do"*

Appropriate Assessment (Section 6; pages 26-27)

QUALITATIVE DATA

Areas of best practice

- 14% of respondents expressed satisfaction with assessment practices across the faculty
- 6% considered that assessments tested their understanding, and related to coursework
- 8% appreciated the various types of assessment e.g. projects, thesis, group work
- Sample comment: *"Some practical projects helped me have a better understanding of what is really expected out of in the real world. Which is way beyond text book reading (memorising)."*

Suggested improvements

- 6% of respondents were dissatisfied with the content and type of assessments used in the faculty, with marking practices, and with the weighting of different assessment elements.
- Sample comment: *"Exams could be weighted less (i.e. instead of being 80% weighted exams), and put more weightings on assignments that takes 2 weeks of effort to complete (instead of making assignments weighted 10%)."*

Appropriate Workload (Section 7; page 28)

QUALITATIVE DATA

Areas of best practice

- No respondents mentioned workload as being an area of best practice

Suggested improvements

- 6% of respondents deemed the workload to be high
- Sample comment: "*The amount of workload required to successfully complete the course is very high. Workload needs to be diversified*"

Clear Goals and Standards (Section 8; page 29)

QUALITATIVE DATA

Areas of best practice

- No respondents commented on this area of their experience as being of best practice.

Suggested improvements

- 2% of respondents would have appreciated a better explanation of learning outcomes
- Sample comment: "*The learning objectives were not very clear. I think learning objectives for every subject should be more specific to motivate students to study sections that are relevant*"

Rachel Y. Symons

Quality Assurance Officer (Learning and Teaching)

July 2009

r.symons@usyd.edu.au

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
SCEQ	Student Course Experience Questionnaire Administered to current students every two years. Next survey due during Semester Two 2009.
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 strongly agreed 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? <p>Written observations from respondents cover all aspects of the student experience: Generic Skills; Good Teaching; Overall Satisfaction; Learning Community; Curriculum (Programme of Study); Appropriate Assessment; Appropriate Workload; and Clear Goals and Standards.</p>
Percentage of comments received	The number of times an aspect is mentioned within written observations received from respondents is presented as a percentage of the total number of comments received from respondents who answered the CEQ open questions relating to areas of best practice and suggested improvements 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 2009.³

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 Engineering and Information Technologies 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 (Generic Skills; Good Teaching; and Overall Satisfaction) plus additional factors (Learning Community; Curriculum; Assessment; Workload; and Clear Goals and Standards) 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/>

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 2005 – 2008⁴

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. i.e. the "Overall" number does not equate to the total of domestic and international combined.

	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
	n=	n=	n=	n=
Domestic students	133	164	216	204
International students	9	20	17	44
Overall	145	174	225	277

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 2002-2003; 2005 - 2008⁵

<u>Areas of best practice</u>	CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
Domestic students	69 ⁶	100	73	122	70	216
International students		8	5	22	10	50
Total		108	78	144	80	266

<u>Suggested improvements</u>	CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=	n=
Domestic students	79	110	79	127	72	220
International students		6	6	21	10	43
Total		116	85	148	82	263

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*

⁴ Data retrieved from the ITL AGS/CEQ website results and reports for the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies, Design and Planning on 25.09.08 and 10.07.09 http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/ceq/tpi_report.cfm

⁵ No data available for 2004 CEQ for the Faculty of Engineering; therefore excluded from the report

⁶ Separate qualitative data for international students was not available until 2003

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. To preserve student confidentiality, sample comments are only provided if there are six or more comments relating to that aspect in the responses. Comments that may possibly identify the student are not been included in the sample comments. Lecturers and tutors names, where included by the respondent, have been replaced by Engineering and Information Technologies, YYY or ZZZ.

5 Analysis and counting of comments

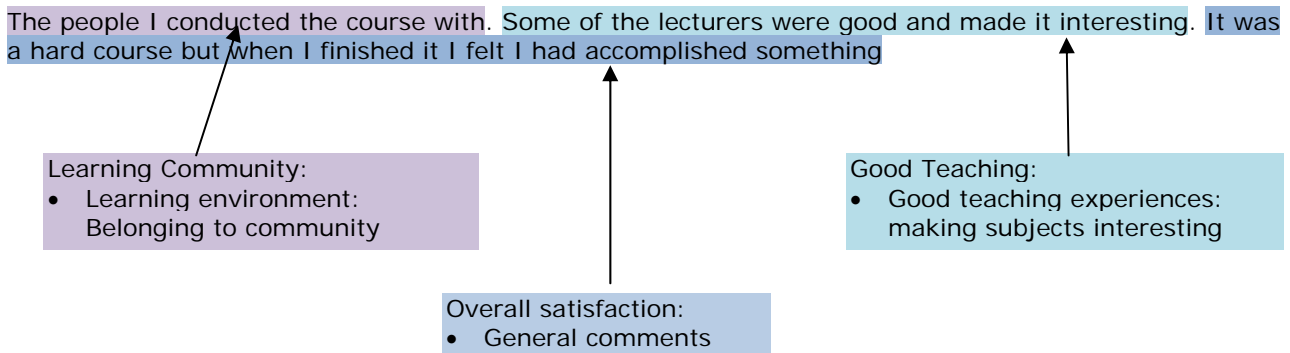
The components of categories and sub-categories used in the analysis of qualitative data are based on:

- 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*⁷, 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. As a general rule, only those aspects which receive over 5% of comments from the whole cohort (i.e. domestic and international combined) are considered significant enough to be included as specific issues in the report.

For example, the following comment is counted as ONE COMMENT RECEIVED; but as it is mentioned in Learning Community (Learning environment: Belonging to community); Overall Satisfaction (General comments); and Good Teaching (Good teaching experiences: making subjects interesting, the highlighted phrases within the comment are counted ONCE in each of the relevant categories i.e. 3 aspects in one comment.



⁷ Available from Quality Assurance Officer (Learning and Teaching)

Part A Key Performance Indicators

This section relates directly to areas of the student experience which are encompassed by the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) linked numerical items in the survey (Generic Skills; Good Teaching; and Overall Satisfaction)

Page references

1	Generic Skills	(pages 12 – 14)
2	Good Teaching	(pages 15 – 17)
3	Overall Satisfaction	(pages 18 – 20)

The following information is included for each KPI:

- Coverage: CEQ survey items; Qualitative data analysis categories
- Summary of 2008 results (KPI linked results and qualitative data analysis)
- Comparative data: KPI linked results 2005 – 2008
i.e. The proportion of students who either agreed or strongly agreed with relevant survey items
- Comparative results: Focus of written observations: 2002- 2003; 2005 – 2008
i.e. The percentage of comments received from respondents to the survey that can be classified as areas of best practice or suggested improvements. Presented as the total received for the relevant KPI
- Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)
 - Areas of best practice
 - Suggested improvements*i.e. The percentage of comments received from respondents to the 2008 survey. Presented as the total received for sub-categories of the KPI which were mentioned in more than 5% of comments received from respondents. Includes 6 illustrative sample comments.*

Where applicable, data is provided separately for domestic and international respondents, and as an overall result.

1 Generic Skills

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 Attributes⁸.

- 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 declined considerably since 2007, and currently sit at 64% agreement. This represents a decrease of 10% on the previous year's results. The University average for Generic skills is 60%. Domestic and international graduates experienced similar outcomes.

QUALITATIVE DATA

Areas of best practice

- 29% of respondents to the CEQ who provided written observations mentioned that they were satisfied with the acquisition of skills and abilities across all of the five University Graduate Attribute Clusters: Research and Inquiry (11%); Information Literacy (1%); Personal and Intellectual Autonomy (3%); and Ethical, Professional and Social Understanding (12%); and Communication (3%).
- In the Ethical, Professional and Social Understanding cluster, 2% mentioned that the ethical, social and cultural aspects of engineering were covered; 3% valued the increase in group and team work skills, whilst a further 2% appreciated opportunities to enhance professional skills, and undertake experience in the workplace.

Suggested improvements

- 10% of respondents were dissatisfied with this aspect of their experience
- The majority of comments (7%) referred to the lack of practical or industry experience during the course

⁸ http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/graduateAttributes/policy_framework.pdf

1.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2005–2008

The following graph shows the proportion of graduates who either strongly agreed or agreed with the relevant survey items for Generic Skills in the CEQ.

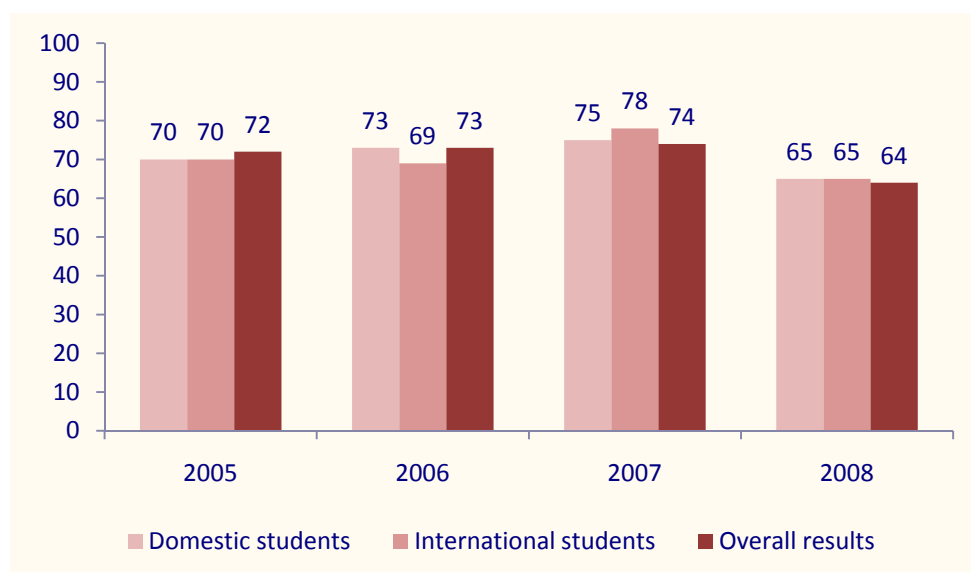


Figure 1: Generic Skills: KPI linked results: CEQ 2005 - 2008

1.2 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008

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 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic	38%	15%	43%	21%	28%
	International	<i>Too few</i>	<i>Too few</i>	32%	<i>Too few</i>	34%
	All	33%	40%	14%	41%	21%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	8%	4%	7%	11%	10%
	International	<i>Too few</i>	<i>Too few</i>	14%	<i>Too few</i>	12%
	All	16%	9%	4%	8%	10%

1.3 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

1.3.1 Areas of best practice

	Domestic (n=216)	International (n=50)	All (n=266)
Research and Inquiry			
- Development of problem solving skills	12%	8%	11%
- Development of critical thinking and analytical skills			
- Expansion of relevant knowledge in the subject			
Ethical, social, professional understanding			
- Ability to work in a group/ team working skills	12%	14%	12%
- Development of discipline/ professional skills			
- Presence of work placement/ industry experience in the course			

	Domestic (n=216)	International (n=50)	All (n=266)
--	----------------------	--------------------------	-----------------

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Developing the analytical problem solving mind set. Improving written communication skills*
- *The skills learnt throughout the course. People skills, team working skills, being able to see solutions or think in a logical manner*
- *Very good at developing generic engineering skills, and a better understanding of the overall field*

Sample comments: international students

- *The course helped strength my skills in doing research, writing, speaking. Most importantly, I am more confident with my knowledge and skills*
- *The course helps me a lot on developing my personal skill. It taught me how works in a team or group*
- *The best aspects of my course: I developed my teamwork and analytical skills through the project & assignment were given*

1.3.2 Suggested improvements

	Domestic (n=220)	International (n=43)	All (n=263)
--	----------------------	--------------------------	-----------------

Ethical, social, professional understanding

- | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|
| - Discipline or professional skills were not developed | 7% | 7% | 7% |
| - Work placement/ industry experience in the course required | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *More courses dedicated to target and help 'transition into work and what to expect'. e.g. writing skills, reports, etc*
- *Additionally, a structured Industrial Experience Program would be beneficial to all students.*
- *I feel that I have not obtained the all skills that I wanted when I first started this degree*

Sample comments: international students

- *Analytical skills*
- *How to apply those knowledge into REAL practical world*
- *industrial exposure, hands-on experience*

2 Good Teaching

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 learning⁹)

Summary

KPI LINKED RESULTS

The KPI linked results for Good Teaching have stayed in the 30th percentile since 2005, and currently sit at 35% agreement, which is 2% lower than the 2005 and 2007 scores, and 5% higher than the 2006 score. With scores in the 40th percentile, international students consistently rate their experiences higher than their domestic counterparts. The University average for Good Teaching is 50%.

QUALITATIVE DATA

Areas of best practice

- 30% of respondents who provided written observations indicated that they appreciated the teaching practices across the Faculty
- 20% 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 5% of respondents

Suggested improvements

- 48% of respondents considered that improvements were necessary in this area of their experience
- 18% referred to the outdated teaching methods used; whilst a further 8% would have appreciated more help and support from some academic staff
- 13% of comments received from this group of respondents mentioned that they were unable to understand the lecturers and tutors, due in part to the lack of English language proficiency in some staff.

⁹ The development of research skills is included in Generic Skills: Information Literacy

2.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2005–2008

The following graph shows the proportion of graduates who either strongly agreed or agreed with the relevant survey item statements for Good Teaching in the CEQ.

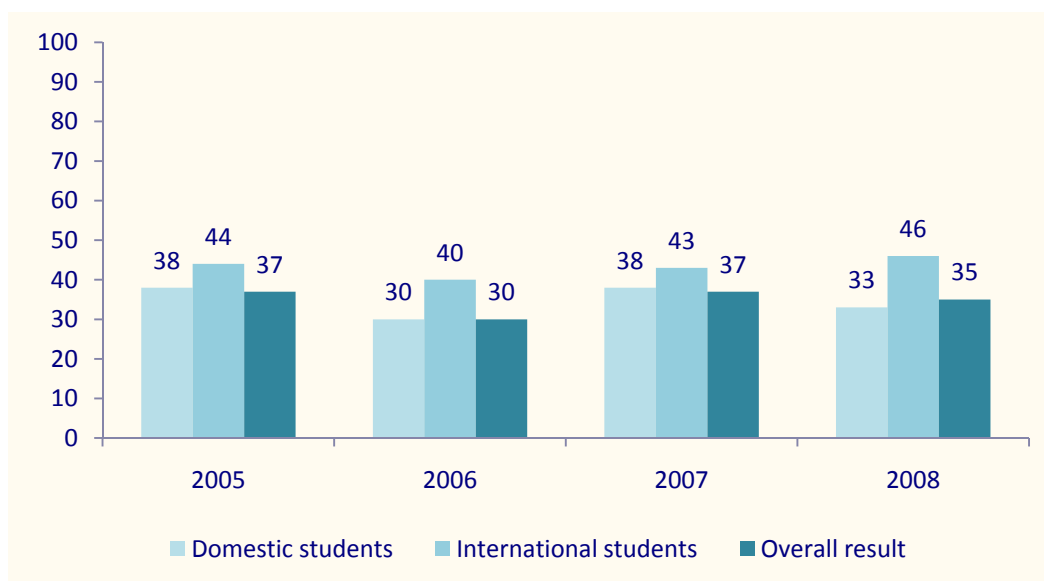


Figure 2: Good Teaching: KPI Linked results : CEQ 2005 - 2008

2.2 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008

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 graduates' experience of Good Teaching between 2002 and 2008, as indicated in the responses to open questions in the CEQ.

	CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic	27%	26%	20%	26%	33%
	International	<i>Too few</i>	<i>Too few</i>	23%	<i>Too few</i>	16%
	All	30%	28%	25%	20%	28%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	60%	53%	46%	50%	50%
	International	<i>Too few</i>	<i>Too few</i>	24%	<i>Too few</i>	35%
	All	44%	59%	49%	43%	50%

2.3 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

2.3.1 Areas of best practice

	Domestic (n=216)	International (n=50)	All (n=266)
Good teaching experiences			
- Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques	21%	8%	18%
- Ability to keep students interested in the subject			
- Learning resources are up to date, and relevant to curriculum			

	Domestic (n=216)	International (n=50)	All (n=266)
--	----------------------	--------------------------	-----------------

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The few lecturers who actually took the time to explain course material in a way that could be understand. They were, available outside of set class hours, as well as being approachable, when you needed help with something*
- *Lecturers and tutors have been very helpful in explaining concepts theory and the relationship to practice*
- *Some subjects had good lecturers that tried to make their topics interesting and engaged the students. They also provided good feedback to assignments and exam results. Unfortunately there were few*

Sample comments: international students

- *Tutorial and lecturer were conducted fairly well*
- *pretty interesting lectures*
- *The staff is really professional and understanding the difficulty faced by student*

2.3.2 Suggested improvements

	Domestic (n=220)	International (n=43)	All (n=263)
--	----------------------	--------------------------	-----------------

Good teaching experiences

- | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| - Teaching methods and techniques used are outdated/need improvement | | | |
| - Discussions of issues during class were not encouraged | 20% | 12% | 18% |
| - Lecturers were boring; did not engage with students | | | |
| - Learning materials and resources were outdated | | | |
| - Concerns raised about plagiarism/cheating | | | |

Concern and care for student learning

- | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|
| - Students did not feel supported in their learning; | 8% | 9% | 8% |
| - help and advice was not readily available | | | |

Good explanations received

- | | | | |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| - Lecturers did not explain subject matter with clarity | 14% | 9% | 13% |
| - Lecturers/ tutors lacked proficiency in English language | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The lecturers who simply ran lectures as a way of obtaining support for their research. These courses were often lacking in support and teaching resources, as well as the lecturers own indifference towards his student body*
- *Lecturing Skills, tutors were generally poor-had poor communication skill. Get some tutors who have excellent communication skills, rather than just picking up the most academic, because I learnt very little from tutorials*
- *Teaching ability of lecturers. Some need more proficient English. I know a lot of the subjects are difficult and uninteresting but simply putting up lecture notes and getting students to read them isn't a good method to teach people.*

Sample comments: international students

- *The aspects of my course that needs of improvement are: Some of the tutors do not give a good feedback to student (seems they don't really care about the problems facing by us as a student). Some of the lectures do not explain very clearly*
- *Lecturers in most senior units of study (Yr 3&4) were not capable of explaining things clearly (Most of them from non English speaking backgrounds). As a result in most cases the subject material was taught without clarity and content otherwise interesting lacked substance*
- *Most lecturers can't teach - they really need formal training in teaching. The only ones who I found truly capable of teaching and communicating were external experts who have actually worked as engineers!*

3 Overall Satisfaction

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 by 8% since 2006 (66%) and currently sit at 58% agreement. The University average for this KPI is 65%. For the first time since 2005, domestic and international students experienced similar outcomes. Between 2005 and 2007, international students were considerably more satisfied with this aspect of their experience than domestic students (+10-12%).

QUALITATIVE DATA

Best practice

- 4% of respondents provided written observation which fell within the remit of Overall Satisfaction.
- Respondents appreciated the calibre of fellow students, the experience, knowledge and qualifications of academic staff, and the overall learning experience.

Suggested improvements

- 10% of respondents suggested improvements in this area of their experience
- 7% expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of staff (up to date subject knowledge; teaching skills)

3.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2005–2008

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

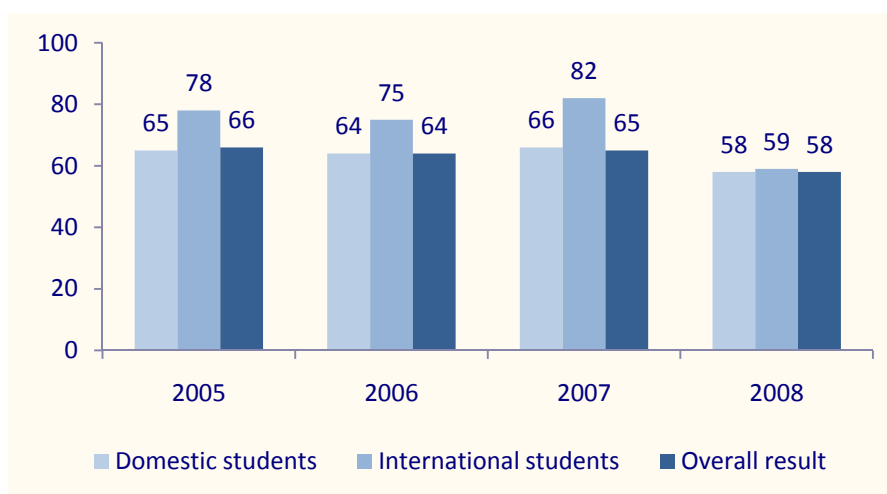


Figure 3: Overall Satisfaction: CEQ KPI linked results : 2005 - 2008

3.2 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008

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 graduates' overall satisfaction between 2002 and 2008.

	CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic	6%	14%	10%	19%	4%
	International	<i>Too few</i>	<i>Too few</i>	5%	<i>Too few</i>	6%
	All	13%	6%	13%	9%	16%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	10%	14%	9%	10%	9%
	International	<i>Too few</i>	<i>Too few</i>	5%	<i>Too few</i>	14%
	All	15%	10%	13%	8%	10%

3.3 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

3.3.1 Areas of best practice

4% of graduates (i.e. 11/266 comments received) who responded to the CEQ were satisfied with the overall quality of their degree experience, with the calibre of fellow students, and with the relevant knowledge, experience and qualifications of staff, including guest lecturers.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *It was a hard course but when I finished it I felt I had accomplished something*
- *Good feedback. In Aeronautical Engineering the knowledge and expertise of the teachers as the best point*
- *Best aspects were the fact that I attended the advanced stream and was able to work with a team members of similar ability in several group projects*

Sample comments: international students

- *Qualification*
- *Sydney University concentrates on teaching the concept of Civil Engineering. This is really helpful for student to understand the physical behaviours of building in terms of its concrete and steel. I am honestly to say that the course of civil engineering in Sydney University helps to develop a valuable experience for student who want to be engineer*
- *Other talented students*

3.3.2 Suggested improvements

	Domestic (n=220)	International (n=43)	All (n=263)
Quality of staff			
- Staff required training in teaching at tertiary level	6%	14%	7%
- Relevant and up to date knowledge of lecturers and tutors in subject area not evident			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Lecturers are not experienced in the practical world, some lecturers are almost as non helpful as those textbooks that they recommend. By all means having a high education qualification doesn't mean they can teach*
- *In order to make the course interesting and for students to learn, I strongly recommend the faculty's (civil engineering) to employ external staff an 'experience engineers' as a lecturer, to provide real case study problems*
- *Also lecturers should be chosen based on knowledge of their subjects and industry experience. They should not be chosen based on research abilities and the funding that they can bring to the department, as this means that they are more motivated to their research then teaching. More teaching based lecturers are required to make chemical engineering better*

Sample comments: international students

- *The standards of tutors should be enhanced, because many of them even cannot solve the academic questions by themselves*
- *There were too many visiting lecturers. Especially the lecturers from unsw, they did not seem to be responsible for the position*
- *Some of the lecturers are just not good enough to give the lecturer. Therefore, quality of the lecturer at Aeronautical stream of USYD is definitely need to be improved and I have seen some of the quality lecturers leaving the University to the industry in recent years*

Part B Additional areas of the student experience

Respondents to the CEQ who provide written observations on their experiences, often refer to areas of their experience that are not directly related to the KPI linked numerical items on the survey, but are related to the extended CEQ scales (Learning Community; Appropriate Assessment; Appropriate Workload; Clear Goals and Standards), and Curriculum (Programme of Study). Since these topics may be mentioned in up to 50% of comments received, they are included in this report in order to provide a full picture of issues which were perceived by respondents to the CEQ to be either of best practice or in need of improvement during their period of study at the University.

Page references

4	Learning Community	(pages 22 – 23)
5	Curriculum	(pages 24 – 25)
6	Appropriate Assessment	(pages 26 – 27)
7	Appropriate Workload	(page 28)
8	Clear Goals and Standards	(page 29)

The following information is provided for each of the above areas of the student experience:

- Coverage: Qualitative data analysis categories
- Summary of 2008 results (qualitative data analysis)
- Comparative results: Focus of written observations: 2002- 2003; 2005 – 2008
i.e. The percentage of comments received from respondents to the survey that can be classified as areas of best practice or suggested improvements. Presented as the total received for the relevant KPI
- Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)
 - Areas of best practice
 - Suggested improvements*i.e. The percentage of comments received from respondents to the 2008 survey. Presented as the total received for sub-categories of the KPI which were mentioned in more than 5% of comments received from respondents. Includes 6 illustrative sample comments.*

Where applicable, data is provided separately for domestic and international respondents, and also as a combined total.

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

- 18% of respondents who provided written observations expressed satisfaction with the Learning Community aspect of their experience
- 15% 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

Suggested improvements

- 21% of respondents considered that this area of their experience required improvement
- The majority of these comments (12%) referred to the physical resources provided by the University e.g. buildings, equipment, computers, library services; whilst a further 8% would have appreciated more opportunities to explore academic interests, and smaller class sizes

4.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008

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 graduates' experience of the Learning Community between 2002 and 2008.

		CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic		27%	22%	21%	23%	16%
	International		<i>Too few</i>	<i>Too few</i>	23%	<i>Too few</i>	24%
	All	14%	25%	21%	22%	28%	18%
Suggested improvements	Domestic		23%	28%	26%	21%	19%
	International		<i>Too few</i>	<i>Too few</i>	29%	<i>Too few</i>	33%
	All	27%	23%	26%	26%	22%	21%

4.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

4.2.1 Areas of best practice

	Domestic (n=216)	International (n=50)	All (n=266)
Learning environment			
- Enjoyed University social life			
- Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty)	14%	20%	15%
- 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

- *Being with passionate people who are interested in the same things as myself*
- *And, because of the small class size, I've made some excellent friendships which have continued beyond University*
- *Facilities in the Engineering Department were good*

Sample comments: international students

- *The sense of family that the School Of Chemical And Biomolecular Engineering fostered*
- *Good library resources*
- *Tutorials were helpful*

4.2.2 Suggested improvements

	Domestic (n=220)	International (n=43)	All (n=263)
Learning environment			
- Felt isolated from the community (degree/ Faculty)			
- Academic interests were not being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials; during laboratory work	7%	12%	8%
- Presence of NESB students inhibited group work/ discussions			
- Unhappy with size of class			
Physical resources			
- Library staff and services unsatisfactory	10%	19%	12%
- Facilities (buildings; lecture rooms; computers; etc) of unacceptable standard			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Teaching facility, computers need upgrade! There should be more interaction between student and lecturer. Teacher should listen to students' feedback*
- *Neither is having to teach non-English speaking students to do group work*
- *Then there's the facilities. Building's where you can actually work would be good (funnily enough students generally have to work a fair bit past 5pm to finish the pile of work they have). Also somewhere decent to get something to eat on campus would be nice. I mean every other uni seems to manage that, but not usyd, oh no they have 'union outlets' where you have the privilege of paying ridiculously inflated prices for crummy stuff.*

Sample comments: international students

- *Engineering facilities like computers and hardware*
- *The course need more equipments for practical experiences*
- *The facility, most of the equipments used for thesis was inadequate. More computers needed*

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 employers¹⁰”. 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 who provided written observations expressed satisfaction with the programme of study offered by the Faculty
- 39% appreciated the structure and relevance of the course

Suggested improvements

- 32% of respondents were dissatisfied with the programme of study
- Main issues included: the lack of electives, restricted subject choice, and relevance to the current working environment

5.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008

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 graduates' experience of Curriculum between 2002 and 2008.

		CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic		43%	47%	46%	34%	46%
	International		<i>Too few</i>	<i>Too few</i>	18%	<i>Too few</i>	42%
	All	43%	43%	44%	42%	35%	45%
Suggested improvements	Domestic		33%	34%	44%	26%	33%
	International		<i>Too few</i>	<i>Too few</i>	24%	<i>Too few</i>	23%
	All	32%	33%	32%	41%	26%	32%

¹⁰ 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

	Domestic (n=216)	International (n=50)	All (n=266)
Content and structure			
- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	39%	42%	39%
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Doing both Engineering and Arts was good as it gave me a broad knowledge base and an interesting perspective. It is great that I had the opportunity to combine these 2 very difficult areas of study*
- *Fundamental principles taught in subjects were almost always taken to a practical level which was good because it helped you learn it better and prepared you for the engineering profession*
- *Variation in the subjects and fields studied gave a well rounded course. There was a high level of mathematics at the start which built a solid base for future studies.*

Sample comments: international students

- *Practical experience and subjects that actually teach student skills and technology of the real engineering world e.g. Energy & Environment, Project Management, Professional Engineering, Innovation & Technology Commercialisation*
- *The technical coverage of the course appears in-depth. This enables students to be confident in dealing with various obstacles encountered in modern working environments. Students are more willing to take up the responsibilities in solving these problems.*
- *The course gives a strong theoretical background*

5.2.3 Suggested improvements

	Domestic (n=220)	International (n=43)	All (n=263)
Content and structure			
- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	31%	21%	29%
- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			
- Do not like intensive courses			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *I was rather disappointed when courses I have been planning to do got cancelled due to insufficient student numbers. In particular Advanced Computer Engineering. In my opinion these advanced subjects should be expected to be small, and should NOT be cancelled due to few numbers! The budget should be configured to allow these final year advanced subjects to run independent of student numbers*
- *There are several areas which need improvement. Firstly, teaching solid works to civil engineers is a waste of time since the industry relies on Auto cad. Also, current demands for skills in excel programming are high, and this was assumed without being covered. I think that courses could be condensed to allow for more practical subjects to enlighten students on current construction markets and their direction in the future rather than focusing on creating over-technically skilled engineers without any real sense of direction*
- *The removal of subjects which do not relate to my field. I understand that engineering is a wide field but I could have easily completed the important aspects of my course in two years rather than four. Perhaps there could be an option for a compressed course in my major which doesn't encompass the things I am not required to know*

Sample comments: international students

- *Mechatronic Engineering covers a wide range of topics. This is our strength and also our weakness. We are not specialised in any of the fields. We know mechanical, electrical and even computer science, but we are not experts in these fields. I think we should be offered more mechanical topics instead of electrical topics, because after graduation, most of us need to work as a mechanical engineer first then move into management or other fields*
- *We needed more electrical subjects rather than mostly mechanical subjects, industrial experience could be between the 2nd and 3rd yr as well rather than only between 3rd and 4th yr*
- *Need much more structure and organisation. The organisation of the course is poor, too many errors in course materials*

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

- 14% of respondents who comments on their experiences expressed satisfaction with assessment practices across the faculty
- 6% considered that assessments tested their understanding, and related to coursework
- 8% appreciated the various types of assessment e.g. projects, thesis, group work

Suggested improvements

- 6% of respondents were dissatisfied with the content and type of assessments used in the faculty, with marking practices, and with the weighting of different assessment elements.

6.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008

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 graduates' experience of Appropriate Assessment between 2002 and 2008.

		CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic		10%	12%	9%	11%	15%
	International		<i>Too few</i>	<i>Too few</i>	14%	<i>Too few</i>	10%
	All	4%	9%	12%	10%	10%	14%
Suggested improvements	Domestic		6%	9%	6%	7%	8%
	International		<i>Too few</i>	<i>Too few</i>	10%	<i>Too few</i>	0%
	All	1%	6%	8%	6%	6%	6%

6.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

6.2.1 Areas of best practice

	Domestic (n=216)	International (n=50)	All (n=266)
Types of assessment	9%	0%	8%
- Students happy with the types of assessment used e.g. projects; thesis; group work			
Content of assessment	6%	10%	6%
- Students considered that assessments measured understanding of the subject			
- Assessments were interesting and relevant			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Electrical engineering: really interesting project work in the later years*
- *Final year project. Working independently to produce something tangible, as opposed to just attending lectures and passing exams.*
- *I loved doing group work assignments as well as presentations. I work better with others than by myself as I tend to have difficulties remembering everything that was taught. Rather, I am better at assembling bits and pieces of information together to make sense of something larger*

Sample comments: international students

- *The projects were challenging*
- *Freedom to explore and solve team based projects*
- *Challenging assignments*

6.2.2 Suggested improvements

6% of graduates (i.e. 17/263 comments received) who responded to the CEQ expressed dissatisfaction with the choice, aptness, marking and design of assessments.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Exams that were purely based on past papers and relied on textbook word for word answers (2nd Year Materials course)*
- *Fairness of grading systems within cohorts, and between them (e.g. Some thesis markers mark theses which they have no real knowledge in and hence give impartial marks which far differ [more than 10%] to the marks given by a specialist in the area. The current mark difference before a review is made is 15%, which is far too large).*
- *Group work needs to be removed from university. Despite what people want to believe about 'preparing people for the real world' and other similar nonsense, it does not work at university on the whole. This cannot be stressed enough. If I repeat it enough times maybe someone will listen. Why? Because in the work force, if you do no work you get fired! In university, those who want to do well must pick up the slack for those who don't care because they get the same mark. I personally know of people who should not pass (even failed final exams) but scrap through because of good group work, to which they contributed little. University has attempted to address this by requiring peer reviews, however I have never seen anyone failed from a peer review no matter how terrible. Furthermore friends cover for each other. This allows people to pass who have no grasp of the subject. This in turn produces poor graduates who reduce the value of my degree and reduce the reputation of Sydney University. In summary get rid of, or reduce the focus on, group work. Tell those who believe it's great to stop dreaming; it doesn't work!*
- *Exams could be weighted less (i.e. instead of being 80% weighted exams), and put more weightings on assignments that takes 2 weeks of effort to complete (instead of making assignments weighted 10%).*
- *More group work and large projects required*
- *more assignments, less emphasis on final exam*

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

- No respondents mentioned workload as being an area of best practice

Suggested improvements

- 6% of respondents who provided written observations deemed the workload to be high

7.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008

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 graduates' experience of Appropriate Workload between 2002 and 2008.

		CEQ 2002	CEQ 2003	CEQ 2005	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007	CEQ 2008
Areas of best practice	Domestic		0%	1%	1%	0%	0%
	International		<i>Too few</i>	<i>Too few</i>	0%	<i>Too few</i>	0%
	All	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Suggested improvements	Domestic		4%	5%	2%	3%	6%
	International		<i>Too few</i>	<i>Too few</i>	5%	<i>Too few</i>	5%
	All	5%	3%	5%	3%	5%	6%

7.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

The main issues raised by graduates related to the amount of work that was required during their courses, 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 commented on this area of their experience as being of best practice.

Suggested improvements

- 2% of respondents comments that they would have appreciated a better explanation of learning outcomes

8.1 Comparative results: Focus of written observations 2002-2003; 2005–2008

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 graduates' experience of Clear Goals and Standards between 2002 and 2008.

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

8.2 Key issues for coursework graduates (CEQ 2008)

8.2.1 Areas of best practice

One respondent appreciated guidance and assistance during their thesis .

8.2.2 Suggested improvements

2% of students (i.e. 4/263 comments received) expressed concern about the lack of clear learning 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.

Attachment 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 who provided written observations) 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.

193 respondents provided written observations on areas of best practice; 208 respondents suggested improvements.

Generic Skills

Best practice

- 29% of comments received expressed satisfaction with the development of generic skills/ graduate attributes.
- The majority of comments referred to the development of skills and abilities in the Research and Inquiry cluster (12%); and the Ethical, Social and Professional Understanding cluster (11%)

Suggested improvements

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

Good Teaching

Best practice

- 22% of comments received expressed satisfaction with teaching practices across the Faculty
- 11% of respondents appreciated the use of up-to-date teaching methods, interesting and engaging lectures, and the presence of useful learning resources

Suggested improvements

- 61% of comments received expressed dissatisfaction with this area of their experience
- The lack of current learning resources; and out of date teaching methods accounted for 26% of comments; whilst 20% related to the lack of clarity in instruction and the related English language proficiency in academic staff
- 7% of respondents were concerned about the lack of timely and constructive feedback on work.

Overall Satisfaction

Best practice

- 5% of respondents appreciated the professionalism, qualifications, knowledge and experience of academic staff

Suggested improvements

- 6% of respondents provided comments that could be categorised as belonging to this KPI
- Areas of concern included: financial costs of the course; the quality of the degree; and the relevant experience and knowledge of some academic staff.

Learning Community

Best practice

- 25% of respondents expressed satisfaction with aspects of their experience that fall within the remit of Learning Community
- 23% appreciated the learning environment experienced during their studies: 15% enjoyed the community feel of the faculty, the social life of the university, and the forming of friendships with fellow students; and 8% valued the opportunity to explore academic interests with staff and students in tutorials and other discussion fora. The remaining comments referred to the cultural diversity of the student body, and the small class sizes

Suggested improvements

- 27% of respondents provided comments that could be categorised as belonging to this KPI
- Dissatisfaction with the physical facilities provided by the faculty and/ or university (buildings; lecture rooms; computer labs etc) was mentioned in 14% of comments received.
- Further areas of concern included: tutorials (4%); and class sizes (5%).

Curriculum

Best practice

- 37% of respondents appreciated the programme of study or curriculum offered by the Faculty, considering it relevant to their future profession

Suggested improvements

- 24% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the content and structure of the curriculum, and its relevance and usefulness to their future profession

Appropriate Assessment

Best practice

- 10% 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

- 3% of respondents expressed satisfaction with workload

Suggested improvements

- 11% of respondents considered the workload to be too high; and would appreciate a more equitable spacing of assessments.

Clear Goals and Standards

Best practice

- No respondents considered this topic to be an area of best practice

Suggested improvements

- 4% 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.