

FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NATURAL RESOURCES

STUDENT COURSE EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE (SCEQ) ANALYSIS OF OPEN RESPONSE COMMENTS 2003

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

NB: *number of comments on each aspect are displayed as a percentage of the total number of comments received for each question.*

1 Degree Course Experience

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

Students appreciate the practical aspects of the curriculum (2003: 33%)

(2002: 23%; 2001: 29%; 2000: 31%)

- The work experience component. Although it seems tedious to organise, in the long run I know that it is beneficial to my overall ease and capabilities in finding employment after I have finished my degree
- The practicals as we are actually able to interact with staff and achieve a greater understanding of course material
- Compulsory work experience enables you to get incentive to get involved in the industry

Students feel part of a learning community (2003: 26%)

(2002: 25%; 2001: 27%; 2000: 28%)

- The small number of people in the Faculty – I feel part of a close-knit group
- The community spirit of people within the course
- It's small, everyone knows everyone. There is a close relationship with staff

Students appreciate some aspects of the curriculum (2003: 22%)

(2002: 26%; 2001: 25%; 2000: 33%)

- Broad science base is a positive with opportunity to special or remain broad in later years
- Learning a wide variety of agricultural concepts that all need to be understood in order to have 'full picture'
- That it incorporates Agriculture into a normal Economics course which is what I wanted and which no other close university does.

Students appreciate the standard of teaching received (2003: 8%)

(2002: 6%; 2001: 12%; 2000: 15%)

- Some lecturers are very enthusiastic and well planned which makes the student feel more focussed
- The animal science lecturers are excellent and helpful however because they set such a high standard it is hard to accept faults and poor teaching in other subjects
- Animal science lecturers are committed to students. Do as much as they can to help us. Go out of their way to help us

Students appreciate the ability to choose from a wide range of subject options (2003: 6%)

(2002: 5%; 2001: 5%; 2000: 6%)

- Diverse range of subjects to choose from in B.L.W. Sc.
- Being able to choose subjects from a variety of faculties is great, because it makes the course more diverse
- Ability to be involved with a wide range of subjects, enables us to do what we find interesting

Students appreciate integration of research into their course (2003: 4%)

¹ Number of comments received: 2003 – 195; 2002 – 217; 2001 – 226; 2000 – 93

(2002: 3%; 2001: 2%; 2000: 2%)

- Access to researchers was one of the best aspects
- Learning from experienced researchers and hearing the latest in discoveries
- The experience of the lecturers and that they are active researchers as promotes your desire to learn

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

Students are unhappy with some aspects of their curriculum (2003: 26%)

(2002: 34%; 2001: 33%; 2000: 29%)

- Need more Horticulture courses for those more interested in Horticulture rather than Agriculture
- Reduced focus on mathematics, and shifted focus to economic issues, less number (math) orientated in general. The difficulty level is not in line with the UAI required for entry. Also greater choice for electives, and fewer compulsory subjects such as econometrics
- The course was advertised as being 'para-veterinary' but it is just the same as an ag science degree, and involves a lot of study in areas that I believe are not as relevant as they could be. There was very little in the UAC guide that mentioned agriculture, let alone that it WAS agriculture. I feel very ripped off. We need more animal related subjects earlier on in the degree.

Students are dissatisfied with the standard of teaching received (2003: 14%)

(2002: 9%; 2001: 17%; 2000: 23%)

- More emphasis on lecturers being teachers rather than researchers. Many of the older ones really don't look like they want to be there and this is reflected in their teaching methods, enthusiasm and the work they put into their lectures
- Some lecturers could use more interesting lecture techniques, class participation, PowerPoint, relevant explanations
- Teaching quality. Many teaching staff have minimal understanding of the teaching learning process. This limits the effectiveness at their attempts at teaching, increases the workload of students (who then need to work harder to 'make up') and so reduces the amount of effective learning that students can achieve

Students are unhappy with their workload (2003: 14%)

(2002: 9%; 2001: 8%; 2000: 12%)

- The sheer volume of work is hard to take all of it in
- The workload for some of the subjects with only 3 or 4 credit points is still the same as these with 6 or 8
- A little more communication between the faculties with respect to assignment loads, especially at certain times of the year – fewer assignments near the exams

Students are dissatisfied with some of the practical aspects of the curriculum (2003: 9%)

(2002: 12%; 2001: 9%; 2000: 18%)

- More information on practical experiences should be provided to students with more contacts etc
- The professional experience requirements are too much. IF the Faculty want to keep the same amounts of professional experience they should allow time during the semester
- 18 weeks work experience is too much

Useful and timely feedback would be appreciated (2003: 8%)

(2002: 3%; 2001: 7%; 2000: 10%)

- Need more feedback about what's done wrong
- Better feedback would improve the course. Only receiving marks at the end of semester makes it very hard to comprehend what is required
- Staff should provide feedback on assignments rather than marks alone

2 Experience of student administration and student support services

² Number of comments received: 2003 – 195; 2002 – 214; 2001 – 211; 2000 – 84

SCEQ 2003 OR Q 67³ What are the best aspects of the student administration and support services at the University?

Staff are friendly, helpful and efficient (2003: 27%)
(2002: 38%; 2001: 37%; 2000: 45%)

- The lady at the Agriculture Faculty office (don't know her name, older lady) was very friendly, was lovely, helpful and supportive
- Extremely pleased with the service and helpful and friendly atmosphere of the Agricultural Faculty. They are a top bunch of people and have always more than satisfactorily fulfilled any enquiries and questions. A good example for the rest of the University to learn from as they surely set the benchmark in student Admin/ support services
- People are helpful when you can get to see them. Most of the time, they are friendly and have your interest at heart

Internet/ intranet services are appreciated (2003: 18%)
(2002: 13%; 2001: 10%; 2000: 15%)

- The internet aspects of this service are good, otherwise it is too hard to access
- The internet is fantastic. Blackboard especially. Making the most of the new technology makes life more efficient
- Intranet and the use of the internet to access personal info and the library. Very convenient and helpful

Library staff and services (2003: 17%)
(2002: 18%; 2001: 16%; 2000: 19%)

- The overhauling of Badham has greatly improved the accessibility to computers and improved the flow and structure of the library
- Library had a sufficient supply of books but number edition of some books may be better
- Camden library staff are excellent. Always helpful and friendly

Accessibility and convenience of services is appreciated (2003: 11%)
(2002: 14%; 2001: 9%; 2000: 4%)

- They are there when you need them
- Easy access to all support services
- The best aspect is that they are all easily accessible

Computer Access Centres (2003: 10%)
(2002: 10%; 2001: 9%; 2000: 2%)

- Faculty computer centres because it's not very crowded and the provider rarely breaks down
- My Faculty has upgraded computers recently which is a positive step. However there is still room for more friendly machines
- The Faculty computing services were excellent

Other aspects mentioned include:

- | | | |
|--|------------|---------------------------------|
| • Availability and existence of services | (2003: 8%) | (2002: 10%; 2001: 9%; 2000: 4%) |
| • Online access to services | (2003: 8%) | (2002: 2%; 2001: 4%; 2000: 2%) |
| • Variety of services available | (2003: 7%) | (2002: 3%; 2001: 11%; 2000: 4%) |

SCEQ 2003 OR Q 68⁴ How could student administration and support services be improved to better support your study at the University?

³ Number of comments received: 2003 – 125; 2002 – 157; 2001 – 150; 2000 – 47

Staff are unfriendly, unhelpful and inefficient

(2003: 19%)

(2002: 25%; 2001: 23%; 2000: 26%)

- Some of the people move around and shift responsibilities. This makes it difficult to receive help from them
- Ensure that there are staff with specialised knowledge, as opposed to a whole bunch of people knowing just a little
- Their attitude towards the student could be improved, it should be run as a business so that Admin should treat students like customers, like they do now! They treat students like dirt!

Services could be advertised more

(2003: 16%)

(2002: 12%; 2001: 13%; 2000: 13%)

- Many students are unaware of what services are actually available and whether they are eligible to apply for the services
- More information promoting the services available around the university
- Perhaps more information about all the services available

Computer Access Centres

(2003: 14%)

(2002: 22%; 2001: 21%; 2000: 9%)

- New computers for the Woolly computer lab are essential for students. They constantly crash and large emails cannot be sent
- Earlier access to the Faculty Computer Centres would be helpful. They currently open at approx 9am. 8 o'clock access would be beneficial
- Upgrading the computers in the 4th year computer lab in the Woolly building

Student Centre

(2003: 9%)

(2002: 9%; 2001: 5%; 2000: 9%)

- More staff available at the Student Centre to minimise waiting time, also available after five for students who start at nine and finish classes at five and tend to have no other breaks available
- More staff at the Student Centre in times of high demand e.g. early in semester
- Increased staffing at the Student Centre at peak periods

More staff should be employed, particularly at peak periods

(2003: 9%)

(2002: 7%; 2001: 6%; 2000: 2%)

- It would be nice if there were a few more people helping out, as sometimes you do not have the time to stand in line for an hour
- More staff at peak times would help
- More staff in busy times i.e. lunch

Other aspects mentioned include:

- | | | |
|--|------------|---------------------------------|
| • Online access to services | (2003: 8%) | (2002: 2%; 2001: 2%; 2000: 2%) |
| • Internet/ intranet services | (2003: 6%) | (2002: 8%; 2001: 14%; 2000: 6%) |
| • Administration and organisation in general | (2003: 4%) | (2002: 5%; 2001: 1%) |
| • Accessibility and convenience | (2003: 3%) | (2003: 4%; 2001: 4%; 2000: 4%) |

Other services mentioned by name include:

- | | | |
|--|------------|----------------------------------|
| • Library staff and services | (2003: 6%) | (2002: 11%; 2001: 14%; 2000: 9%) |
| • Security Services (incl Redfern bus service) | (2003: 3%) | (2002: 1%; 2001: 2%; 2000: 4%) |

⁴ Number of comments received: 2003 – 101; 2002 – 113; 2001 – 107; 2000 – 47