



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning

Student experience of Learning and Teaching

Trends and key issues: Postgraduate coursework students
2001-2007

October 2008

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Glossary

The following terms and phrases are used throughout the report

SCEQ	Student Course Experience Questionnaire Administered to current students
CEQ	Course Experience Questionnaire Administered to graduates of previous year
Graduates	Students who completed the CEQ for 2007 i.e. graduated in 2006
Current students	Students who were studying at the University during 2007; from all years of the course
Faculty scores Percentage agreement	The percentage of current students/ graduates who either agreed or strongly agreed with relevant survey items in the SCEQ/ CEQ
Qualitative data Comments	Students written observations received in response to open ended questions in the surveys. Relate to aspects of best practice in degree experience and aspects in need of improvement
Percentage of comments received	The number of times an aspect is mentioned within the comments received from respondents is presented as a percentage of the total number of comments received

Notes

1 Percentage of respondents providing written comments

The percentage of students providing written observations in their answers to the SCEQ declined significantly in 2007. In 2005, 72% of respondents supplied written comments in answer to the open questions; in 2007 just over half (56%) of respondents supplied written observations. This decline is present across the University.

2 Analysis of qualitative data from international students

Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ): 2003 - 2007

Qualitative data: 2005

Less than 20 international students who responded to the SCEQ in 2005 provided written observations on their experiences. Since the minimum sample size recommended for statistical analysis of SCEQ data is 20, the analysis of the qualitative data from international students for 2005 should be viewed with caution.

Qualitative data: 2007

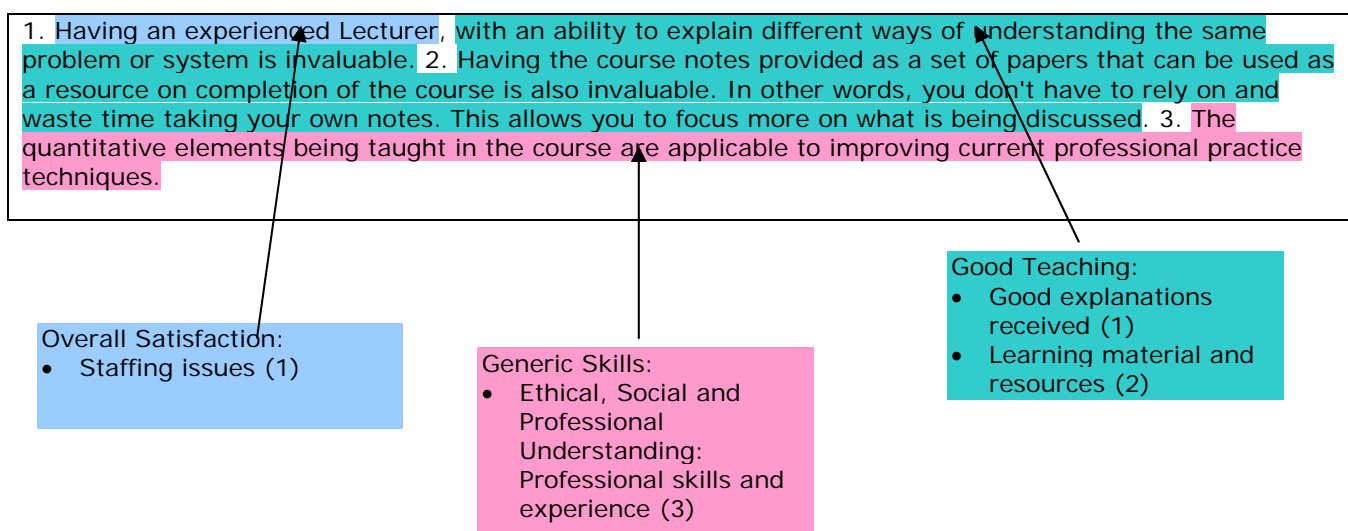
Less than 10 international students who responded to the SCEQ in 2007 provided written observations on their experiences. Since this number falls within the lower range of statistics that can be viewed with caution (5-20), the results of the qualitative analysis for international students in 2007 have been excluded from the report. This is indicated by the phrase *Too few* in the comparative tables for qualitative data. Where available sample comments from international students are included in the Key Issues sections of the report.

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

Each comment is analysed according to the *Taxonomy for analysing qualitative data from the SCEQ/ CEQ*¹, which is based on the University KPIs for Learning and Teaching, with those comments including more than one aspect being counted once for each aspect mentioned. The number of times an aspect is mentioned is presented as a percentage of the total number of comments received. For example, the following comment is counted as ONE COMMENT RECEIVED; but as it is mentioned in Overall Satisfaction (Staffing issues); Good Teaching (Good explanations received *and* Learning materials and resources); and Generic Skills (Ethical, Social and Professional Understanding; Professional Skills and Experience) the comment is counted ONCE in each of the relevant categories.



¹ Available from Quality Assurance Officer (Learning and Teaching)

Executive summary

Data about the student degree experience in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning is collected through the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) (previous year's graduates) and the Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ) (current students).

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; and Workload).

Written observations from students about their experience provide evidence to support the percentage agreement scores, and provide detailed information about key issues in the areas of best practice or areas of concern.

The term "Faculty scores" refers to the proportion of current students/ graduates who either agreed or strongly agreed with the relevant survey items in the SCEQ/ CEQ for 2007.

Key results

- Faculty scores for **Generic Skills** (KPI 14; Section 1)
 - have decreased for current students (SCEQ)
 - have increased for graduates (CEQ)
 - remain below the University average in both surveys
 - domestic students and international students are recording similar experiences

Evidence from the analysis of the qualitative data indicates that both current students and graduates consider that skills and abilities within the Ethical, Social and Professional range of attributes are being developed.

- Faculty scores for **Good Teaching** (KPI 15; Section 2)
 - have decreased for current students (SCEQ)
 - are in the bottom quarter of faculties for current students (SCEQ)
 - are higher than previous years for graduates (CEQ)
 - are in the top quarter of faculties for graduates (CEQ)

Evidence from the analysis of the qualitative data corroborates the disparate results between current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ). Whilst current students (SCEQ) continue to regard the standard of teaching as an area of improvement within the Faculty; analysis of the data from graduates (CEQ) indicates that they are satisfied with Faculty teaching practices. More comments suggesting improvements were received from current students; whereas more comments expressing satisfaction were received from graduates.

- Faculty scores for **Overall Satisfaction** (KPI 15; Section 3)
 - are 65% for current students (SCEQ)
 - are below the University average, and one of the lowest in the University for current students (SCEQ)
 - are 72% for graduates (CEQ)
 - are higher than the University average, and in the top five faculties for graduates (CEQ)

Analysis of the qualitative data indicates that current students (SCEQ) appear to be highly satisfied with their overall experience, in particular with the knowledge, experience and qualifications of academic staff. In 2007, there was a substantial difference between positive and negative comments for the first time since analysis of the qualitative data commenced. For graduates (CEQ) the percentage of comments received on this topic are equally divided between those expressing satisfaction and those suggesting improvements.

- Faculty scores for **Learning Community** (Section 4)
 - are 55% for current students (SCEQ)
 - are marginally above the University average
 - are identical to the 2005 results

Evidence from the qualitative data indicates that whilst students appreciated the community feel of the Faculty, due to its small size and location; together with opportunities to explore academic interests with staff and students in tutorials and studio sessions; they were unhappy with the facilities including computers, laboratories and studio space.

- Faculty scores for **Curriculum (qualitative data only)** (Section 5)
 - in 2007, 43% of comments from both current students (SCEQ) and graduates were favourable
 - in 2007, 35% of comments received from current students (SCEQ) and 29% from graduates (CEQ) recommended areas for improvement.

The flexible nature of the course, including the ability to undertake intensive units of study, together with the practical components was appreciated by both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ). However some students considered that material was out of date and not relevant to the course.

- Faculty scores for **Appropriate Assessment** (Section 6)
 - for current students (SCEQ) are higher than the University average of 66%
 - have increased by 10% over the past three surveys
 - are among the top six faculties in the University

Analysis of the qualitative data indicates that students and graduates are particularly concerned about group assessments, particularly in relation to equitable marking, and student contribution.

- Faculty scores for **Appropriate Workload** (Section 7)
 - are higher than the University average of 32%
 - are the second highest in the University

In 2005, 7% of comments received from current students (SCEQ) mentioned workload as an area in need of improvement; in 2007 this decreased to 1%, thereby indicating that the respondents to the SCEQ are more than satisfied with their workload, and corroborating the excellent quantitative data results.

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Conceptual framework

Student Evaluation of Teaching Surveys

The University Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ) and the DEEWR/ GCA Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) are designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data about students' perceptions of the quality of teaching and learning in their degree courses.

In both surveys 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 provide written comments on the best aspects of their degree experience and those that could be improved.

Quantitative and qualitative data from the CEQ and the SCEQ 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.

Difference between SCEQ and CEQ

Both surveys are administered by the Institute for Teaching and Learning. The SCEQ is distributed to a stratified sample of current students (i.e. all years of study, all degrees). The CEQ is distributed to all graduates of the University in the year following graduation.

Focus of the Trend Analysis Report

Based on the answers to these surveys, this report seeks to provide an analysis of observable trends in the student experience of learning and teaching in the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning between 2000 and 2007. The report also provides detailed information on the key issues highlighted in the analysis of the 2007 SCEQ and CEQ qualitative data. Reliable qualitative data for international students did not become available until the 2005 SCEQ.

Information is arranged by Key Performance Indicators (7: Generic Skills; 8: Good Teaching; and 9: Overall Satisfaction) plus additional factors (Learning Community; Curriculum; Assessment; and Workload) which, taken together, comprise the student experience of learning and teaching in the Faculty.

When reading this report, it should be noted that the absence of favourable comments on a particular aspect of learning and teaching does not reflect student dissatisfaction on the relevant topic. Rather, it could be interpreted that the students are happy with their experiences, and prefer to focus on providing written observations on areas in need of improvement. Also of note is that students are increasingly providing constructive comments in response to the open-response questions, and often mention more than one aspect of their experiences.

1 Generic Skills (KPI 14)

Definition

Generic Skills includes:

- 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)

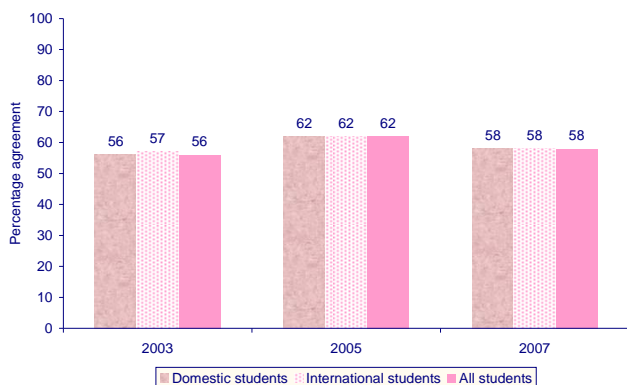
Trends

There has been a decrease in the Faculty scores for Generic Skills for current students (SCEQ); whilst scores for graduates (CEQ) have increased. Domestic and international students are recording similar experiences. The University average for Generic Skills is 66% for current students and 62% for graduates. The Faculty is in the bottom range of faculties for this KPI for current students (SCEQ) and the middle range for graduates (CEQ).

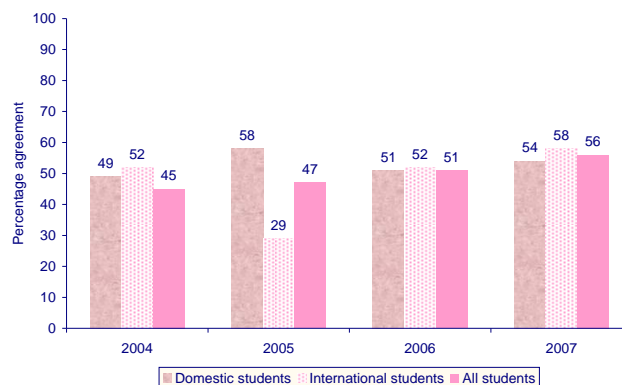
Evidence from the analysis of the qualitative data indicates that both current students and graduates consider that skills and abilities within the Ethical, Social and Professional range of attributes are being developed.

1.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2001–2007

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



1.1.1 Student Course Experience Questionnaire: 2003; 2005; 2007 (current students)



1.1.2 Course Experience Questionnaire 2004–2007 (graduates from previous year)

1.2 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

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 the student satisfaction with the development of University graduate attributes / generic skills between 2001 and 2007.

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	16%	18%	20%	8%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	23%	21%	6%	<i>Too few</i>
	All	9%	10%	13%	17%	18%	16%	6%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	4%	3%	6%	13%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	5%	11%	<i>Too few</i>
	All	3%	2%	2%	3%	4%	7%	13%

1.3 Key issues for coursework students (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)

1.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=102)	International (n=39)	All (n=141)
Ethical, social, professional understanding			
- Ability to work in a group/ team working skills	8%	3%	6%
- Development of discipline/ professional skills			
- Presence of work placement/ industry experience/ field trips in the course			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The best aspect is gaining experience working in teams. In this way the course is like practical experience in professional work relationships.*
- *Best aspects are learning little snippets of information about working in the real world from contractors/freelancers the Uni has outsourced to 'teach'--if you can call it that. It's good because these non-teachers cut through bullshit and tell you what working in the real world is really like and put discrete values on teaching--examples are made about money, work demand, timelines, etc. with actual data, not abstract answers such as 'it varies from place to place'.*
- *The quantitative elements being taught in the course are applicable to improving current professional practice techniques*

Sample comments: international students

- *Research and problem solving skill, because the course provide me with essential tools I have to know to do an appropriate research and finding solutions in my field of work and allow enough space for me to explore my interest*
- *Utilization of technology helps me develop my knowledge and skill more efficiently*
- *The research mode of inquiry. This is important as there are many uncharted territories in the path of life, that may be eased a bit if a quick systematic research is conducted on any problem. It is the understanding of the problem, backed by thorough understanding of the principles, that leads to the solution.*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

6% of postgraduate coursework graduates (i.e. 3/47 comments received) felt that team work and research and inquiry skills and abilities were developed during their course.

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

1.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

4% of postgraduate coursework students (i.e. 5/136 comments received) mentioned that communication skills were not being developed and that they would appreciate more access to professional experience.

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

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

13% of postgraduate coursework graduates (i.e. 6/45 comments received) mentioned that they would appreciate more opportunities to develop their professional skills e.g. through industry placement.

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

2 Good Teaching (KPI 15)

Definition

Good Teaching includes:

- Good teaching experiences (interesting, teaching methods, discussions encouraged etc)
- Motivating teaching (enthusiasm, passion of teachers)
- Concern and care for student learning
- Good explanations received (includes English language proficiency of teachers)
- Feedback on work (timely, constructive)

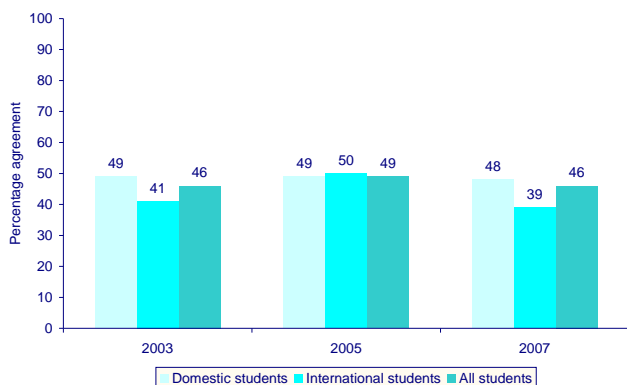
Trends

Faculty scores for Good Teaching for current students (SCEQ) have decreased by 3% since 2005, and are identical to the 2003 scores, but are still below the University average (51%). These results place the Faculty in the bottom quarter of faculties for this KPI. For graduates (CEQ), scores are higher than those for 2006, and lower than the University average of 52%, placing the Faculty in the top quarter of faculties.

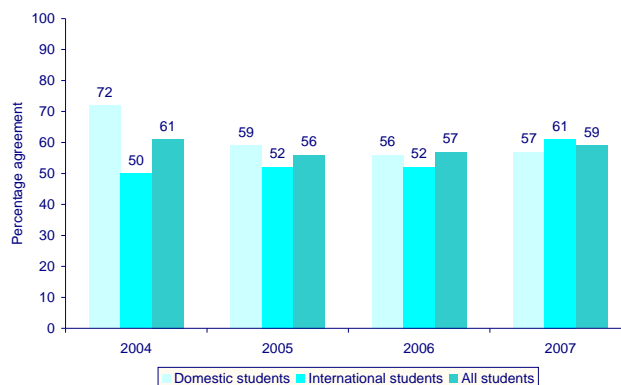
Evidence from the analysis of the qualitative data corroborates the disparate results between current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ). Whilst current students (SCEQ) continue to regard the standard of teaching as an area of improvement within the Faculty; analysis of the data from graduates (CEQ) indicates that they are satisfied with Faculty teaching practices. More comments suggesting improvements were received from current students; whereas more comments expressing satisfaction were received from graduates.

2.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2001–2007

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



2.1.1 Student Course Experience Questionnaire: 2003; 2005; 2007 (current students)



2.1.2 Course Experience Questionnaire 2004–2007 (graduates from previous year)

2.2 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

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 2001 and 2007, as indicated in the responses to open questions in the SCEQ and the CEQ.

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	37%	27%	33%	36%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	35%	38%	28%	<i>Too few</i>
	All	12%	21%	31%	36%	30%	32%	34%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	49%	36%	33%	21%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	43%	51%	26%	<i>Too few</i>
	All	41%	38%	39%	47%	40%	31%	22%

2.3 Key issues for coursework students (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)

2.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=102)	International (n=39)	All (n=141)
------------------------------	---------------------	-------------------------	----------------

Good teaching experiences

- | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|
| - Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques | | | |
| - Ability to keep students interested in the subject | 13% | 18% | 14% |
| - Encouragement to participate in discussions during lectures and tutorials | | | |
| - Learning resources are up to date, and relevant to curriculum | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Well prepared 'traditional' lectures by the course coordinator are always useful and interesting*
- *I am studying a Grad.Dip in Audio Design. I have found many of these subjects to be very informative and stimulating. Especially those subjects taught by XX, XX and XX. These subjects are stimulating, diverse and extremely informative while also being relevant to the REAL WORLD. The above staff have structured their classes to include a good balance of theory and practical based teaching which I felt covered the topic and extended the learning outcomes*
- *XX combines expert knowledge with excellent communication skills and a variety of teaching techniques unlike some other academics who are too 'boffin' like*

Sample comments: international students

- *Excellent teacher, good course handouts*
- *The quality of teaching is excellent*
- *Study packs, where issued, are excellent and their use should be encouraged*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=39)
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Good teaching experiences

- | | |
|---|----|
| - Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques | |
| - Ability to keep students interested in the subject | 6% |
| - Encouragement to participate in discussions during lectures and tutorials | |
| - Learning resources are up to date, and relevant to curriculum | |

Concern and care for student learning

- | | |
|--|-----|
| - Students felt supported in their learning; help and advice readily available | 11% |
| - Lecturers understood problems and difficulties of students (academic and personal) | |

Student motivation

- | | |
|--|----|
| - Students feel motivated by the teaching | 6% |
| - Lecturers convey enthusiasm, passion for their subject | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Specific lecturers in animation and composing, really cared about what they were doing and took an interest in us*
- *Some of the teaching was excellent*
- *The 3D animation and Digital Composition subjects were fantastic. The teachers were helpful and enthusiastic. This also goes for sound Design, Digital Video and Documentary (Digital). I miss these subjects dearly*
- *Some of the lecturers were highly skilled, great teachers, able to convey industry standards very well*

Sample comments: international students

- *The fact that we were asked to do our own work, they motivated us to dig in more*
- *The best aspects of my course are presentation of the project and the way of criticism [feedback]*

2.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=95)	International (n=41)	All (n=136)
Good teaching experiences			
- Teaching methods used are outdated; Lectures were boring			
- Discussions of issues raised during lectures and tutorials are not encouraged	12%	15%	13%
- Learning resources are out of date, and not relevant to curriculum			
- Parallel teaching with undergraduate students not acceptable			
Concern and care for student learning			
- Staff do not provide support and help for students, including one-on-one consultations	7%	12%	9%
- Staff do not seem to understand student difficulties and problems			
- Staff are perceived to be more interested in their research than in teaching			
Feedback on work (from staff to students)			
- Comments on work are not constructive; do not explain where mistakes occur that can be rectified.	13%	17%	14%
- Marks only supplied, no comments			
- Feedback is untimely and not helpful			
- Perceived lack of staff effort in provision of feedback on assessment			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Feedback on some subjects need to be timely. One lecturer who was outside the USyd never gave any feedback. So it is difficult to rectify mistakes or learn in such cases*
- *Prompted in-class interaction. Lectures are almost the only form of interaction with the lecturer. These consist of the lecturer lecturing for 4 days with very little if any requests for student input. Encouraging the students with a small question session each day, or actively inviting questions during lectures would make them considerably more interesting*
- *Group work needs to be more structured at the outset. This would reduce the amount of time required by groups to self-coordinate and assign various tasks. This recommendation is based on the premise that most of the students attending classes are working full time. Also, many of the students studying are from a diverse range of professions as well as cultural background. Having unstructured group work in this situation does provide the opportunity to develop better team working skills, however as mentioned previously, there is often little time for this and as a result can lead to unnecessary pressure and inferior quality of work.*

Sample comments: international students

- *If there has someone like a teaching assistant to communicate with international student and find and solve their academic problems, it would be much better*
- *Feedback is rarely given, and when it is given, it is vague and really unhelpful. It is also very frequently given in an untimely manner and I have had to turn in second and third assignments without receiving so much as a grade on the first*
- *The teachers could be more prepared. Most of them seem like robots...go in give the lecture and leave...no enthusiasm, passion and most don't know how to teach. Mr. XX is a good example of this. Most of the students in his class don't like his teaching methods and specially his attitude*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=45)
Concern and care for student learning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff do not provide support and help for students, including one-on-one consultations - Staff do not seem to understand student difficulties and problems - Staff are perceived to be more interested in their research than in teaching 	9%
Feedback on work (from staff to students)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comments on work are not constructive; do not explain where mistakes occur that can be rectified. - Feedback is untimely and not helpful 	9%
Sample comments: domestic students	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The film component was a horror. Most students were dissatisfied with his lack of professionalism many int'l students did not complain for fear of losing student status for putting themselves in compromising situations.</i> - <i>The attention to students study and feedback requirements by lecturers</i> - <i>Too many part time lecturers/adjunct professors, etc - they don't seem to really care about our learning and put little effort into teaching us</i> - <i>Some lecturers/tutors were not suited to the subjects they were teaching, or were not interested in the course of students. However, this was true for only a small minority of staff</i> 	
Sample comments: international students	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The 'PowerPoint lectures' which are weaker than what they should be... To involve students more- sometimes the lectures are boring</i> - <i>Little feedback</i> 	

3 Overall Satisfaction (KPI 16)

Definition

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

- Reputation of the University/ Faculty/ degree (including reputation/ accreditation 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

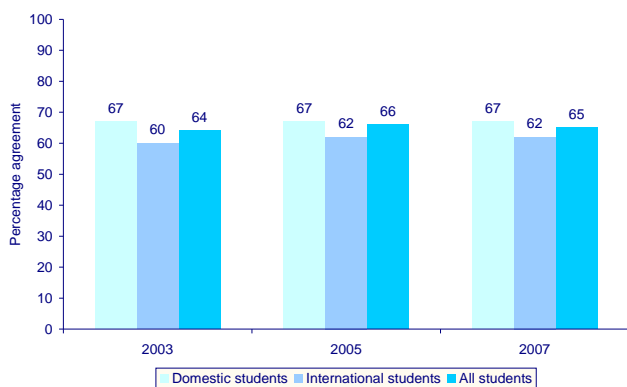
Trends

Faculty scores for Overall Satisfaction have remained in the mid 60th percentile for current students (SCEQ) since 2003. The current score of 65% is below the University average of 75% and one of the lowest in the University. On the other hand, the score of 72% for graduates (CEQ) is above the University average and in the top third of all faculties.

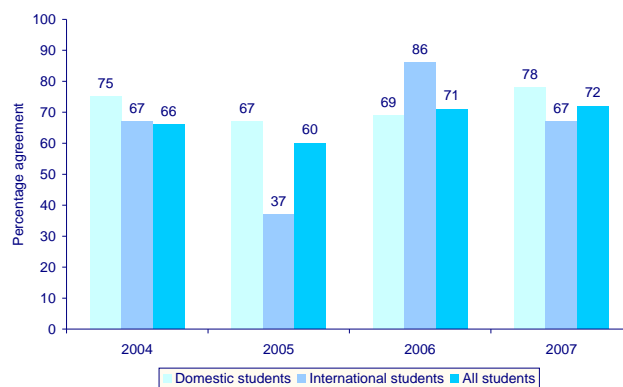
Analysis of the qualitative data indicates that current students (SCEQ) appear to be highly satisfied with their overall experience, in particular with the knowledge, experience and qualifications of academic staff. In 2007, there was a substantial difference between positive and negative comments for the first time since analysis of the qualitative data commenced. For graduates (CEQ) the percentage of comments received on this topic are equally divided between those expressing satisfaction and those suggesting improvements.

3.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2001–2007

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 SCEQ and the CEQ.



3.1.1 Student Course Experience Questionnaire: 2003; 2005; 2007 (current students)



3.1.2 Course Experience Questionnaire 2004–2007 (graduates from previous year)

3.2 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

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

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	22%	25%	13%	18%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	15%	26%	28%	Too few
	All	29%	23%	18%	20%	26%	16%	15%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	18%	16%	10%	18%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	23%	15%	26%	Too few
	All	25%	22%	16%	19%	15%	14%	16%

3.3 Key issues for coursework students (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)

3.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=102)	International (n=39)	All (n=141)
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Staffing issues

- Qualifications of staff in subject matter and in teaching at tertiary level	23%	21%	22%
- Relevant experience of lecturers and tutors in subject area			
- Relevant and up to date knowledge of lecturers and tutors in subject area			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Depth of knowledge and experience of the lecturers give insights into the material presented as well as actual practise*
- *TO have industry experts and give talks and lectures about different aspects of illumination. This gives me an insight from not just my lecturer but from experts that are working in the field continuously*
- *Lecturers who are active in their professional field and sharing professional experiences with students in the classroom*

Sample comments: international students

- *I am learning the Master of Design Science Facilities Management currently. Our coordinator has involved a couple of professionals in FM industry into our lectures, which is an effective way to get us closer to the real world*
- *The best aspect of my degree course is the course coordinator's effort to get people in the industry in the classroom so that I can get a true image what is going on in the real world*
- *Some tutors bring practitioners from industry to explain current issues and this is much appreciated*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)		All (n=47)	
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Staffing issues

- Qualifications of staff in subject matter and in teaching at tertiary level		13%	
- Relevant experience of lecturers and tutors in subject area			
- Relevant and up to date knowledge of lecturers and tutors in subject area			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Exposure to current professional practice, guest lecturers from within industry*
- *Some of the lecturers were highly skilled, great teachers, able to convey industry standards very well*
- *Some of the lecturers were outstanding and this was instrumental in making the course worthwhile*
- *lectures from industry professionals*
- *lectures delivered by top-level practitioners*
- *I was able to double my income and have a interesting job.*

3.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=95)	International (n=41)	All (n=136)
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Staffing issues

- Staff not qualified to teach subject matter	8%	0%	6%
- Lack of knowledge and/or experience of academic staff incl. tutors			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *re lectures and academic staff in the field of planning - at present the course/ degree rests on 2.5 staff - this is not enough and some are not of the quality and experience to lecture in this field - I learnt more from fellow students*
- *More visiting lecturers preferably practitioners from within the industry who are up on current practices. Academics can get stale & they would benefit from this as well*
- *ideally the tutor, as well as being thoroughly knowledgeable about software and hardware issues, would have been briefed by the lecturer so that s/he knows exactly the aims of the exercise and can provide swift and concise responses to students' queries*

Sample comments: international students

- *some lecturers were not only unhelpful but confusing and a sincere waste of tuition money*
- *The lectures are a waste of time. If it is something I can read or do on my own time for free, then I don't want to be spending my valuable money and time sitting through an unenthusiastic lecture. Lecture after lecture like this is absurd. Good researchers do not equal good teachers. It's unfortunate that three out of my four classes are a waste of my time, and the fourth one I don't have time for because of all the trivial nonsense work I'm expected to do in the first three. I am extremely unhappy with this program and the only reason I'm sticking it out is because I am an international student, and quitting would be a bigger waste of money than finishing. At least I will leave with a master's degree, pointless as it is considering I learned nothing I either didn't already know or could have figured out on my own time anyway*
- *Overall I'm very disappointed in the Design Faculty overall. Hoped for much more than what I'm getting*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)		All (n=45)	
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Staffing issues

- Staff not qualified to teach subject matter		11%	
- Lack of knowledge and/or experience of academic staff incl. tutors			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Consistency in teaching staff/lectures*
- *Lecturers academics, not industry professionals input from industry people would be very beneficial*
- *We need more academic staff, we need a professional experience component*
- *Disruption - lecturers leaving*
- *Admission standards - full fee paying students let in regardless of academic merit*
- *Number of International students and local students were required to support, during team work projects*

4 Learning Community

Definition

Learning Community includes the following:

- Learning environment (exploration of academic interests with staff and students; belonging to a community, social experiences; cultural diversity; equity issues)
- Physical resources (physical facilities: buildings, rooms, etc; library)
- Location/ isolation (affiliated campuses, hospitals, institutes)
- Induction and orientation
- Responsiveness to student feedback

Trends

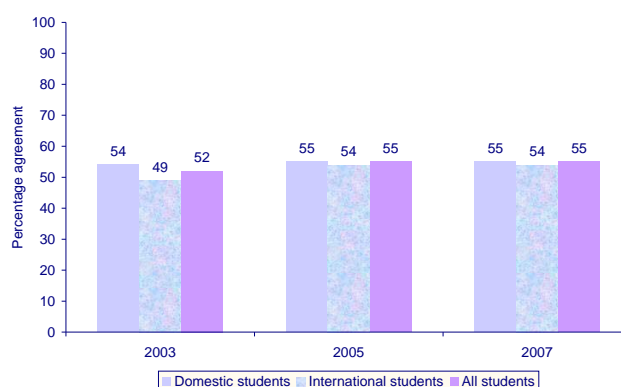
55% of students either agreed or strongly agreed with SCEQ survey items on the Learning Community. This is marginally above the University average, and is identical to the 2005 results.

Evidence from the qualitative data indicates that whilst students appreciated the community feel of the Faculty, due to its small size and location; together with opportunities to explore academic interests with staff and students in tutorials and studio sessions; they were unhappy with the facilities e.g. computers and lab/ studio, and buildings.

4.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data SCEQ 2003–2007

The following table show the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with survey item statements on Learning Community in the Student Course Experience Questionnaire.

Note: The Learning Community Scale is not included in the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ).



4.1.1 Student Course Experience Questionnaire: 2003; 2005; 2007 (current students)

4.2 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

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 2001 and 2007.

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	30%	24%	18%	28%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	13%	33%	17%	<i>Too few</i>
	All	24%	22%	13%	25%	26%	18%	23%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	14%	25%	10%	24%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	20%	44%	11%	<i>Too few</i>
	All	24%	17%	16%	16%	31%	10%	24%

4.3 Key issues for coursework students (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)

4.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=102)	International (n=39)	All (n=141)
Learning environment			
- Enjoyed University social life			
- Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty)	17%	18%	17%
- Academic interests were being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials			
- Enjoyed the cultural mix of students in the course			
Learning resources			
- Physical facilities satisfactory	6%	18%	9%
- Library services and resources acceptable			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The network built with other students to bounce ideas and experiences off*
- *Mainly, it's the contributions of my fellow students that are included in the best aspects of the degree course (Master of Urban and Regional Planning).*
- *The relationships I've established with my lecturers and tutors have proven to be very rewarding by providing an opportunity for discourse and debate even if not necessarily leading to a direct recognition of merit in my effort or the occasional hindrances resulting from the fact that generally I stand alone amongst students, who appear to hope to make it through the lectures and tutorials without saying a word or expressing their opinions/observations on the subject.*

Sample comments: international students

- *Facilities. The computer lab and the books in the library covers all the aspects of my study materials*
- *The class discussions with students*
- *During the study, I can meet with students from other countries and communicate with them. Communications with people from different areas around the world helps me in my major*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=47)
Learning resources	
- Physical facilities satisfactory	11%
- Library services and resources acceptable	

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The opportunity to use the best equipment - computers, software, cameras, green screen etc*
- *Very nice building and environment for students to study*
- *Interaction with students and academics*
- *The library is great and staff well informed*
- *Variety of subjects, generally small class sizes, studying with people from a variety of backgrounds*
- *Meeting overseas students*

4.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=95)	International (n=41)	All (n=136)
Learning environment			
- Academic interests were not explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials: during studio sessions	8%	20%	12%
- Class sizes too large for productive discussions			
- Discrimination and equity issues have arisen during course			
Learning resources			
- Physical facilities inadequate	15%	22%	17%
- Library services and resources unsatisfactory			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The class sizes have apparently expanded quite a lot in recent years and it shows. The rooms were quite crowded, and the class structure was quite a formal lecture presentation. In the absence of tutorials, this gave little opportunity to discuss concepts, etc., in a more interactive way. Clearly in a smaller group a lecture would digress into discussions, but this didn't happen in the larger group. Perhaps the structure needs to be adjusted to reflect the class size and make interaction a more explicit aspect of the classes.*
- *Weekly tutoring will be immensely helpful. Exercises and worked examples should be definitely provided rather than just putting down the formulas and not demonstrating how it works*
- *Give the building a good clean and keep it clean, it's like working in a rubbish tip. The AV equipment is basic and the screen needs replacing. The room needs to be refurbished - paint, curtains, furniture - 20 years is more than enough to get out of the existing. Fix the hand dryer in the toilet Clean the toilet more than each fortnight*

Sample comments: international students

- *The labs and the classrooms should have better location and more facilities. Especially the ones located at the ground floor should have better lighting*
- *Both degrees: There are no activities to get to know the other students before the studies. It has to be done under the pressure of studies with the breaches between Australians and international students/immigrants*
- *As a student coming in at the second semester, the only factor I would have liked to improve upon is for greater interactive classes that would have allowed me to feel more a part of the class than I do now. The semester is over, but I am still not completely at ease, and do not yet feel like I belong. Perhaps this will be amended in the next semester, when the courses are intended for students new to the degree and are more interactive*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=45)
Learning environment	
- Academic interests were not explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials: during studio sessions	11%
- Class sizes too large for productive discussions	
- Discrimination and equity issues have arisen during course	
Learning resources	
- Physical facilities inadequate	13%
- Library services and resources unsatisfactory	

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Resources! Not enough for number of students!*
- *The lack of available resources (computers never free etc) plus no industry training, no help on finding work at all!*
- *Design studio class- no favouritism shown towards particular students!*
- *Library never open for a part-timer*

Sample comments: international students

- *Normally for the mandatory courses, there was too many students in the lecture, kind of a barrier to free communication between lecturers and students*
- *One main aspect should be improved, is the weekly design discussion in the design studios*

5 Curriculum

Definition

Student perceptions of the curriculum used in their degree course include:

- Content and structure of degree(s) (intensive courses; relationship between Units of Study; content of Units of Study; relevance to work/ career/ industry)
- Mode of delivery (PBL; online)
- Flexibility of degree, including ability to take a range of Units of Study
- Availability/ cancellation of advertised courses
- Practical components of degree course²

Trends

In 2007 43% of comments received from both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ) commented favourably on various aspects of the curriculum. 35% of comments received in the SCEQ and 29% in the CEQ suggested improvements in this area of their experience.

The flexible nature of the course, including the ability to undertake intensive units of study, together with the practical components was appreciated by both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ). However some students considered that material was out of date and not relevant to the course.

Note: Specific items on Curriculum are not included in either the SCEQ or CEQ. Therefore no comparative quantitative data is available for this aspect of the student experience. Due to the high proportion of student comments on the delivery, content, structure and relevance of the curriculum this important aspect of the student experience has been included as a separate item in reports since 2002.

5.1 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

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 2001 and 2007.

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	52%	49%	38%	38%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	40%	26%	44%	<i>Too few</i>
	All	48%	41%	44%	49%	43%	40%	43%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	42%	39%	38%	29%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	38%	27%	58%	<i>Too few</i>
	All	33%	35%	25%	41%	35%	44%	29%

² Development of practical skills included in Generic Skills: Professional Skills and Experience

5.2 Key issues for coursework students (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)

5.2.2 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=102)	International (n=39)	All (n=141)
Content and structure			
- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	32%	18%	28%
- Intensive courses			
- Subjects appear to be linked together			
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			
Flexibility, diversity, variety			
- Students appreciate the range of subjects available	9%	3%	7%
- Students appreciate the ability to choose units from other faculties			
Practical components of curriculum			
- Satisfaction with practical components of curriculum	8%	5%	7%
- Appreciated mix of theory and practical			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *the number of lectures offered in intensive mode...allows me to match a normal class with an intensive class in each semester (I do two units per semester) which in turn reduces the number of trips I need to do to uni compared with that if I was enrolled in two normal units per semester*
- *Gaining a general picture of what's going on in the field of Urban Planning in NSW. During four semesters I could take a variety of different subjects each of which covered a specific area of Urban Planning practice in NSW*
- *The equipment and hands on experience in practical tutorials are the best aspect because learning is much more efficient and relevant to industry*

Sample comments: international students

- *Holistic exposure of the subject, from global to the local, from micro to macro and so on. This is important as lack of information can lead to under-informed decisions, which may be detrimental. Thorough understanding of the principles, rather than single lined solution. This is important as every situation requires an analysis to be performed before coming to any conclusion. This is only possible by an in-depth understanding of the principles governing any situation, to be able to take a decision based upon the demand of the problem*
- *The best aspect of the course is the diversity of the subjects offered. Also lots of flexibility in deciding which field within the degree to pursue*
- *The course is very practical which requires to work on the real task, such as making a toolkit to solve the problems, going to a council or court to see the process of making decisions of the DA, etc*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=47)
Content and structure	
- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	30%
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements	
Flexibility, diversity, variety	
- Students appreciate the range of subjects available	9%
- Students appreciate the ability to choose units from other faculties	

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Course work was dealing with current contemporary issues*
- *The variety in units provided in the course*
- *Concentration on practical aspects of heritage conservation*

Sample comments: international students

- *Increase awareness of current issues in industries. Knowledge exchanges between classmates and lecturers*
- *Some courses were related with real life (industrial level) aspects not just limited within study level*
- *Urban design theory classes have strong connection with Urban Design Studios. To me, urban design program is more integrated than architectural design program*

5.2.3 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=95)	International (n=41)	All (n=136)
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Content and structure

- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	32%	22%	29%
- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *As an interstate student, they could try putting the units together so that I can travel down just the once to complete all units. The course needs a better structure to accommodate interstate students. More flexibility with regards to correspondence. I have applied to continue on and haven't had any feedback yet!!!*
- *Some courses available don't seem relevant with industry standards. An example would be designing virtual worlds, while this course was enjoyable. I fail to see the learning aspect accounting for any knowledge applied to a real job*
- *There is no attempt to relate coursework material to current topics in planning, for example, relate infrastructure planning to current discourse on state/federal funding arrangements for infrastructure*

Sample comments: international students

- *Too few classes are offered so I have no flexibility to specialize or choose my direction. The subject matter of the core courses addresses topics that are too broad and lack focus and I feel that the core classes should be more flexible. In the MURP program streams are advertised and yet truly available or encouraged. I would think that someone interested in heritage and someone interested in housing would take very different paths within the degree requirements but in fact, that is often not the case due to core courses and a lack of options for electives.*
- *International practices examples or case study. I feel that my course focusing too much on Australia practices. Although this can be an advantage for some people working in Australia, it will be better if we also learn more from international best practices*
- *Some courses are too general, do not provide depth of knowledge (it should be deeper than undergraduate courses)*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=45)
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Content and structure

- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	22%
- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry requirements	
- Do not like intensive courses	

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Variety of subjects available and how often subjects were offered*
- *Improve and add more quality to the subjects*
- *Integration between subjects; continuity*
- *They need to add computer classes so students learn to use the software competently*

Sample comments: international students

- *Some units need to be refined and planned*
- *The connection between architectural design theory class and architectural design studios needs to be reinforced*

6 Appropriate Assessment

Definition

Appropriate Assessment includes:

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

Trends

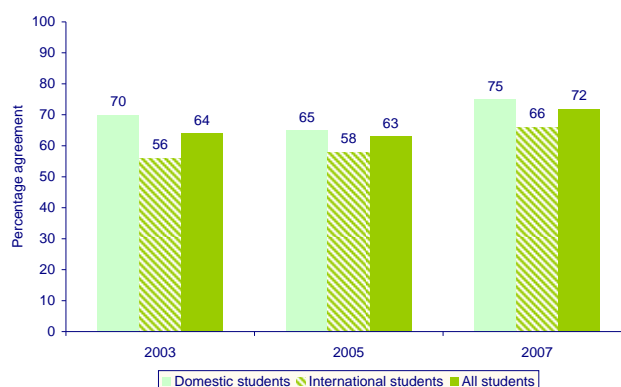
The percentage agreement scores for Appropriate Assessment (72%) in the 2007 SCEQ is higher than the University average of 66%, and represents an increase of approx 10% over previous surveys. Domestic students continue to have a better experience than international students. This result is the 6th highest in the University.

Analysis of the qualitative data indicates that students and graduates are particularly concerned about group assessments, particularly in relation to equitable marking, and student contribution.

6.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data SCEQ 2003-2007

The following tables show the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with survey item statements on Appropriate Assessment in the SCEQ.

NB: The Appropriate assessment Scale is not included in the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ).



6.1.1 Student Course Experience Questionnaire: 2003; 2005; 2007 (current students)

6.2 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

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 Appropriate Assessment between 2001 and 2007.

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	12%	4%	4%	3%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	20%	3%	6%	<i>Too few</i>
	All	6%	4%	3%	14%	4%	4%	6%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	7%	7%	12%	5%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	8%	20%	0%	<i>Too few</i>
	All	4%	4%	7%	7%	11%	8%	4%

6.3 Key issues for coursework students (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)

6.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

4% of students (i.e. 5/141 comments received) expressed satisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments.

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

6% of graduates (i.e. 3/47 comments received) expressed satisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments.

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

6.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=95)	International (n=41)	All (n=136)
Types of assessment	4%	12%	7%
- Students are unhappy with aspects of group assessment			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Group work' is a waste of time and fees -- the practice of preparing assignments in groups bares little resemblance to team work in the real world -- face to face teaching would be much more useful*
- *Working in groups just means that one person does all the work. I don't think that assessing us with group work is an effective way of allowing us to display the things we have learnt in the course. I feel this applies to all group work in all subjects*
- *Finally, the shared marks [in group work] are extremely demoralising to those who put a lot of effort into their work and have high expectations in terms of their achievement and the need for perceived value in their work*

Sample comments: international students

- *I think some assignments should be done in group because planning is not an individual work. sometime, it will be more effective and efficient to solve problems with listening to other opinions*
- *I think that the assignments could be expanded a bit and perhaps be a bit more challenging. In addition there could be more assignments involving the use of electronics hardware / software*
- *The pressure when a unit is assessed by one assignment is too much, something may have happened and for not pass a unit for lack of opportunities to recuperate*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

4% of graduates (i.e. 2/45 comments received) expressed dissatisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments.

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

7 Appropriate Workload

Definition

Appropriate Workload includes:

- 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

Trends

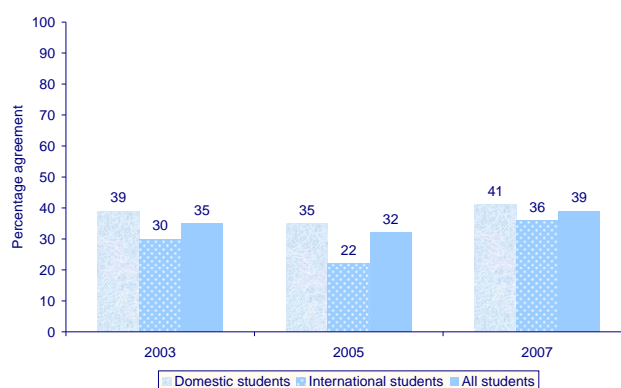
The percentage agreement scores for Appropriate Workload (39%) in the 2007 SCEQ is the second highest in the University, where the average is 32%. Domestic students continue to have a better experience of workload than international students.

In 2005, 7% of comments received from current students (SCEQ) mentioned workload as an area in need of improvement; in 2007 this decreased to 1%, thereby indicating that the respondents to the SCEQ are more than satisfied with their workload, and corroborating the excellent quantitative data results.

7.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2003–2007

The following tables show the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with survey item statements on Appropriate Workload in the Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ).

NB: The Appropriate Workload Scale is not included in the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ).



6.1.1 Student Course Experience Questionnaire: 2003; 2005; 2007 (current students)

7.2 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

The following table provides an indication of trends in the student experience of Appropriate Workload between 2001 and 2007, as indicated in the responses to open questions in the SCEQ and the CEQ.

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	1%	0%	0%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	0%	0%	<i>Too few</i>
	All	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	7%	2%	4%	3%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	8%	0%	0%	<i>Too few</i>
	All	3%	4%	7%	7%	1%	3%	2%

7.3 Key issues for coursework students (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)

The main issue raised by the small percentage of current students who responded to the SCEQ was the amount of work that was required in their courses. The similarity of comments provided on this topic negates the purpose of providing sample comments to illustrate student concerns.