



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Law

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, 70% of respondents supplied written comments in answer to the open questions; in 2007 less than one third (32%) of respondents supplied written observations. This decline is present across the University.

2 Data from international students

Quantitative data (charts)

Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ):

Less than 10 international graduates responded to the overall satisfaction item in the 2004-2007 CEQ. Since the minimum sample size recommended for statistical analysis of CEQ data is 20, the analysis of the quantitative data for this cohort should be viewed with caution.

Qualitative data (Comparative tables and key issues)

Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)

Less than 5 international students who responded to the CEQ in 2007 provided written observations on their experiences. Since the minimum sample size for statistical reporting is 5, the results of the qualitative analysis for international students have been excluded from the report. This is indicated by the phrase *Too few* in the comparative tables for qualitative data.

Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ)

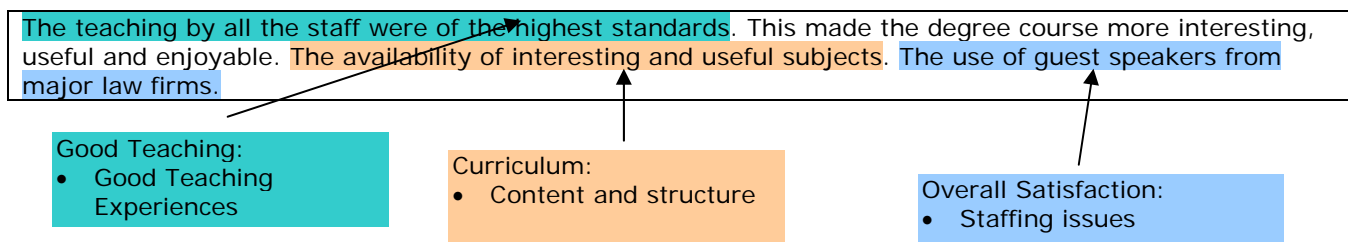
Less than 20 international students who responded to the SCEQ, provided written observations on their experiences. Since the minimum sample size recommended for statistical analysis of SCEQ data is 20, the analysis of the qualitative data from this cohort, should be viewed with caution.

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 Good Teaching (Good teaching experiences): Curriculum (Content and structure); and Overall Satisfaction (Staffing issues), 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 Law 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 remained steady for current students (SCEQ) and currently sit at 63%
 - have decreased for graduates (CEQ) and currently sit at 60%
 - remain below the University average in both surveys

Evidence from the analysis of the qualitative data indicates that both current students and graduates are satisfied with the development of all the skills and abilities encompassed by the University of Sydney Generic Graduate Attributes.

- Faculty scores for **Good Teaching** (KPI 15; Section 2)
 - are 55% for current students (SCEQ)
 - are at 53% for graduates (CEQ)
 - are above the University average for both surveys

Evidence from the qualitative data indicates that there has been little change in the experiences of current students (SCEQ) in this area of their experience since 2005, which was the first year since 2001 in which a higher percentage of positive comments was received than those suggesting improvements. However for graduates (CEQ) the percentage of positive comments received on this topic continues to be substantially less than those suggesting improvements.

- Faculty scores for **Overall Satisfaction** (KPI 15; Section 3)
 - are 85% for current students (SCEQ)
 - are 74% for graduates (CEQ), a decrease of 4% since 2006
 - are higher than the University average both current students and graduates

Satisfaction with the qualifications, knowledge and experience of academic staff and external lecturers is the focus of the majority of comments from both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ) on this area of their experience.

- Faculty scores for **Learning Community** (Section 4)
 - are 53% for current students (SCEQ)
 - are marginally below the University average of 54%
 - are identical to the 2005 results

Analysis of the qualitative data from both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ) indicates that whilst they appreciate the learning environment engendered within the Faculty, particularly the diversity of students, and the exploration of academic interests, they are dissatisfied with the poor state of the Law campus infrastructure, though they understand this will improve on removal to Camperdown.

- Faculty scores for **Curriculum (qualitative data only)** (Section 5)
 - in 2007, 53% of comments from current students (SCEQ) were favourable whilst 54% recommended areas in need of improvement.
 - in 2007, 54% of comments received from graduates (CEQ) were favourable, 16% recommended areas for improvement.

Whilst all respondents appreciated the content of the curriculum, the variety of subjects available and the intensive mode of delivery of some units; they were concerned about the unavailability of courses that were advertised on the University website, or which were cancelled without due notification.

- Faculty scores for **Appropriate Assessment** (Section 6)
 - for current students (SCEQ) is higher than the University average of 66%
 - is identical to the 2005 results

Very few respondents provided comments on this aspect of their experiences. There has been a substantial decrease in the percentage of comments suggesting improvements to assessment practices since 2005.

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

The majority of comments received from both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ) referred to dissatisfaction with the high amount of reading required for the course.

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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 Law 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)

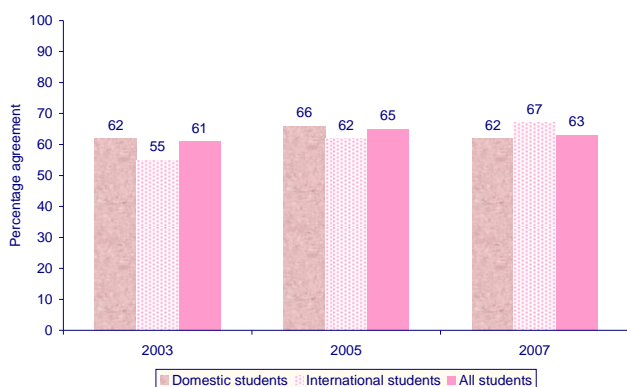
Trends

Faculty scores for Generic Skills for current students (SCEQ) remain in the mid 60th percentile, and currently sit at 63%. This is marginally below the University average of 65%, and places the Faculty in the bottom third of faculties for this SCEQ Factor. Scores for graduates (CEQ) have decreased by 7% since 2003, and currently sit at 60%. This is below the University average of 62% and places the Faculty in the middle range of faculties for this CEQ KPI.

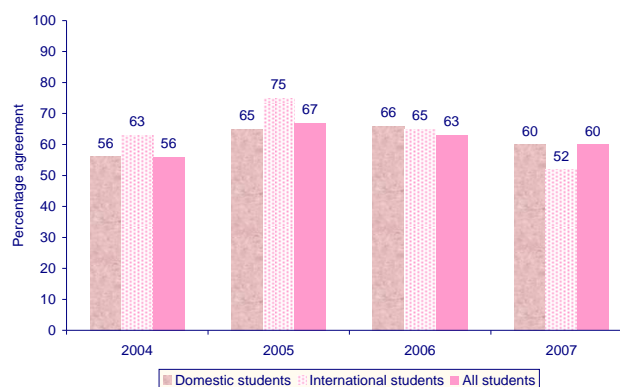
Evidence from the analysis of the qualitative data indicates that both current students and graduates are satisfied with the development of all the skills and abilities encompassed by the University of Sydney Generic Graduate Attributes.

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	11%	6%	8%	6%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	28%	43%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	6%	7%	5%	13%	12%	8%	6%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	2%	0%	4%	0%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	0%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	0%	1%	1%	3%	0%	4%	0%

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

1.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

12% of postgraduate coursework students (i.e. 10/83 comments received) felt that necessary skills and abilities were being developed during the course of their studies. Skills and abilities mentioned by students fell within the range of four of the University Graduate Attributes: Research and Inquiry; Information Literacy; Personal and Intellectual Autonomy; and Communication Skills.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *This has overall been an extremely worthwhile academic decision. I have gained a lot of academic skills, exposed myself to a different and stimulating academic field and I believe things have academically 'clicked' for me this year - I am extremely grateful for this*
- *independence - expected to do a lot of work on your own - choose your own subjects*
- *My Masters of Environmental Law has broadened my perspective on several issues, and I have grown intellectually*

Sample comments: international students

- *The teaching staff worked hard to come up with thought provoking essay topics that will not only improve our writing skills but importantly our analytical skills*
- *the assessments.. they really sharpened my analytic skills*
- *Improving Academic English*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

6% of postgraduate coursework students (i.e. 5/78 comments received) felt that necessary skills and abilities were being developed during the course of their studies. Skills and abilities mentioned by students fell within the range of four of the University Graduate Attributes: Research and Inquiry; Ethical, Social and Professional Understanding; and Communication Skills.

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

1.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

There were no comments relating to the non-development of generic skills in the comments received from current students (SCEQ) in answer to the question: *What aspects of your degree course could be improved?*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

There were no comments relating to the non-development of generic skills in the comments received from graduates (CEQ) in answer to the question: *What aspects of your course were most in need of improvement?*

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)

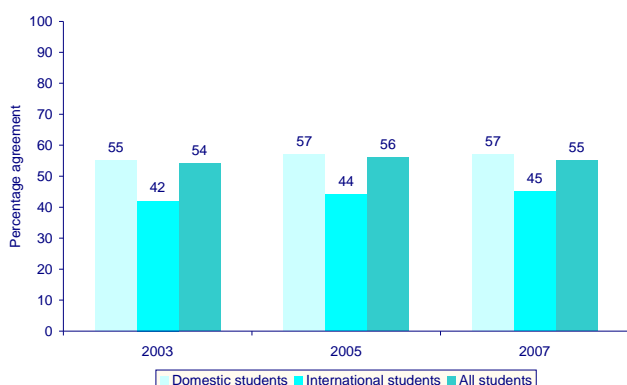
Trends

Faculty scores for Good Teaching for current students (SCEQ) remain in the mid 50th percentile. The current score of 55% is above the University average (51%). For graduates (CEQ), scores are lower than those for 2006, and are marginally higher than the University average of 52%. Both scores place the Faculty in the middle range of faculties for this KPI.

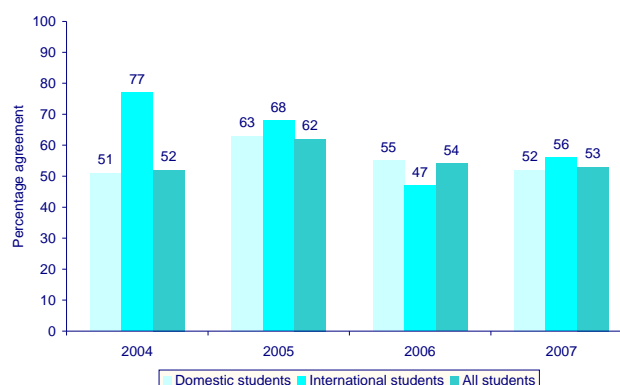
Evidence from the qualitative data indicates that there has been little change in the experiences of current students (SCEQ) in this area of their experience since 2005, which was the first year since 2001 in which a higher percentage of positive comments was received than those suggesting improvements. However for graduates (CEQ) the percentage of positive comments received on this topic continues to be substantially less than those suggesting improvements.

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	45%	49%	28%	23%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	39%	36%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	21%	33%	34%	45%	47%	28%	26%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	42%	42%	41%	46%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	16%	17%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	40%	45%	52%	38%	38%	42%	45%

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

2.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=69)	International (n=14)	All (n=83)
Good teaching experiences			
- Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques			
- Ability to keep students interested in the subject	19%	14%	18%
- Encouragement to participate in discussions during lectures and tutorials			
- Learning resources are up to date, relevant to curriculum; and provided in a timely manner			
Concern and care for student learning			
- Students felt supported in their learning; help and advice readily available	12%	7%	11%
- Lecturers understood problems and difficulties of students (academic and personal)			
Research-enhanced learning and teaching			
- Students participate in research projects			
- Students are aware of lecturers' research interests	10%	14%	11%
- There is a research component in the curriculum			
- <i>(mentioned in 11% of comments received in 2007 cf. with 8% in 2005, and 4% in 2003)</i>			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *I feel the University is very supportive of me, this ranges from the great administrative staff who are always helping me finalise units of study, to the professors who take an interest in what interests us as students*
- *The teaching staff is excellent - very knowledgeable, most lecturers obviously try to vary their teaching methods and take an interest in student responses - classes are well organised on the whole and the intensive format works well*
- *Research based learning - academics providing the basics to create inspiration for further research in a choice area*

Sample comments: international students

- *The teaching staff are very helpful in ensuring that the students understand what is being taught. They also provide helpful feedbacks. They are always there to assist the students*
- *The possibility to undertake an independent research project. This allows students that want to do their course by coursework to nevertheless research a topic of their own choice*
- *The material that is given in advance. This helps us in to prepare for the contact hours and therefore one is able to follow the discussion of the issue*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=78)
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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
- Encouragement to participate in discussions during lectures and tutorials
- Learning resources are up to date, and relevant to curriculum

Sample comments

- *most of the teachers were really good in teaching*
- *Professor xxx subjects (I did three of them) - he is wonderful. Puts in a huge amount of effort, huge interest in students, makes everything interesting*
- *The excellent teaching by xxx and his team of practitioners lecturers. The teaching format of combined lecture/tutorials with papers presented each week by selected students was ideal for these subjects*
- *xxxxx xxxx (Public International Law) and my lecturer for International Criminal Law in 2005 were fantastic, incredibly passionate about their work and teaching*
- *Good range of course work materials variety of learning methods, EG small groups, hypotheticals, short class*
- *Approachability of lecturer whether in or out of uni hours*

2.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=62)	International (n=12)	All (n=74)
Good teaching experiences			
- Teaching methods used are outdated; Lectures were boring			
- Discussions of issues raised during lectures and tutorials are not encouraged	24%	8%	22%
- Learning resources are out of date, and not relevant to curriculum			
- Parallel teaching with undergraduate students not acceptable			
Feedback on work (from staff to students)			
- Comments on work are not constructive; do not explain where mistakes occur that can be rectified.	13%	8%	12%
- 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			
- <i>Due to the nature of the course (i.e. short intensive learning sessions) it is sometimes impossible to get feedback on previous work before the next piece is due. Assessments and face to face teaching days could probably be better structured in some instances to enable feedback to be provided before the next large piece of work is due. I have found the need to submit hard copies of assessment tasks very frustrating - particularly given I work full time and the faculty office is only open business hours. At other unis I have been able to submit online - why not at Sydney?</i>			
- <i>It should also be mandatory for lecturers to give students course outlines. One professor taught Commercial Equity without a course outline or any course structure at all, and this made it very difficult to see the big picture or to understand a broad framework of the subject and where we were heading</i>			
- <i>There is a large discrepancy between quality of teaching provided by academic staff as compared with non-academic presenters (i.e., lecturers from industry). Subjects taught by faculty staff are taught extremely well. Classes taught by non- faculty presenters are generally very difficult to follow, disorganised and not well prepared. In short, they are often not worth the fees charged. However, I understand that lecturers from industry have less teaching experience, less time to prepare etc and presenters are largely voluntarily giving up their time to do this. So, not sure how this can be improved.</i>			
- <i>Entry subject environmental law and policy could be much improved. The current teacher (XXX) is lazy, uses no power point presentations and does not address the course outline in class</i>			
Sample comments: international students			
- <i>feedback!!! only feedback in grades and sometimes poorly marked assignments, comments do not help to improve</i>			
- <i>Choice of units, teaching of units, workload</i>			
Graduates (CEQ 2007)		All (n=62)	
Good teaching experiences			
- Teaching methods and techniques used are outdated/need improvement		18%	
- Discussions of issues during class were not encouraged			
- Lecturers were boring; did not engage with students			
- Learning materials and resources were outdated			
Concern and care for student learning			
- Staff do not provide support and help for students, including one-on-one consultations		8%	
- 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%	
- Feedback is untimely and not helpful			

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

All
(n=62)

Sample comments

- *Some lecturers were tired, uninspirational, disinterested*
- *More understanding of work / Study juggling needed*
- *Feedback on a continual basis. We often never received feedback until the end of the subject*
- *Organisation of staff, presentation, being concise and not waffling*
- *Too much use of PowerPoint presentation in lectures*
- *As with all areas of endeavour done some of the lecturers did not have interesting or well prepared material*

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

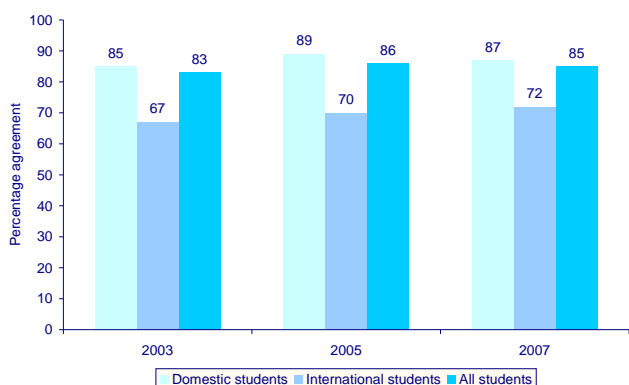
Trends

Overall Satisfaction with the degree course currently rates at 85% for current students (SCEQ) and 74% for graduates. These results represent the status quo on previous years for current students; and a decrease of 4% for graduates. The University average for current students is 75% and for graduates is 70%. The Faculty is placed 4th in the University rankings for both surveys.

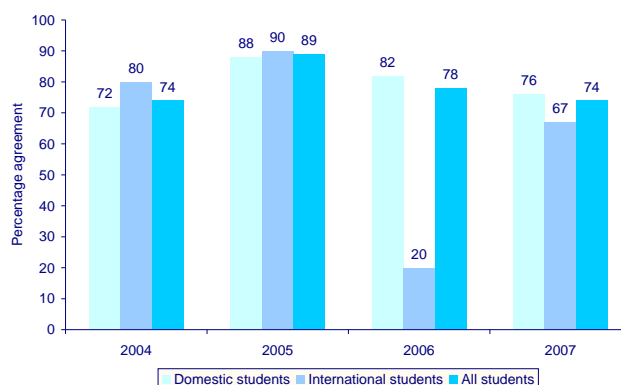
Satisfaction with the qualifications, knowledge and experience of academic staff and external lecturers is the focus of the majority of comments from both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ) on this area of their experience.

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	28%	38%	23%	23%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	11%	14%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	31%	44%	36%	26%	34%	23%	24%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	10%	10%	6%	8%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	11%	0%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	11%	15%	7%	10%	8%	7%	8%

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

3.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=69)	International (n=14)	All (n=83)
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Staffing issues

- Qualifications of staff in subject matter and in teaching at tertiary level	32%	14%	29%
- 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

- *Excellent lecturers / presenters - while I only enrolled in one course this semester there was an excellent group of knowledgeable presenters who were thoroughly engaging and experienced in their fields*
- *Lecturers who have actually practised within the last 10 years seem to be more in touch with current issues and practical applications of the law. - Pure academics seem to focus purely on the theoretical with no real skills to deal with application in the current environment*
- *The fact that the lecturers are widely acknowledged experts in their fields (e.g. XXX and XXX) means I not only have confidence in the relevance of the subject material I'm given access to the people who are leading both research and practical applications*
- *The lecturers are active in the legal profession. They practice the material they teach on a daily basis, and are able to add anecdotes from their personal experiences. They are specialists in their chosen area of law, and are active researchers. This assists with both practical and theoretical questions that students may have*

Sample comments: international students

- *Enough materials provided by experienced lecturers*
- *The professors are really outstanding and the courses go far beyond the 'traditional' aspects of the subjects*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)		All (n=78)	
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Staffing issues

- Qualifications of staff in subject matter and in teaching at tertiary level		19%	
- Relevant experience of lecturers and tutors in subject area			
- Relevant and up to date knowledge of lecturers and tutors in subject area			

Sample comments

- *Law school teaching staff are particularly very good. We had a mix of experts in different areas of law and they offered a wealth of experience in their respective field*
- *Overseas lecturers, whom had worked in private practice and knew how to lecture, namely marrying the elements of practice and existing new theories of the Law*
- *Professionalism of lecturers. Quality of lecturers*
- *My lecturers are knowledgeable and have abundant experience in the field. In addition to knowledge coming from textbook, they also take practical views and analyse the problems*
- *Having the best academic staff who are equipped with wide knowledge*
- *Lecturers experts in industry, practically experienced*

3.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

8% of students (i.e. 6/74 comments received) raised concerns regarding discrepancies between quality of teaching provided by academic staff as compared with non-academic presenters (i.e. lecturers from industry); and the cost of the course vis-à-vis the poor quality of the Law campus infrastructure.

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

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

8% of graduates (i.e. 5/62) expressed concern about the quality of the academic staff and guest lecturers.

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

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

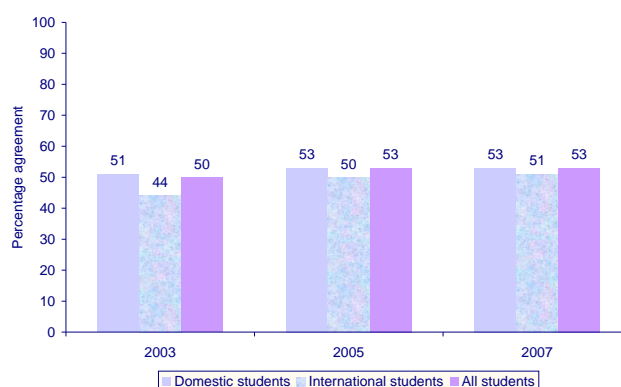
53% of students either agreed or strongly agreed with SCEQ survey items on the Learning Community. This is marginally below the University average, and identical to the 2005 results.

Analysis of the qualitative data from both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ) indicates that whilst they appreciate the learning environment engendered within the Faculty, particularly the diversity of students, and the exploration of academic interests, they are dissatisfied with the poor state of the Law campus infrastructure, though they understand this will improve on removal to Camperdown.

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	18%	14%	14%	12%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	11%	21%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	19%	8%	7%	18%	16%	13%	13%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	17%	26%	8%	10%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	11%	8%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	22%	13%	14%	16%	23%	7%	10%

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

4.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=69)	International (n=14)	All (n=83)
Learning environment			
- Enjoyed University social life			
- Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty)	13%	14%	13%
- Academic interests were being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials			
- Enjoyed the cultural mix of students in the course			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *learning new areas of law integrating with other post grad students - bit ore mature, come from wide and diverse backgrounds*
- *The intellectual rigour and argument are the best aspects of my current course. It enlivens the ordinary experiences of life to discuss a subject without judgment and with the full benefit of open debate, where both sides may be critically analysed*
- *Law library excellent, both online and physical*
- *The knowledge of the lectures in both law and industrial relations was current and up to date. They are all very professional and encourage students to think and extend themselves*

Sample comments: international students

- *Socialising with other students, being in Sydney*
- *The are plenty of seminars and group discussions, thus courses are very interactive, I come from European Universities and I really appreciate that aspect of the courses, ex cathedra courses can be so boring*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=78)
Learning environment	
- Enjoyed University social life	
- Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty)	10%
- Academic interests were being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials	
- Enjoyed the cultural mix of students in the course	

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Convenience of location of classes*
- *Exposure to diverse range of students from different backgrounds*
- *Interaction with other students-Often members in related professional field*
- *Teachers were very helpful, excellent library, the lectures were very interesting*
- *Discussion / interactions with other students*
- *The majority of lecturers were fabulous and the chance to interact with people from many different organisations*

4.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=62)	International (n=12)	All (n=74)
Learning environment			
- Did not feel that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty/ profession)	10%	0%	8%
- Academic interests were not being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials and during group work			
- Were unhappy with class sizes			
Learning resources			
- Physical facilities inadequate	13%	0%	11%
- Library services and resources unsatisfactory			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Proposal to move Law School to Camperdown a big negative. One of the primary reasons I chose to do my Masters at USYD was the convenient location of the campus. I just hope I'm finished before the move happens (there seems to be little information available as to when that's happening).*
- *There is no sense of community in this degree. Because of intensive units, students are only at uni one week per semester. More facilitation of contact with other students should be made by encouraging online (internet) interaction*
- *As a post grad student working full-time there is a lack of engagement with the faculty, the opportunity to meet other students, more interaction with students like me would be good*
- *Facilities - lecture theatres are too small for the number of people enrolled generally, and also where it is an evening class, air conditioning should be turned on as there is insufficient flow of air into the room*
- *The law faculty building is a horrible environment and is not conducive to learning. Given the amount of money I pay as a postgraduate student, I am appalled at the status of the rooms including the lack of natural light and the fact that I spend entire weekends learning 'underground'. I learn very ineffectively when my lectures are in this building and I choose to study at the UNSW law library instead of the USyd law library. I realise that a new site is under construction however I hear that post grad students will remain in the city location. Post grads pay more money than undergrads and are entitled to facilities that are just as good as those for undergrads, if not better*
- *The library at the main campus has great facilities and the environment is conducive to study. However, the library really should be open all day on a Sunday. I have studied at smaller universities at which the libraries have longer opening hours than USyd. Given the number of students and naturally limited computers, being open for 4 hours on a Sunday, even during exam period, is unsatisfactory*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=62)
Learning environment	
- Did not feel that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty/ profession)	10%
- Academic interests were not being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials and during group work	
- Were unhappy with class sizes	
Learning resources	
- Physical facilities inadequate	10%
- Library services and resources unsatisfactory	

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Location of lectures. Lecture hall facilities ill equipped*
- *Limiting number of students in class*
- *The intensively taught subjects suffer too a limited opportunity to student participation and interaction and to feed back to students on their progress and understanding of course material*
- *Law lecture theatres in Phillip Street. Terrible post grad facilities compared with other universities*
- *Opening hours of law library Dismal state of classrooms no light but understood law school moving anyway*
- *The facilities/lecture rooms at Sydney Law School are a disgrace - no surprises there, I guess we have just stuck with them*

5 Curriculum

Definition

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

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

Trends

In 2007 53% of comments received from current students (SCEQ) and 54% from graduates (CEQ) commented favourably on various aspects of the curriculum. 54% of comments received in the SCEQ and 16% in the CEQ suggested improvements in this area of their experience.

Whilst all respondents appreciated the content of the curriculum, the variety of subjects available and the intensive mode of delivery of some units; they were concerned about the unavailability of courses that were advertised on the University website, or which were cancelled without due notification.

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	51%	52%	68%	55%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	61%	57%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	61%	37%	53%	52%	53%	67%	54%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	33%	47%	36%	14%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	42%	92%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	29%	21%	29%	34%	54%	35%	16%

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

5.2.2 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=69)	International (n=14)	All (n=83)
Content and structure			
- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	32%	36%	33%
- 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	7%	21%	10%
- Students appreciate the ability to choose units from other faculties			
Mode of delivery			
- Appreciate opportunities to take courses in intensive mode	13%	0%	11%
- Appreciated online aspects of the curriculum			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *I loved Biodiversity and Heritage law subjects from this semester that included 3 days intensive study for each course (6 days all up) followed by a 5 day combined field trip. The entire experience was just brilliant, and the lecturers- XX and XX were amazing, inspiring and incredibly supportive, and most of all good fun! I thoroughly enjoyed the course and the support we received. It was excellent. I have generally loved every subject I have studied- the postgraduate law courses have generally been excellent!*
- *Masters in law - I can do this through correspondence and Sydney Uni is highly regarded*
- *I really appreciate the flexibility of the part time LLM which allows me to pursue my subjects of interest alongside my work and life commitments. I feel the University is very supportive of me, this ranges from the great administrative staff who are always helping me finalise units of study, to the professors who take an interest to what interests us as students.*

Sample comments: international students

- *I am free to plan my studies as suits me since there are not that many lectures*
- *The large number of units offered*
- *Theoretically it's a very interesting and an energetic course*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=78)
Content and structure	
- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	36%
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements	
Flexibility, diversity, variety	
- Students appreciate the range of subjects available	14%
- Students appreciate the ability to choose units from other faculties	

Sample comments

- *I enjoyed the range of subjects offered for the mix of law public notify. I particularly enjoyed being able to do subjects as an intensive basis. So helpful when working Full time*
- *The learning topics/subjects were great variety*
- *Commercial and real world application of the business law subjects studied*
- *Chinese legal system where we need to go to China to study, very good experience because as we were staying there we were given chance to visit the Law firms there.*
- *learning the regulatory framework for environmental management*
- *Very good knowledge based*

5.2.3 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=62)	International (n=12)	All (n=74)
Content and structure			
- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	18%	42%	22%
- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			
Availability of advertised courses			
- Courses listed in handbooks and advertising material not available	13%	42%	18%
- Courses enrolled in have been cancelled at short notice			
- Choice of courses limited			
Mode of delivery			
- Dissatisfied with intensive mode of delivery	16%	0%	14%
- Online aspects of the curriculum unsatisfactory			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The enrolment guide for my course has been thoroughly misleading and I know I am among many others who have been angered by this. At the start of my degree, I planned exactly which courses I would undertake, only to find that the vast majority of them were not offered. The enrolment guide cites the subjects it has, does and may offer, rather than accurately reflecting only those subjects on offer in a given year.*
- *A broader range of subjects would provide students with more options and may attract new students. This may include more subjects on litigation, intellectual property law, media law, trade practices law and banking and finance law*
- *Intensive courses could be separated by the weekend. It is difficult to spend 5 days in row in a one class and be able to effectively absorb such a large amount of information*

Sample comments: international students

- *there should be a specific course about 'the international law of the sea'. it is one of the major branches of international law, but somehow the faculty will not offer it again since Prof XX has moved to ANU. please find another Professor to replace him*
- *To many courses that are promoted in the University web page, are unavailable, for instance, related to intellectual property*
- *Further, we have limited choices of units of study that we will force to undertake subjects not relevant to our respective endeavours. A review of the description of the units of study should also be made to determine what subjects should be in intensive course and in semester length*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=62)
Content and structure	
- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	13%
- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry requirements	
- Do not like intensive courses	

Sample comments

- *Should have been more courses to choose from in my field*
- *Intensive delivery; inclusion for PT students; engagement with lecturer on major written work*
- *Overlap in material covered caused confusion*
- *Generally I get out only what I put in. Course notes should be online. Note that Laws of agency was a very less course. Lecturing material should be more up to date. More discussion of legit issues during lecture*
- *Subjects that bad with greater detail in an area for e.g. remedies in equity*
- *The competition law course was very bad and disorganised*

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)

Trends

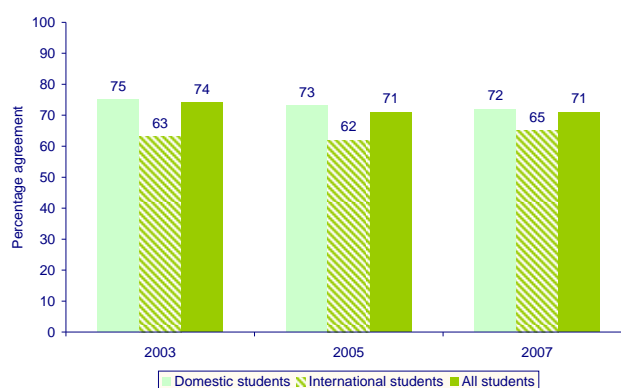
The percentage agreement scores for Appropriate Assessment (71%) in the 2007 SCEQ is higher than the University average of 66%, and is identical to the 2005 results.

Very few respondents provided comments on this aspect of their experiences. There has been a substantial decrease in the percentage of comments suggesting improvements to assessment practices since 2005.

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	7%	1%	3%	1%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	11%	7%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	3%	2%	1%	8%	2%	3%	1%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	13%	5%	8%	3%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	21%	8%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	4%	6%	8%	14%	5%	7%	3%

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

6.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

2% of students (i.e. 2/83 comments received) expressed satisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments.

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

1% of graduates (i.e. 1/75) expressed satisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments.

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

6.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

5% of current students (i.e. 4/74 comments received) mentioned that they would appreciate a wider variety of assessments. This is a decrease of 9% on the 2005 analysis.

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

3% of graduates (i.e. 2/62 comments received) expressed dissatisfaction with assessment practices within the Faculty. This is a decrease of 4% on the 2006 analysis.

Due to the low number of comments from both groups of respondents, 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

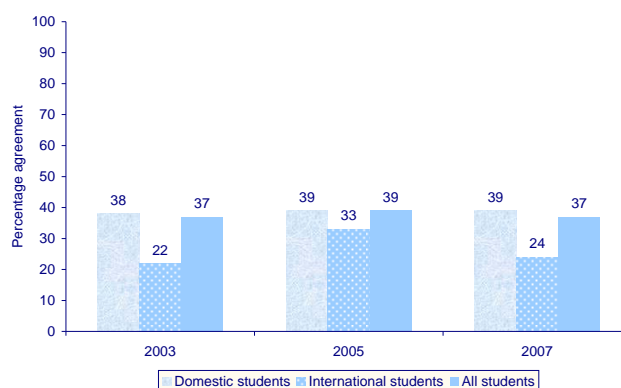
The percentage agreement scores for Appropriate Workload (37%) in the 2007 SCEQ is higher than the University average of 33%.

The majority of comments received from both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ) referred to dissatisfaction with the high amount of reading required for the course.

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	1%	0%	0%	0%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	0%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	8%	6%	6%	3%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	21%	25%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	2%	9%	6%	10%	9%	6%	3%

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

The main issues raised by current students related to the amount of work that was required in their courses e.g. the overwhelming workload; and the amount of reading required for each unit of study. The similarity of comments provided on this topic negates the purpose of providing sample comments to illustrate student concerns.