



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Engineering and Information Technologies

Student experience of Learning and Teaching

Trends and key issues: Undergraduate students 2001-2007

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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
Faculty scores Percentage agreement	The percentage of students who either agreed or disagreed with survey items
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
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

Notes

Note re percentage of respondents providing written comments in SCEQ

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 53% of respondents supplied written observations.

Note re qualitative data for SCEQ 2007 (international students)

18 international graduates provided written observations in their response to the CEQ. Since the minimum sample size recommended for statistical analysis of SCEQ and CEQ data is 20, the analysis of the qualitative data from these students should be viewed with caution.

Note re 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.

Note re 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. Those comments which include more than one aspect of learning and teaching are 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, Overall Satisfaction, Curriculum; and Learning Community, the comment is counted ONCE in each of the relevant categories.

Biomedical Engineering: -The variety of subjects I deal with prevents me from getting bored and allows me to perform to my best ability. – The lecturers are of a high standard and are able to teach and control extremely large classes – The degree has a large cohort and as such allows me to build strong bonds with many people from differing backgrounds which I feel will help prepare me for the future. – In terms of the workload provided, the degree has allowed me to enhance my problem solving abilities through the assignments, homework and examinations I have dealt with. The degree has also forced me to learn how to deal with time constraints effectively which has in turn helped me with other degrees and work outside of university.

Curriculum: flexibility, variety, diversity

Good Teaching: Techniques and methods

Learning community: Belonging to community and Cultural diversity

Generic Skills: Research and Inquiry; and Personal and intellectual autonomy

¹ Available from Quality Assurance Officer (Learning and Teaching)

Executive summary

Key results

- The Faculty score for **Generic Skills:**
 - Have increased steadily in both the SCEQ and CEQ since 2005.
 - The 2007 CEQ score of 74% is higher than the University average of 69%
 - The SCEQ score of 68%, is within the top bracket of faculties, and marginally higher than the University average of 66%.
 - Current domestic students rate this area of their experience higher than international students
 - Graduate domestic students rate this area of their experience lower than international graduates

Evidence from the analysis of the qualitative data supports these good results, with substantially more positive than negative comments being received from both current students and graduates.

- The Faculty score for **Good Teaching:**
 - Increased by 7% between 2006-2007 in the CEQ (37%) but remains below the University average of 48%
 - Has shown little variation over previous years for the SCEQ (29%) and remains below the University average of 44%.

61% percent of comments received from current students and 51% from graduates focussed in whole or in part on the need to improve teaching practices across the Faculty.

Of particular concern is the substantial increase in the percentage of comments from current students which point out the lack of English language proficiency in relation to oral communication skills in both lecturers and tutors.

- The Faculty score for **Overall Satisfaction:**
 - is 65% for graduates compared to the University average of 71%
 - is 64% for current students compared to the University average of 73%.

The majority of qualitative comments (positive and negative) referred to the student perceptions of the relevant knowledge, experience and qualifications of academic staff and guest lecturers.

- The Faculty score for **Learning Community:**
 - is 52% for current students. This is among the lowest in the University.
 - Domestic students continue to rate this area of their experience lower than international students.

Qualitative comments were evenly divided between those expressing satisfaction and those expressing dissatisfaction. Analysis of the comments received in the 2007 SCEQ and CEQ indicate that students appreciate the community feel of the Faculty, and the possibilities of exploring academic interests with students and staff, particularly in tutorials. However, students also commented that some classes contained too many students, and that facilities (infrastructure and computers) were less than satisfactory.

- Faculty scores for **Curriculum:**
 - In 2007 CEQ 40% of graduates commented favourable on various aspect of the curriculum while 24% suggested areas for improvement.
 - In the 2007 SCEQ, 48% of current students commented favourably on various aspects of the curriculum; whilst 39% suggested areas for improvement.
 - Students undertaking combined degrees appreciated the variety of subjects available to them but considered that they would benefit from more support in structuring their programs of study.
- The Faculty score for **Appropriate Assessment:**
 - has increased significantly since 2003
 - The 2007 result (48%) placed the Faculty in the middle range of faculties, but lower than the University average of 55%.

Analysis of the qualitative data suggests that group activities are appreciated by students; although they are dissatisfied with some marking practices.

- The Faculty score for **Appropriate Workload:**
 - has remained at 17% since 2005, and is currently lower than the University average of 23%, placing it within the bottom range of faculties.

Written observations from both current students and graduates indicate dissatisfaction with the high workload, and with simultaneous due dates for assignments.

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Conceptual framework

Student Evaluation of Teaching Surveys

The University Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ) and the DEST/ 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 Engineering and Information Technologies 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; Workload; and Clear Goals and Standards) 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 that this is not an area of best practice. Rather, it could be interpreted that the students are happy with their experiences, and prefer to focus on commenting 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 7)

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)

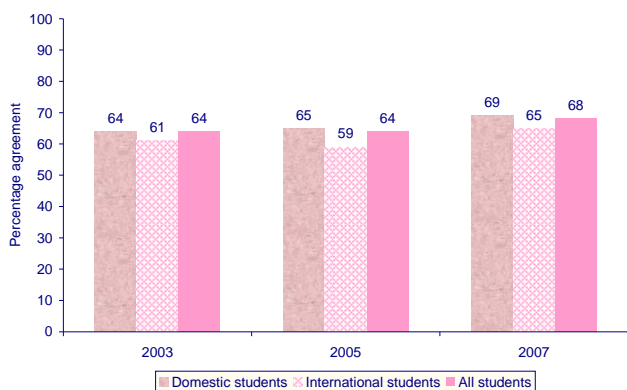
Trends

There has been a steady increase in both the SCEQ and CEQ percentage agreement Faculty scores for Generic Skills since 2003. The 2007 CEQ score of 74% is higher than the University average of 69%; whereas the SCEQ score of 68%, is within the top bracket of faculties, and marginally higher than the University average of 66%. Although domestic current students rate this area of their experience higher than international students; the reverse is true for graduates.

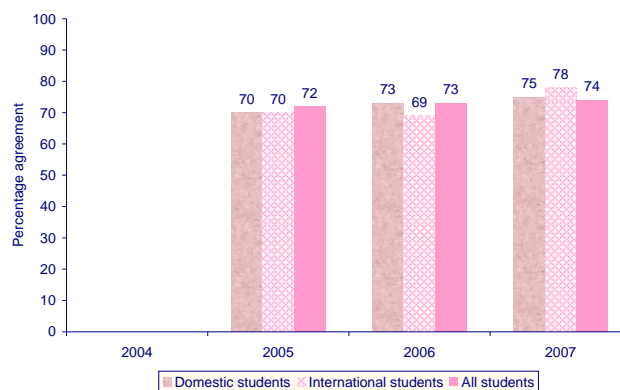
Evidence from the analysis of the qualitative data supports these good results, with substantially more positive than negative comments being received from both current students and graduates. Comments cover the full range of University Graduate Attributes.

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 qualitative comments received that can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement. 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	29%	22%	32%	26%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	42%	63%	46%	17%
	All	30%	30%	33%	31%	27%	34%	25%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	6%	5%	11%	10%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	4%	0%	17%	0%
	All	9%	9%	5%	6%	4%	12%	8%

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

1.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=129)	International (n=16)	All (n=145)
Research and inquiry			
- The capacity to make decisions and solve problems			
- Development of analytical skills	9%	25%	10%
- Ability to apply critical judgement and thinking			
- Recognition of knowledge boundaries			
Ethical, social, professional understanding			
- Ability to work in a group/ team working skills	9%	13%	10%
- Development of discipline/ professional skills			
- Presence of work placement/ industry experience in the course			
Personal and intellectual autonomy			
- Intellectually curious			
- Independent thinking and learning			
- New ways of thinking	3%	13%	4%
- Responsive to unfamiliar problems			
- Ability to meet new challenges			
- Personal vision and goals			
- Plan my own work			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The opportunities to work in teams, in particular the Advanced engineering program because teamwork, cooperation, information sharing, conflict management and team management are essential life-skills to develop and be equipped with before one enters the professional workforce. Teamwork also enables and teaches team members to potentially pool resources together that can achieve outcomes that exceed those of individuals*
- *The best part of my degree is that it provides students with the ability to combine engineering skills with finance skills, which is helpful in my instance as I am choosing project engineering management as my civil engineering stream and finance for my commerce major. Another way of perceiving the degree is that it provides a technical background to the commerce aspect of the degree, which is the way I am pursuing this degree. This is further reinforced by the management skills I would gain from my engineering course*
- *Engineering Degree * team projects - engineers generally work in teams * problem solving - these skills are applicable to any situation * developing analytical skills - these skills are relevant to any situation.*

Sample comments: international students

- *I am doing an engineering course (civil engineering). One of the best parts of this course is that it helps me to be more independent when it comes to doing research for assignments and reports. This, I believe also helps me to be more analytical and thus more confident when answering questions in the exams*
- *Engineering degree: best aspect is developing my problem- solving and logical thinking skills. as the nature of the engineering is problem solving during the study in uni, the course provide us an opportunity to practice to help us to form a good help of how to actually do things*
- *Problem solving is the main idea to learn during the whole 4 years of the electrical engineering course. Not only answering the academic questions during the exams, but also group projects, and project handling skills are needed for lots of the projects*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=72)	International (n=12)	All (n=84)
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Research and inquiry

- The capacity to make decisions and solve problems	13%	8%	12%
- Development of analytical skills			
- Ability to apply critical judgement and thinking			
- Recognition of knowledge boundaries			

Ethical, social, professional understanding

- Ability to work in a group/ team working skills	10%	0%	8%
- Development of discipline/ professional skills			
- Presence of work placement/ industry experience in the course			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Diversity in terms of skills gained e.g. problem solving, presentation, report writing, etc*
- *opportunity to do work experience*
- *Formula SAE was the only area promoting and encouraging team work it was sad that this was extra circular since all engineers need these skills*
- *Learning the engineering method for solving problems*
- *Problem solving, analytical skills development*

Sample comments: international students

- *Lecturers are good at explaining new concepts in writing skills were improved quickly analytical skills were moderately improved*

1.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

Across the University, very few current students who provide written observations expressed concern about the non-development of specific graduate attributes. The Faculty is no exception. Only 4% of undergraduate students (7/159 comments received) mentioned that they felt that necessary skills and abilities were not being developed during the course of their studies. All the comments received related to the development of professional skills, and/or the lack of professional experience.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *I feel the University places far too much emphasis on the theoretical side of engineering. More emphasis should be placed on the practical aspects leading us to develop skills that are actually used in the workplace. After spending some months in an Engineering company I feel that the Department of Civil Engineering neglects these practical skills*
- *Also, the degree could be improved by having more practical experience, like excursions early on in 1st and 2nd year as well as more 'fun and interesting' labs*
- *Engineering: More relevance to industry. Most of the students here will go into the workforce and not into further research and there isn't enough practical experience or relevance to real world engineering in the course anymore. From most accounts when it comes to getting a job, a degree in Engineering is pretty useless compared to a practical course done at TAFE for example*
- *Need more units that teach practical skills*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=72)	International (n=12)	All (n=84)
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Ethical, social, professional understanding

- Ability to work in a group/ team working skills	8%	0%	7%
- Development of discipline/ professional skills			
- Presence of work placement/ industry experience in the course			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *People and team work skills leadership skills (not management)*
- *Professional conduct and communication to prepare students for real world experiences*
- *The lack of practical experience, and evaluation on this practical knowledge gained*
- *Report writing - need to do more*

2 Good teaching (KPI 8)

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)

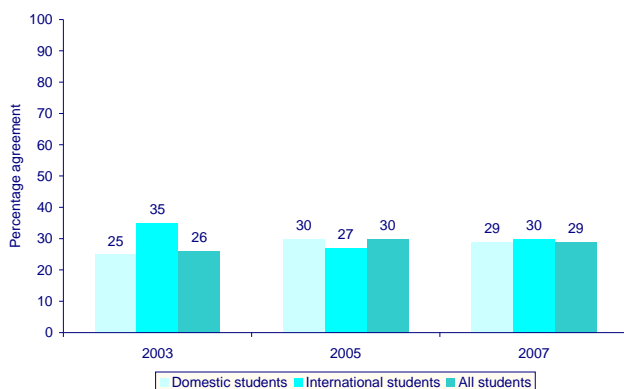
Trends

Faculty scores for Good teaching for current students (SCEQ) have fluctuated at around 26-30% since 2003. In 2007, the score of 29% was the lowest in the University, where the average is 44%. Results for the CEQ are higher (37%) but still below the University average (48%). With a difference in scores of 5%, international graduates (43%) appear to have had a more satisfactory experience than domestic students (38%).

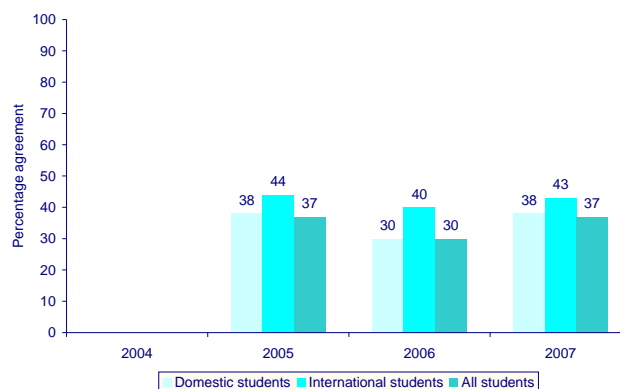
Evidence from students' and graduates written observations supports the quantitative data. Since 2001, the percentage of negative comments relating to aspects of good teaching has significantly surpassed the percentage of positive comments. In 2007, 61% of all written comments received from students suggested areas of improvement in good teaching. Of particular note is the substantial increase in the percentage of comments which point out the lack of English language proficiency in relation to oral communication in both lecturers and tutors. (2001-2: 4%; 2003: 2%; 2005: 4%; 2007: 12%).

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 qualitative comments received which can be classified as areas of best practice or areas of 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	32%	19%	13%	19%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	15%	13%	21%	25%
	All	27%	17%	26%	30%	18%	15%	20%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	52%	62%	50%	49%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	44%	56%	29%	67%
	All	50%	42%	37%	51%	61%	46%	51%

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

2.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=129)	International (n=16)	All (n=145)
Good teaching experiences			
- Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques	13%	0%	12%
- Ability to keep students interested in the subject			
- Learning resources are up to date, and relevant to curriculum			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Lecturer's/tutors are always willing to help with any difficulty you may have. Most offer additional support where it is needed and if you are willing to put the effort in there seems no reason why you cant understand what is being taught*
- *Some lecturers are quite good and put in a lot of effort into their course, can explain things clearly the first time, and take the course seriously. These staff members are outnumbered by those that seemingly put in little effort into their courses, and do it for a bit of extra cash*
- *XXX he is a fantastic lecturer, able to engage the students, and has an excellent understanding of effective learning processes. It is usually made quite clear what he expects with regards to work and the level of knowledge required. It is a sad but unfortunate truth that he does not teach more units*
- *Good lecturers who teach you from the basics and don't assume that you know everything before you come into the course. It is lecturers like these who make the class interesting, and also allows us students to be self motivated to go to the lectures. Good lecturers tend to have a full house where everyone comes to the lecture*

Sample comments: international students

- *Some lecturers are also motivated to teach which consequently inspire me to learn and excel in the exams. I find that I do well in subjects with good lecturers*
- *There are some lectures that are very motivating such as my thesis supervisor. The last couple of years – or a couple of years into the degree I am starting to feel it is not the lecturer against the student, but it is the lecturer helping the student to learn and I find this is very important to a students learning motivation*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=66)	International (n=12)	All (n=78)
Good teaching experiences			
- Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques	10%	8%	10%
- 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	8%	0%	7%
- Lecturers understood problems and difficulties of students (academic and personal)			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Power systems: In final year, industry lecturers were very helpful with their delivery of topic - Approachable and patient*
- *The staff in the engineering department were very responsive to feedback and provided a thorough educational experience*
- *Some lecturers were very enthusiastic about some of the content which really triggered my motivation for those particular subjects, thus I performed well*

Sample comments: international students

- *Lecturers that were engaged in research in industry, who loved their work and inspired us to do the same*
- *Lecturers are good at explaining new concepts*
- *Design things and textbooks were great*

2.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=141)	International (n=18)	All (n=159)
Good teaching experiences			
- Teaching methods used are outdated; Lectures were boring	27%	33%	28%
- Discussions in class were not encouraged			
- Lecturers did not engage with students			
- Learning resources are out of date, and not relevant to curriculum			
Good explanations received			
- Communication skills of lecturers should be improved	19%	17%	19%
- Lecturers did not explain subject matter clearly			
- Lecturers/ tutors lack proficiency in English language oral communication (<i>mentioned in 12% of comments received in 2007 cf with 4% in previous years</i>)			
Motivating students			
- Teachers did display enthusiasm for teaching/ subject	4%	6%	4%
- Teachers are not perceived to be passionate and inspiring			
- Students are not motivated by lecturers/ tutors etc			
Feedback on work (from staff to students)			
- Comments on work are not constructive; do not explain where mistakes occur that can be rectified.	6%	0%	6%
- Marks only supplied, no comments			
- Feedback is untimely and not helpful			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *In engineering: I simply cannot understand some of my lecturers and tutors, their accents can be very strong and I believe the University should establish more rigorous suitability tests for tutors and lecturers*
- *Terrible lecturers and tutors! I'm sure they are all very intelligent and proficient in their respective subjects, however, they have no ability to communicate the information in a informative interpreting way. They do not tend to explain concepts and link ideas when doing work problems and too much knowledge of maths and physics is deemed to be assumed and not even mentioned. This leaves some students very confused and unconfident*
- *Feedback. The most progress in understanding occurs in assessments. However, assessments are mostly just returned with some ticks and/or a mark with little to no deconstruction of the concepts encountered*

Sample comments: international students

- *More motivating lecturers that want to make a difference. Unfortunately there are a lot of lecturers that aren't as motivating (usually the majority) and their teaching is not very good. Lectures can be very boring at times, especially when as a student you feel your lecturer is not really interested in what their teaching or that they have done it so many times that they can't understand how a student can find concepts difficult to understand*
- *Ditch out unqualified lecturer. What I mean by unqualified is not only on their qualification in that subject but also on their teaching skills. I don't think student should come to lecture when the lecturer just literally read the textbook. As international student I'm struggling to understand English but I can manage it if it was used properly but the matter become worse when the lecturer did not use proper English and I found it hard to understand*
- *Some lecturers are also, in my opinion, incapable of delivering the standard of teaching that I had expected them to.*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=74)	International (n=12)	All (n=86)
<p>Good teaching experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching methods and techniques used are outdated/need improvement - Lecturers were boring; did not engage with students - Learning materials and resources were outdated 	16%	42%	20%
<p>Concern and care for student learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students did not feel supported in their learning; - help and advice was not readily available 	8%	8%	8%
<p>Good explanations received</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication skills of lecturers should be improved - Lecturers did not explain subject matter clearly - Lecturers/ tutors lack proficiency in English language oral communication 	12%	8%	12%
<p>Feedback on work (from staff to students)</p> <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 	8%	8%	8%
<p>Sample comments: domestic students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The teaching in my engineering degree was patchy - I had a few excellent teachers, but also quite a number of sub-standard ones. I found it particularly difficult when a lecturer's English was poor</i> - <i>Lecturers and tutors lacked communication skills</i> - <i>Some lecturers lacked organisation whilst others lacked the interest in teaching their subject area. I enjoy a course where the teacher WANTS to share their knowledge with students</i> 			
<p>Sample comments: international students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Lecturer's teaching methods</i> - <i>Labs and tutorials, not all tutors can speak English</i> - <i>Genuine individual attention to students Genuine Concern for students who are struggling at some subjects</i> 			

3 Overall satisfaction (KPI 9)

Definition

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

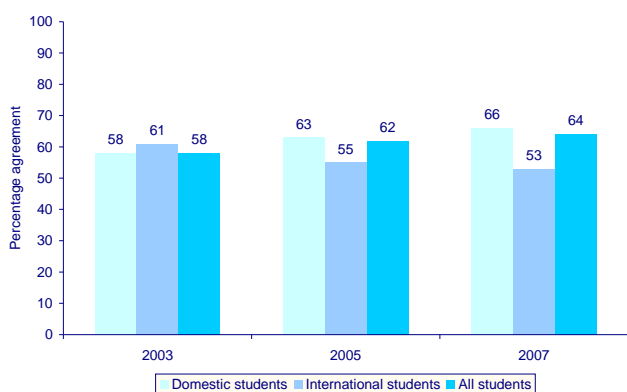
- Reputation of the University/ Faculty/ degree (including reputation in the professional arena)
- Value for money (cost of course; entry standard of students; level of course content)
- Qualifications (teaching/ subject), knowledge and relevant experience of academic staff

Trends

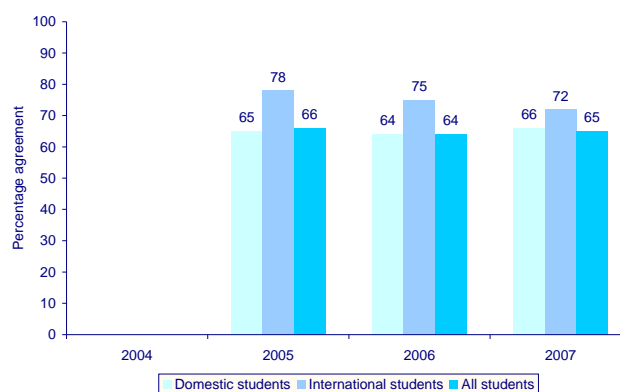
Overall satisfaction with the degree course currently rates at 65% for graduates and 64% for current students. The University average for graduates is 71% and for current students is 73%. The percentage of comments received from both current students and graduates is marginally higher for those expressing satisfaction than those expressing dissatisfaction. The majority of comments referred to the relevant knowledge, experience and qualifications of academic staff and guest lecturers.

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 qualitative comments received which 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	4%	9%	6%	12%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	4%	0%	0%	0%
	All	9%	9%	6%	4%	8%	5%	10%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	3%	4%	5%	4%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	22%	0%	0%
	All	10%	10%	9%	2%	6%	4%	3%

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

3.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=129)	International (n=16)	All (n=145)
Staffing issues			
- Qualifications of staff in subject matter and in teaching at tertiary level	6%	0%	6%
- 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

- *BE: 4th year subjects tend to be very interesting compared to earlier subjects. They tend to be taught by external lecturers who are more knowledgeable in a specific domain and deal with current issues/technology*
- *Engineering: Knowledge of lecturers is very good and usually describe methods in an understandable way*
- *Tutors who know the subject material well and are prepared to go a little beyond just the course material are really stimulating*
- *although difficult and testing at times I feel the level of difficulty of the course makes it a worthwhile and rewarding challenge but is difficult enough to weed out those who haven't got what it takes*
- *Guest speakers from the working force are a great way to remind students that this engineer degree has a lot of interesting things to offer in the future*
- *In software, its good that most of the lecturers have a lot of real world experiences that they always refer to*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

In 2007, very few graduates who provided written observations in their responses to the CEQ mentioned aspects relating to overall satisfaction i.e. reputation/ quality of degree/ University; qualifications, knowledge and experience of staff, including guest lecturers or clinicians; the entry standards or students; or the cost of the course. Only 10% of graduates (9/86 comments received) mentioned the aforementioned aspects as being areas of best practice.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Industry members giving lectures in final year they gave more insight in the subject matter*
- *The lecturers were good and knowledgeable The engineering faculty was pleasant.*
- *Provided me with a qualification to get into what I wanted to do*
- *Learning in detail about what I am passionate about; planes*

3.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

In 2007, very few current students who provided written observations in their responses to the SCEQ mentioned aspects relating to dissatisfaction with the reputation/ quality of degree/ University; qualifications, knowledge and experience of staff, including guest lecturers or clinicians; the entry standards or students; or the cost of the course. Only 6% of undergraduate students (9/159 comments received) mentioned the aforementioned aspects as being areas in need of improvement.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The university prides itself on its reputation, but when students from other institutions see the lack of facilities provided, this reputation is quickly destroyed. It seems that the university, in some respects, is more concerned with making money than providing a good education to its students.*
- *Another issue is that courses are growing in size, and in some cases doubled. However the teaching staff/facilities to accommodate this doesn't seem to get much attention. Take for example my steel structures class. Very good lecturer and generally has a full house however the classroom where we are located doesn't have enough seats to accommodate everyone in the course. That is really poor on the universities half. We pay our fees and sometimes don't even get a seat in the class then what's the point in paying the fees.*
- *Biomedical Engineering - there is an incredible amount of plagiarism. This is partly due to the fact that engineering is quite difficult and there is definitely a drinking culture; which subsequently inhibits some extra study. There is also that demand for people to pass the course so that they can: get a student visa, be accredited with a USYD degree, get a job out of uni, live in Australia etc. If lecturers and tutors could ACTUALLY give the 0 to a few people who obviously have plagiarised (not just collaborative work which is necessary in Engineering)- even if only in the small assignments, then I think it would help this problem.*

Sample comments: international students

- *The old and poor equipment are the main problem of the lab practical sessions, compared to the UNSW engineering course. I would choose UNSW instead of USYD, because of the new and more equipment than USYD, it helps the students through the course.*
- *lecturers. some of them are excellent. however a few of them are just completely useless. I couldn't learn anything from their teaching. it's really annoying, since I pay so much money to study in such a good uni.*
- *Perhaps, due to the small number of teaching staff, the department resorts to postgraduate/PhD students, whom most of them are still new and inexperienced in teaching. All these aspects have to be analysed and improved in order to effectively improve the whole degree course.*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

Three percent of students (i.e. 3/86) expressed concern about the quality of their degree/ course experience. 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)
- Location/ isolation (affiliated campuses, hospitals, institutes)
- Physical facilities
- Induction and orientation
- Responsiveness to student feedback

Trends

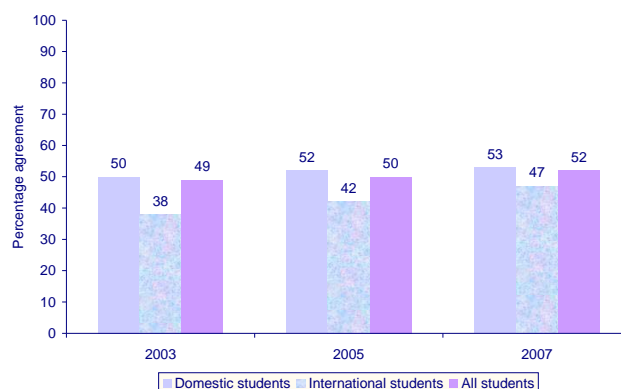
Fifty-two percent of students either agreed or strongly agreed with SCEQ survey items on the Learning Community. This among the lowest scores in the University, indicating that students are less satisfied with the Learning environment and community engendered within the Faculty than their peers in other faculties.

International students continue to rate this area of their experience lower than domestic students. Analysis of the comments received in the 2007 SCEQ and CEQ indicate that students appreciate the community feel of the Faculty, and the possibilities of exploring academic interests with students and staff, particularly in tutorials. However, opinions that some classes contained too many students, and that facilities (infrastructure and computers) were less than satisfactory, were also expressed.

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 qualitative comments received which 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	19%	27%	17%	17%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	15%	0%	8%	50%
	All	19%	20%	21%	19%	24%	16%	21%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	19%	23%	12%	22%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	11%	44%	17%	17%
	All	15%	15%	8%	18%	26%	13%	21%

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

4.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=129)	International (n=16)	All (n=145)
Learning environment			
- Experienced social experience of being at university			
- Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty)	26%	0%	23%
- Academic interests were being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials			
- Enjoyed the cultural mix of students in the course			
- Class sizes were considered to be appropriate			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The degree has a large cohort and as such allows me to build strong bonds with many people from differing backgrounds which I feel will help prepare me for the future*
- *Social events such as BBQ's, cocktail cruise and student staff days. It allows social interaction with staff and other students within the faculty*
- *The best aspects are meeting new friends through lectures, tutorials, projects and labs and learning about how engineering can be applied throughout our lives. Friends have made uni something to look forward to, especially the ones you see in your courses everyday*
- *The group work and the smaller tutorials because you feel more comfortable and learn more*
- *The multicultural nature of the class helps give a broad range of perspectives on issues*
- *The exploration and stimulation of ideas and interests is great, as we are encouraged to pursue further information in things we have a genuine interest in. This also means that we don't learn by rote, and the application of ideas is more important than actual facts/figures/formulae*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=72)	International (n=12)	All (n=86)
Learning environment			
- Experienced social experience of being at university			
- Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty)	14%	50%	19%
- Academic interests were being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials			
- Class sizes were considered to be appropriate			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Engineering: An extremely close knit faculty team orientated*
- *Classroom Size: it had a good student to tutor / lecturer ratio*
- *Peers in engineering. Good network*
- *Small lectures and tute classes, great facilities, MIPPS Scholarship opportunity*

Sample comments: international students

- *high interaction with senior students and lecturers*
- *Tutorials were useful (small) good for learning material*

4.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=141)	International (n=18)	All (n=159)
Learning environment			
- Did not feel that they belonged to a community			
- Academic interests were not explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials	11%	11%	11%
- Lectures and tutorials had too many people in them; inhibited discussion			
Physical facilities			
- Students dissatisfied with facilities provided e.g. computers	11%	28%	13%
- Buildings and class rooms unsuitable; in need of repair			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Tutorials although helpful could be improved if the classes were smaller and if the tutors would go through questions with students. I also believe tutorials should be optional as due to the type of work undertaken (solving eng problems) the tutorials may be useless for some people as they may be able to do this same work at home. This however could be improved through having the weekly assessment in tutorials.. this could be done through going through examples in the first half of the tute then having a question for the students to do worth 2% at the end of the tute.*
- *As part of my aeronautical engineering degree the course AERO1400 that I took as an elective but is compulsory for all aeronautical engineering students could be improved by reducing the number of lectures to just one a week and introducing a tutorial instead of the second lecture as it is hard to learn all the design aspects that are present in the lectures when they are not followed up in some form of tutorial*
- *Engineering buildings are old and rundown compared to other faculties. Buildings are very depressing. - Desks are coated with graffiti and gum*

Sample comments: international students

- *I find that there are too many students enrolled in this course. This is not a problem if there are adequate number of teaching staff to cater for the large number of students. However, this is certainly not the case in my degree course. As a result, my learning experience is somehow limited and to a certain extent ineffective. For instance, due to the large number of students, tutorial sessions are done in a huge drawing office with only 3 tutors. Imagine having only 3 tutors to cater for 200 students. I feel because of this, the teaching staff are not very responsive to students' needs. This is also the same case for lectures, particularly for the core subjects. A small lecture room is allocated for about 200 students. I sometimes have to sit on the floor because there isn't any seat left. I'm sure \$16000 a year would be enough to get me at least a decent chair and desk to study more effectively*
- *I could not believe that commerce students have better computer facilities that engineering faculty. Engineering requires high performance computer to perform study. With low performance computer, student would waste their time in waiting for results. The CFD lab has the most terrible computer resources and the room suffers from leaking of water during rainy day. Engineering really needs high performance computer to develop things. Do you think that game programmer has low performance computer to develop game with fine graphic? Similarly, do you think engineer can work efficiently with low performance computer?*
- *The Computer Labs are EXTREMELY limited. In comparison to other faculties where computers are NEW and UPDATED, and RARELY USED; Engineering ones are SLOW, BROKEN, and demand of using them is HIGH*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=74)	International (n=12)	All (n=86)
----------------------	--------------------	-------------------------	---------------

Learning environment

- | | | | |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| - Did not feel that they belonged to a community | 14% | 0% | 12% |
| - Academic interests were not explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials | | | |
| - Lectures and tutorials had too many people in them; inhibited discussion | | | |

Physical facilities

- | | | | |
|---|----|-----|----|
| - Students dissatisfied with facilities provided e.g. computers | 8% | 17% | 9% |
| - Buildings and class rooms unsuitable; in need of repair | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Tutorials over crowded.*
- *More tutors and better study aids such as more on time tutorials questions. Improved computer labs and research facilities*
- *Lab work and lab Facilities needs a lot of improvement*
- *More computers required in chem. eng building, better ?? lecture rooms*

Sample comments: international students

- *Facilities in civil engineering needs of aromatic improvement*
- *Improvement in facilities such as laboratories, equipment*

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
- Cultural aspects i.e. inclusion of international or indigenous themes
- Combined degrees

Trends

Since analysis of the qualitative data commenced, the percentage of comments expressing satisfaction with the curriculum in the Faculty has exceeded those expressing dissatisfaction, indicating a general appreciation of the courses offered. In 2007 40% of comments received from graduates and 48% from current students commented favourably on various aspects of the curriculum, whilst 39% of comments received in the SCEQ and 24% in the CEQ suggested areas for improvement. Students undertaking combined degrees appreciated the variety of subjects available to them but considered that they would benefit from more support in structuring their programs of study.

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 qualitative comments received 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	58%	50%	42%	39%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	42%	38%	13%	50%
	All	39%	39%	31%	56%	48%	37%	40%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	34%	43%	42%	24%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	33%	11%	25%	25%
	All	21%	23%	27%	34%	39%	39%	24%

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

5.2.2 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=129)	International (n=16)	All (n=145)
Content and structure			
- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	41%	38%	41%
- Intensive courses			
- Subjects appear to be linked together			
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *well structured course. When beginning the degree I wasn't sure what to do but the fact that this engineering degree didn't have electives helped me get through the first couple of years without worrying too much about making incorrect subject choices. But as the degree progress the number of electives increase allowing me to make a more informed decision about what I want to do since I am well into my degree.*
- *the mechatronics engineering degree is the best aspect of my course its the understanding of how individual electrical mechanical and computational systems interact with one another to create a synergy of everyday manufactured goods humans use everyday. by first analysing the most minute component; I truly appreciate the effort that goes into the wonder that is a mechatronic system*
- *From a double degree B.E./B.A. I am able to attain a well-rounded, broad knowledge. I can study subjects that I'm interested in as well as studying subjects that complement my learning in Engineering. I get a 'break' from the sometimes overwhelming maths/science subjects and can learn about Art in Ancient civilisations*

Sample comments: international students

- *The degree also gives me the opportunity to explore some things that I can only get once I work as a real engineer. For instance, I am excited when it comes to having lab sessions because it means that I am able to see and learn new engineering related skills and knowledge*
- *The best aspect is the broad insights that I have gained during the course ranging from theoretical to practical. The experience in both flight operation at flight mechanic 1 and Jabiru Construction at AERO1400 are the most precious experience that I have gained. In additional, at space engineering 2, with the practical experience in system engineering via spacecraft construction, intensive soft skills have been developed*
- *some courses are really helpful to me to understand the degree I'm learning , especially the core units in this degree course. I realise that will help me when I graduate*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=72)	International (n=12)	All (n=86)
Content and structure			
- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	33%	33%	33%
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Involved with Formula SAE - hard work and rewarding!!! Support this project, employers love this! The practical aspects, are especially helpful for Engineering IE. design and building tasks*
- *A large range of choices were given for the various fields we could go into. Only offered honours in fourth year*
- *The various different types of subjects enabled me to have better ideas trading of the overall course*

Sample comments: international students

- *As it was a combined degree, the variety of work kept the course interesting*
- *Theory and practical come together*
- *able to do subjects in other departments*

5.2.3 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=141)	International (n=18)	All (n=159)
Content and structure			
- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	26%	6%	23%
- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			
Method of delivery			
- Unhappy with various aspects of WebCT	6%	0%	6%
Flexibility, variety, diversity			
- Course requirements/ prerequisites too rigid	6%	0%	6%
- Limited range of subjects available			
Combined degrees			
- Unhappy with various aspects of combined degrees	9%	0%	9%
- Lack of support for students undertaking combined degrees			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Subjects were very fundamental at hand and the direct correlation with what is used in industry was generally hard to see. Whilst the flexibility of the degree is a good thing, it is quite easy to choose too many subjects that were irrelevant to your degree (i.e. maybe adding an extra core unit or two to give definite structure).*
- *Engineering: More relevance to industry. Most of the students here will go into the workforce and not into further research and there isn't enough practical experience or relevance to real world engineering in the course anymore. From most accounts when it comes to getting a job, a degree in Engineering is pretty useless compared to a practical course done at TAFE for example. Having more courses in Professional Engineering, Report Writing etc. is fine, but when it comes at the expense of practical engineering what's the point of doing an engineering degree?.*
- *Better management of double degree courses would be good as well. Some standard programs should be put in place so students know that in their final years they've completed the necessary requirements. Also, courses which build on previous ones (particularly in engineering) should be done in successive semesters (and this should be suggested to students). I.e. For a combined BE/BCom most of the commerce should be done in the first few years with the later years devoted to engineering or vice versa. Especially for engineering, this helps keeps concepts in mind when you need them for several successive courses rather than doing a mix of commerce and engineering over five years and not really having anything 'stick.'*
- *Needs to be a more practical side to our study. Everything seems too academic sometimes. It's nice to know maths, but we're not mathematicians. Eliminate certain useless units of study. Professional Engineering, Intro to Engineering Concepts, Engineering Society. These things could have been squeezed into just one unit with more time spent on difficult concepts such as Concrete and Steel Structures, and Structural Analysis*

Sample comments: international students

- *More choice when it comes to subjects available so that students have more freedom to choose.*
- *UoS is also quite confusing, too many things in the lecture, so I can not get the main point of this subject.*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=74)	International (n=10)	All (n=86)
Content and structure			
- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	23%	25%	23%
- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Connection through to industry needed to be stronger. Relevance with up-to-date research*
- *Too theoretically based, lack essential industry related skills and practical skills. Syllabus not relevant to Australian industry*
- *Courses available were limited with limited opportunities*

Sample comments: international students

- *I would like to have a minor from other faculty*
- *Staff and course material, stuff that covered in course are old school, needs new technology and new knowledge*
- *course use the same material year after year with no effort to improve on previous years*

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

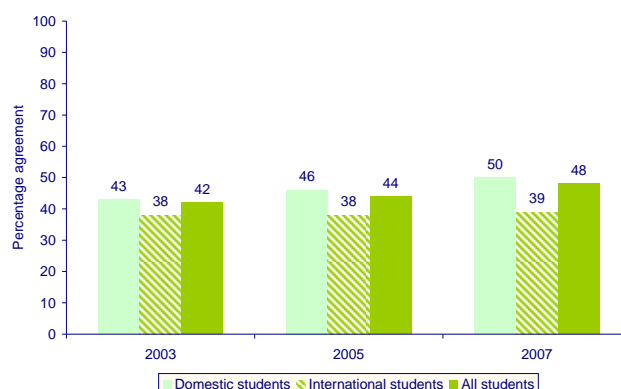
The percentage agreement scores for appropriate assessment (48%) in the 2007 SCEQ is lower than the University average of 55%, and places it in the middle range of all faculties.

In relation to comments received which mention assessment, comments are evenly divided between those expressing satisfaction and those suggesting areas for improvement. On the whole students appreciate group activities, but are dissatisfied with some marking practices.

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 qualitative comments 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	10%	10%	8%	11%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	12%	6%	13%	0%
	All	4%	5%	4%	11%	10%	9%	10%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	17%	11%	7%	7%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	22%	6%	13%	0%
	All	9%	5%	8%	17%	10%	8%	6%

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

6.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=129)	International (n=16)	All (n=145)
Content and types of assessment			
- Appreciate the forms of assessment used by the Faculty, incl. group projects	9%	6%	8%
- Students gain understanding of the topics through assessments			
- General comments on assessment			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Best aspects of this course is the practical assignments which use the Australian Codes to effectively allow us to learn on how to design the various structures we will be encountering in future years, this is good as we develop practical knowledge on designing of structures and how to effectively utilize the standards*
- *Group design assignments challenge thinking and allow for group learning*
- *Team-based exercises and assessments, as learning of others, in particular with my degree, is an one of the most effective ways of learning*
- *There are a few enjoyable activities and assignments*
- *In engineering, the focus is usually on understanding. not just facts*

Sample comments: international students

- *Often working in teams, practical experiments*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=72)	International (n=12)	All (n=86)
Types of assessment			
- Appreciate the forms of assessment used by the Faculty, incl. group projects	8%	0%	7%
- General comments on assessment			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Assignments were challenging*
- *Project based assignment, a mixture of different disciplines*
- *Range of subjects; problem solving assignments*
- *Involved with Formula SAE - hard work and rewarding!!! Support this project, employers love this!*
- *Hands on subjects and group work was beneficial*

6.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=141)	International (n=18)	All (n=159)
Types of assessment			
- Unhappy with the forms of assessment used by the Faculty	5%	6%	5%
- Dissatisfied with group work, particularly in relation to parity of marks cf to contribution of members			
- General comments on assessment			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Some lecturers had very POOR assessment weightings (90% multiple choice exam in engineering!?!?!?). Some lecturers gave the impression that we were on our own when it came to our performance over semester (i.e. it seemed that they didn't care about if we failed)*
- *Some assignments, and exams would have very poor English/grammar such that it was hard to comprehend what the actual task at hand is (whilst this can easily be rectified for an assignment by asking the lecturer, for an exam, it is too late)*
- *Continuous assessment leaves little scope for learning at ones own pace. The competency based courses restrict the level of assessment available. The group based courses are not marked fairly as the contributions of each member are not assessed well*
- *Engineering: - Too many group assignments. Let us do our own work, to prevent other students leaching from us*
- *Particularly in Civil engineering, there are some subjects that have not been well organised, taught or assessed. CIVL 2230 should have more varied modes of assessment such as reports, practicals, group and individual assignments rather than just an 80% exam which may not represent the student's understanding. It should also be structured with more interactive lectures (perhaps some practicals) that closely follow the course objectives - similar to Civil 2201*

Sample comments: international students

- *One more thing is the faculty should be more involve with lecturer decision, such as preparing 30 multiple choice question for a 90% final exam hints: check all ?? ?? subject). I don't see any academic benefit on having full multiple choice question in an exam and it sound more like TV show to me.... a very bad TV show*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

Six percent of students (i.e. 5/86) expressed concern about the assessment practices within the Faculty. Due to the low number of comments, 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

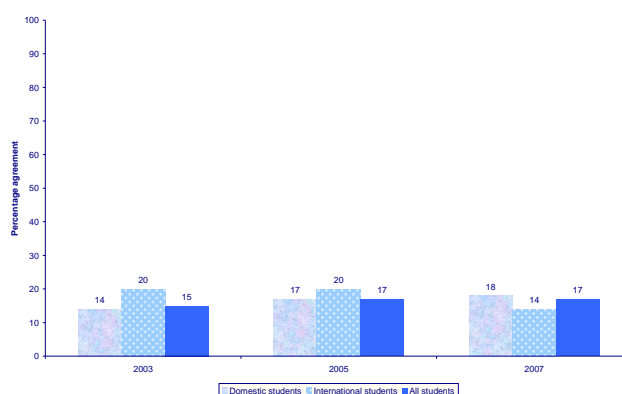
The percentage agreement scores for appropriate workload (17%) in the 2007 SCEQ is lower than the University average of 23%, and places it in the bottom range of faculties.

Written observations from both current students and graduates indicate dissatisfaction with the high workload, and with simultaneous due dates for assignments.

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%	4%	0%	0%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	0%	0%	8%
	All	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	0%	1%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	13%	10%	2%	3%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	15%	6%	4%	17%
	All	2%	4%	5%	13%	9%	2%	5%

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

The main issues raised by both current students and graduates related to the overwhelming workload, and the timing of assessment deadlines i.e. a number due in close proximity.

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