Student Feedback on Units and Teaching Survey Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Context

(1) The University uses a range of standardised surveys to enable students to give feedback on their experiences at many levels, and on many different dimensions including their perceptions of teaching, their learning experience in units of study, their overall course experience, and their whole experience at the University.

(2) This policy outlines a coherent and integrated suite of standardised instruments for gathering student feedback, thus enabling comparability over time, and consistent, systematic reporting of information at appropriate levels of aggregation.

(3) This policy outlines how student feedback on units and teaching is gathered, reported, and utilised, using University-approved standard surveys, as part of the University's ongoing commitment to providing a quality learning experience for students.

(4) This policy should be read in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Fundamental Code, Code of Conduct, Student Code of Conduct, Privacy Policy, Promotions Policy and the Academic Staff Agreement.

Section 2 - Definitions

(5) For the purpose of this policy:

a. student feedback on units (SFU) survey - is the University-approved instrument which gathers feedback from students on their experiences of learning in taught units. The survey is used by staff teaching in units for the purposes of providing a key source of information to inform unit quality improvement. Item by item data is used by Unit Coordinator, Director, Academic Program (including eDAPs) and Dean for the purposes of providing a key source of information to inform program quality improvement.
b. student feedback on teaching (SFT) survey - is the University-approved instrument which gathers feedback from students on their perceptions of teaching effectiveness. The survey is used by individual teaching staff for the purposes of providing a key source of information about their teaching effectiveness and to identify areas for improvement.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(6) The University is committed to providing opportunities for all students to offer feedback on their educational experiences. Student surveys are a key component of the University's institutional monitoring, review and improvement activities, and an important source of feedback to staff on their teaching. They complement other sources of evidence about the quality and effectiveness of courses, units, teaching practices and other aspects of students' experiences at the University.

(7) Whilst not the only source of evaluation data about educational quality, the University considers students' views to

be of critical importance in the evidence-based approaches used within the University to target improvements in both teaching practices and the quality of courses and units of study.

Student Feedback on Units (SFU) Survey

(8) The University will undertake regular annual review of units of study, using student feedback along with other sources of information.

(9) Student feedback on units of study will be gathered using the University-approved standardised SFU survey in all units.

(10) Units of study will normally be evaluated in every teaching period they are offered, except where special circumstances apply.

(11) SFU survey data will be collected, analysed and reported in accordance with ethical practice as embodied in the University's defined procedure (attached).

(12) Results from student feedback on units will be reported to students and staff, along with targets and plans for improvement, in a rolling cycle of improving the quality of units of study.

(13) SFU survey results aggregated at the course or school level will be published on the University website.

Student Feedback on Teaching (SFT) Survey

(14) Evaluation of teaching by way of the SFT survey will be undertaken in accordance with the current Academic Staff Agreement.

(15) Student feedback on teaching will be gathered using the University-approved standardised SFT survey for all teachers.

(16) Teaching will normally be evaluated at least annually for every teacher, except where special circumstances apply.

(17) SFT survey data will be collected, analysed and reported in accordance with ethical practice as embodied in the University's defined procedure.

(18) Results from student feedback on teaching will be reported to individual staff to be discussed with their supervisor at the time of the Academic Career Development, Planning and Review meeting.

(19) Aggregated findings of SFT survey results that relate to the relevance and quality of courses and units in terms of student needs and expectations may be used by the University for any purpose.

Part A - Responsibilities

Academic Staff

(20) Academic staff with roles which directly support the learning of students have responsibilities to:

a. engage in regular evaluation to improve the effectiveness of their own individual contribution to the quality of students' learning experience, using an appropriate mix of standardised survey along with other methods;
b. use the SFT survey results annually in order to review and enhance their own teaching;
c. provide information to the Office of Quality and Performance as required to assist in the processes of collecting, analysing and reporting SFT survey data;
d. maintain their own personal and confidential records of information relating to their teaching evaluations for

use in performance review and development processes with their academic supervisor and for use when making formal claims about teaching achievements, such as in academic promotions; and

e. contribute to the analysis of SFU surveys and other evaluation information relating to units in which they teach, and to the identification and implementation of improvement strategies.

University Management Responsibilities

(21) University Management responsibilities are:

a. to ensure that the anonymity of individual student responses is preserved through the collection, aggregation and analysis of SFU/T survey data;
b. to ensure that staff anonymity and privacy are preserved in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement;
c. to provide the support, resources and development opportunities to assist academics improve the quality of the units they deliver;
d. to solicit recommendations for improvement based on the survey data from academic staff teaching in units.
e. the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning Transformations is available in a capacity of mediator:
    i. if there is a dispute around the use of SFU data, initially this should be resolved at the School level.
    ii. if no resolution is reached, then the dispute may be referred to the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning Transformations and each party may make a written submission to the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning Transformations.
    iii. The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning Transformations will make a determination on the issue and recommend a resolution within four weeks.
    iv. the availability of this mediation facility does not limit the rights of staff to avail themselves of the dispute procedures which are available within the Enterprise Agreement.

Unit Coordinators

(22) Unit Coordinators have responsibilities to:

a. provide information to the Office of Quality and Performance as required to assist in the processes of collecting, analysing and reporting SFU survey data;
b. review the SFU results for their unit(s) in conjunction with other sources of data about unit quality e.g. peer review activities;
c. facilitate discussion of SFU results with other academic and support staff working on the unit;
d. ensure the discussions have as their focus the improvement of unit quality;
e. Identify areas of good practice and key areas which the data indicate warrant improvement action;
f. report both the good practice and improvement priorities for the unit to the relevant Director, Academic Program and the School with a brief outline of the unit team's plan to address the improvement priorities. A copy of this report should be provided to all academics involved in the unit's delivery;
g. provide feedback to students in the Learning Guide on improvements made based on their survey responses;
h. develop targets for improvement and strategies required to implement improvement solutions;
i. ensure that the use of SFU data is consistent with the stated goals to improve the quality of units of study and to inform students about improvements made as a result of their feedback.

Director, Academic Program

(23) Director, Academic Program have responsibilities to:

a. in discussion with Unit Coordinators, review SFU survey results for all units in the program in conjunction with

other sources of data about unit and program quality e.g. peer review activities, performance and outcomes data;

b. identify areas of good practice and key areas which the unit data indicate warrant improvement action;
c. report to the relevant Dean on:
    i. the key areas of good practice that will be promoted and the key targets and strategies for improvement, as well as
    ii. the effectiveness of strategies previously implemented.
d. make a copy of the report available to staff teaching in the program, and provide feedback to students on improvements made based on their feedback;
e. monitor evaluation processes and practices to ensure that the principles and processes outlined in this policy are observed, and that defined protocols are strictly complied with.

Deans

(24) Deans have responsibilities to:

a. provide a School report on the overall outcomes, highlighting how a range of evaluative data have informed the identification of strengths and improvement targets;
b. identify the key areas of good practice that will be promoted and the key targets and strategies for improvement that are taking place across their School;
c. ensure that avenues are pursued in a timely fashion to address any staff or student concerns regarding breaches of procedures and/or protocols;
d. where the SFT survey is not appropriate for use in a particular circumstance, approve the use for an individual staff member of an alternative validated and standardised instrument, and the associated protocols for independent administration and processing of the results;
e. ensure that the staff member has written confirmation of the approval to use an alternative evaluation instrument to include in claims made by the staff member about their teaching effectiveness, for example in academic promotion applications;
f. overview program reports received from the Directors of Academic Program and review these in conjunction with other sources of data about unit and program quality eg peer review activities;
g. identify recurring areas of good practice and areas for improvement within and between the Schools;
h. report on the achievement of targets and the effectiveness of strategies adopted;
i. use areas of good practice to promote the School.

Students

(25) Students have responsibilities to:

a. contribute constructive feedback on the effectiveness of individual teaching staff through the SFT survey and other methods;
b. contribute constructive feedback on the quality of units of study through the SFU survey and other methods;
c. provide feedback which is free from racist, sexist or abusive intent, as per the University's Code of Conduct and related policies (Policy DDS);
d. recognise improvements made as a result of student feedback.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(26) Nil.

Status and Details

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