



Department of Accreditation and Quality Assurance

# Faculty Development Unit

Fostering Teaching Excellence, Enhancing Student Success

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## Leveraging Student Evaluations for Teaching Improvement and Quality Assurance

Faculty Quick Guide



**Feedback is the breakfast of champions!** — Ken Blanchard



## Introduction

End-of-course student evaluations provide valuable insights into teaching effectiveness, course design, and student learning experiences. When used effectively, they can guide faculty development, enhance course quality, and contribute to institutional accreditation and continuous improvement.

## Why Student Evaluations Matter?

- Provide direct insights into student learning experiences.
- Identify strengths and areas for instructional improvement.
- Support faculty professional development.
- Contribute to program and institutional quality assurance.

## Five Key Steps for Responding to Student Evaluations

1. **Reflect** – Before reviewing evaluations, consider: *What went well in the course? What areas could be improved?*
2. **Read and React** – Allow yourself to process emotional reactions to the feedback before analyzing it objectively.
3. **Take a Break** – Step away from the evaluations briefly to gain perspective before re-engaging with a neutral mindset.
4. **Revisit and Analyze** – Identify recurring themes, trends, and patterns in student feedback. Compare data with previous courses.
5. **Respond and Implement** – Determine what changes to make and document insights for future course revisions.

# How to Effectively Use Student Evaluations

## Review the Feedback Objectively

- Identify recurring themes rather than focusing on isolated comments.
- Compare with past evaluations for trends in teaching effectiveness.
- Recognize potential biases in feedback (e.g., personal preferences, recency effects).



### Questions to Ask:

1. What are the most common themes in the feedback?
2. Are the strengths and weaknesses consistent across different evaluations?

## Interpret Quantitative Data

- Review overall evaluation scores and identify trends.
- Compare scores with past courses to detect improvements or challenges.
- Consider possible factors influencing surprising scores.



### Question to ask:

- Do the scores reflect my overall perception of student experiences in this course
- Which scores are surprising because they are either higher or lower than expected
- What possible factors could have influenced these unexpected scores?
- How do this semester's scores compare to previous semesters?

## Interpret Qualitative Comments

- Look for recurring themes in student comments.
- Distinguish between actionable suggestions and non-actionable feedback.
- Compare positive and critical feedback to understand students' perspectives.
- Consider external factors that may have influenced responses (e.g., course structure, assessment methods).



### Questions to Ask:

- What common themes emerge from the comments?
- Are there consistent areas of praise or concern from students?
- Do student explanations align with their numerical ratings?
- Are the comments consistent with past evaluations, or do they reflect new issues?

## Best Practices for Faculty in Using Student Evaluations

- Look for Patterns, Not Just Individual Comments:** Identify common themes rather than reacting to isolated feedback.
- Stay Objective** – Recognize that both positive and negative feedback can provide valuable insights.

- Recognize Recency Bias:** Students may overemphasize recent experiences rather than the full course.
- Differentiate Actionable vs. Non-Actionable Feedback:** Implement changes that improve learning outcomes and ignore feedback outside your control.
- Compare with Past Evaluations:** Look for trends over multiple semesters to track progress and improvements.
- Document Changes:** Keep a record of adjustments made based on evaluations for future reference and accreditation purposes.
- Share Improvements:** Highlight course adjustments made based on past evaluations in syllabi, course materials, or department updates to demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement.
- Engage in Professional Development** – Use feedback as a tool for continuous teaching improvement and participation in faculty development programs.

## Engaging in Institutional Quality Assurance

- Collaborate with Academic Leadership:** Share insights with department heads and curriculum committees.
- Align with Accreditation Goals:** Ensure course improvements contribute to institutional accreditation standards.
- Participate in Faculty Development Initiatives:** Engage in workshops, peer observations, and teaching enhancement programs.

## Call to Action

Turn Feedback into Action! Partner with the Department of Accreditation and Quality Assurance and the Faculty Development Unit to elevate your teaching and enhance student success.