

FACULTY OF INFORMATION
Guidelines & Procedures for the Student Evaluation of Teaching in Courses
Original Adopted at Faculty Council, 12 April, 2013
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The Faculty of Information (iSchool) and the University of Toronto are committed to ensuring the quality of its academic programs, its teaching and the learning experiences of its students. An important component of this is the regular evaluation of courses by students. At the iSchool and the University of Toronto, course evaluations are conducted for the following reasons:

1. To provide formative data used by instructors for the continuous improvement of their teaching.
2. To provide members of the University community, including students, with information about teaching and courses at the institution.
3. To collect data used in the summative evaluation of teaching for administrative purposes such as annual merit, tenure and promotion review.
4. To provide data used by divisions for program and curriculum review.

Course evaluations are part of an overall teaching and program evaluation framework that includes regular peer review, instructor self-assessment, cyclical program review and other forms of assessment, as appropriate. As part of this framework, course evaluations are a particularly useful tool for providing students with an opportunity to provide feedback on their own learning experiences (from the *Policy on the Student Evaluation of Teaching in Courses*, University of Toronto, 2011).

This document outlines the various roles and responsibilities of the University, iSchool, and instructors in relation to the administration and use of course evaluations. In addition, this document provides information pertaining to the reporting of collected course evaluation data.

1. Administration of Course Evaluations

At the Faculty of Information all Masters-level courses will be evaluated as required by the University of Toronto's [Policy on the Evaluation of Teaching in Courses](#) (2011).¹ The normal practice will be to utilize the University of Toronto's centralized course evaluation framework and online delivery system for Masters courses. The institutional framework provides a customizable evaluation form with the following general format:

| Type of questions | Use of questions |
|--------------------------|---|
| Institutional questions | These questions must appear on the forms for all courses across the university. |

¹ See: http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/Policy_Student_Evaluation_of_Teaching_in_Courses.htm

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| iSchool divisional questions | These questions must appear on the forms for all courses (or relevant subset of courses) in the division. |
| Instructor questions | These questions may be specified for each course offering taught by the instructor. |

Responsibility for the administration of course evaluations will be as follows:

1.a. University Role and Responsibilities

- Provides and supports a centralized course evaluation framework and online delivery system that preserves student anonymity and supports various reporting options. This framework and system will be used for all courses across the university. The framework includes a common course evaluation form that is customizable by divisions, academic units, and instructors. The online course evaluation system will be managed centrally through the Office of the Vice-President & Provost and the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation (CTSI).
- Specifies a set of institutional questions that reflect the overall teaching priorities of the University, and that must be included on all course evaluation forms.
- Provides staff support for course evaluation administration in CTSI through the Course Evaluation Service team who is specifically designated to assist divisions, units, and instructors in all aspects of the evaluation process.
- Provides materials to support the interpretation and use of course evaluation data (available from the Course Evaluations tab in the Portal)
- Manages communication to students, faculty, academic administrators, and staff information about the course evaluation system, with the assistance of the CSTI Course Evaluation Service team and in consultation with the division.
- Advises divisions on appropriate evaluation processes for courses with enrolment under 10.

1.b. Faculty of Information Role and Responsibilities

- Oversees the course evaluation process for all of its courses.
- Engages the support of iSchool student associations to facilitate ongoing communication with students.
- In consultation with faculty and staff, identifies any courses that may require alternative means of evaluation (for example, low-enrolment courses, online courses, doctoral-level courses, etc.).
- Identifies divisional questions that reflect Masters-level teaching and learning priorities.
- Sets the time period for course evaluations. All evaluations will be administered at the end of each graduate term for a time period of at least two week’s duration. Students will have the opportunity to complete the evaluations online throughout the given time period.

- Contributes to regular reviews of the policies and procedures of the course evaluation process to identify any necessary changes to division-wide procedures.

1.c. Program Role and Responsibilities

The Programs Committee will have responsibility for setting and leading the review of all policies relating to Masters-level course evaluations.

Program representatives are particularly tasked with:

- Ensuring divisional-level questions assess program learning and teaching priorities
- Where necessary, recommending strategies to align evaluation questions with program learning outcomes and objectives
- Co-operating with Student Services to identify any courses where ROSI information is incomplete or insufficient
- Co-operating with Student Services to identify any courses requiring special evaluation needs.

1.d. Student Services Role and Responsibilities

Student Services plays an essential role in effective implementation of the system each term because of their access to, and comfort with, ROSI, as well as administrative expertise and access levels required to:

- Ensure instructors are properly identified with courses,
- Ensure course codes and term designators are accurate,
- Ensure student enrollment is up-to-date, and
- With the help of Programs Committee, flag courses with less common parameters such as intensive courses, team-teaching / co-teaching, INF Workshops, year-long courses, etc.
- Provide wording on opt-out options for instructors to CTSI and designate a person who will receive opt-out requests
- Record instructors' intentions to opt-out of Student Reports
- Provide names, UTorIDs and emails to CTSI for persons authorized to access summative reports (this is normally the Dean but may also include Chairs and/or Vice-Deans)
- Publish and maintain Student Reports on our website

1.e. Instructor Role and Responsibilities

- If desired, selects up to 3 additional questions from the University of Toronto item bank for the evaluation form for each offering of each course that they teach. Instructors may use these questions to assess specific teaching priorities and/or approaches not addressed elsewhere on the form. The data collected through the use of these questions are intended to provide formative feedback for the instructor and as such will only be reported to the instructor.
 - Each instructor teaching a course will receive an email invitation to add instructor-selected questions from the item bank to the course evaluation form. Directions, guidance, and deadlines for this process will be included with the email communication. There is no requirement for instructors to add questions to their evaluation forms.

- Instructors may choose to share the results from instructor-selected questions with their chair or other academic administrators for review.
- Instructors may choose to opt out of sharing data from institutional and divisional questions (see details below). Instructions for how to do so will be provided in an email at the same time the instructor is invited to select individual questions.

2. *The Evaluation Form*

The University of Toronto’s course evaluation framework includes a set of required core institutional questions, divisionally-selected questions, departmentally-selected questions and instructor-selected questions. **The maximum number of questions permitted on the evaluation form is 20.**

At the Faculty of Information, the standard format for course evaluations is as follows:

| Administrative Responsibility | Questions | Details |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Institutional (8) | 1. I found the course intellectually stimulating. 2. The course provided me with a deeper understanding of the subject matter. 3. The instructor created a course atmosphere that was conducive to my learning. 4. Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams improved my understanding of the course material. 5. Course projects, assignments, tests and/or exams provided opportunity for me to demonstrate an understanding of the course material. 6. Overall, the quality of my learning experience in this course was: Poor >> Fair >> Good >> Very good >> Excellent 7. Please comment on the overall quality of instruction in this course. (Open-ended) | To appear on all forms. Scale for Questions 1-5: Not at all >> Somewhat >> Moderately >> Mostly >> A great deal |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| | 8. Please comment on any assistance that was available to support your learning in the course. (Open-ended) | |
| Divisional – iSchool questions (5) | <p>1. The course instructor encouraged students to think about the subject matter from multiple perspectives.</p> <p>2. The course instructor encouraged me to explore alternative approaches when problem-solving.</p> <p>3. The course drew attention to ethical and social issues related to the field of study.</p> <p>4. The course instructor encouraged students to reflect critically on the course material.</p> <p>5. The course instructor explained how course topics contributed to an overall understanding of the field (i.e. Archives, Knowledge Management, Museum Studies).</p> | To appear on all forms |
| Program (up to 4) | TBD | NB: 2 of these questions are being held for possible TA assessment at a future date. 2 of these questions are being held for future iSchool priorities. |
| Instructor (up to 3) | To be selected by the instructor | Questions chosen from the question bank or in consultation with CTSI. |

3. Reporting

Reports of the results of course evaluations will be available to various audiences, following the Provostial *Guidelines on the Evaluation of Courses*, which outline institutional requirements relating to the access of course evaluation data. Available reports include:

3.a. Summative Report

Purpose and Recipients

- Intended to be used for summative evaluation in support of assessment of an instructor's teaching for PTR, tenure and promotion, awards, etc.
- **Note:** Student evaluation of teaching forms just one component of a thorough assessment of an instructor.
- Available to the instructor, as well as to their dean(s) and those responsible for program oversight.

Included Information (each course reported on separately)

- Quantitative and qualitative data from institutional, divisional, and (where applicable) program questions
- For each question, the following data will be provided:
 - Question text
 - Response set
 - Course enrolment
 - Number of responses
 - For quantitative questions only²:
 - Frequency (the distribution of responses will be displayed as chart)
 - Mean
 - Median
 - Mode
 - Standard deviation
- A composite score will be provided for core institutional questions 1-5
 - The composite provides an average response for each question and reflects the extent to which each of the institutional priorities was part of a student's learning experience in his/her course. The composite takes into account multiple factors relating to this experience and provides a comprehensive assessment of that experience.
- The following comparative data for quantitative questions will also be provided (when available):
 - From the division (for institutional and divisional questions):
 - Divisional mean for all Masters-level graduate courses, as relevant
 - Divisional mean for courses of similar size
 - Standard deviations for divisional means
 - From the institution (for institutional questions):
 - Institutional mean (graduate)
 - Standard deviation for institutional mean
- Additional comparative data reporting can be requested from CTSI.

² Frequency includes number of responses received for each question; Mean provides an average; Median reflects the point at which half responses fall above, and half below; Mode represents the most frequently occurring response.

Note: Data from instructor-selected questions will appear only on the formative report.

Note: For courses with response rates less than 5, qualitative data and only response distributions for each of the quantitative questions will be provided.

3.b. Formative Report

Purpose and Recipients

- Intended to be used for formative purposes – i.e., to inform an instructor in improvement of their teaching and course development.
- Available only to the instructor.
- Instructors may share this data with administrators for purposes of professional development, if they choose. It may *not* be shared with administrators or committees for promotion, tenure, 3rd year reviews or PTR/Merit.

Included Information (each course reported on separately)

- All the information from the summative report, **plus:**
- Data from any and all instructor-selected questions, including:
 - Question text
 - Response set
 - Course enrolment
 - Number of responses
 - For quantitative questions only:
 - Frequency (displayed as chart)
 - Mean
 - Median
 - Mode
 - Standard deviation

4. Reports Available Upon Request

CTSI is developing additional reporting structures. Currently, the following reports or more customizable reports for the Dean, program Chairs and directors, or instructors can be generated *upon request* from CTSI.

4.a. Student's Report

Purpose and Recipients

- Intended to provide information to students helpful in course planning and selection.
- Provided to students (anyone with access to the Portal with a UTorID) through the Course Evals tab in the Portal.

Included Information (each course reported on separately)

- Quantitative data from all institutional and divisional questions.
 - A composite score will be provided for core institutional questions 1 -5, and quantitative divisional questions.

- Frequency of responses (displayed as a chart) will be provided for quantitative institutional and divisional questions.

Note: Instructors may opt out of having the information made available for each course offering they teach. Instructors will be asked to indicate their interest in doing so at the time that they select their course-specific questions. This must be specified separately for each course, each time it is taught.

4.b. Program Report (sample)

Purpose and Recipients

- Intended to provide information to academic programs helpful in curriculum design, planning, and assessment.
- Available to academic programs heads and associate chairs.

Included Information (each course reported on separately)

- Summative report for each course and instructor, **plus:**
- Academic programs may request customized reports reflecting aggregate or individual instructor data from institutional, divisional, or academic programs questions.

4.c. Dean's Report (sample)

Purpose and Recipients

- Intended to provide information to the dean's office helpful in assessing teaching and curriculum across the Faculty.
- Available to dean and designates.

Included Information (each course reported on separately)

- Summative report for each course and instructor, **plus:**
- The Dean's office may request customized reports reflecting aggregate or individual instructor data from institutional, divisional, or academic unit questions.

5. Reviewing Guidelines and Procedures

The Programs Committee will review all policies, guidelines and procedures once annually to maintain and communicate best practices. It is expected that this review will occur with input from the iSchool community.

Changes require approval of Faculty Council.