CHAPTER 11: STUDENT FEEDBACK ON TEACHING AND LEARNING AT CURTIN

\textbf{eVALUate} is Curtin's online system for gathering and reporting students' perceptions of their learning experiences. \textbf{eVALUate} also gathers feedback from employers and graduates for the purpose of Comprehensive Course Review. Students can give feedback about units and teaching through the:

- \textbf{eVALUate} unit survey, which asks students their perceptions of what helps and hinders their achievement of unit learning outcomes, their motivation and engagement, and their overall satisfaction with the unit.
- \textbf{eVALUate} teaching survey, which asks students to give feedback to individual teachers on their teaching effectiveness.

Staff can access all relevant functions in \textbf{eVALUate} using a single sign-on via Staff OASIS or via the \textbf{eVALUate} website at http://www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/. This personalised summary page includes:

- A teaching evaluation section where staff can register for a teaching survey, view all their teaching evaluation reports and view the number of student respondents to their teaching survey at any time during an active \textbf{eVALUate} event.
- A unit evaluation section where staff can withdraw publication of their Unit Summary Report prior to an event or at any stage thereafter, view a record of whether their past Unit Summary Reports are published, publish and add a response to Unit Summary Reports, view Full Unit Reports and view unit response rates at any time during an active \textbf{eVALUate} event.
- An "other reports" section where staff can directly access the Aggregated University Reports. In this section, Heads of schools can access their Course Summary Reports and Owning Organisation Reports.

\section*{Survey Events}

The \textbf{eVALUate} unit survey is automatically available for all undergraduate and postgraduate coursework units at all of Curtin's Australian and at many of its offshore campuses and partnerships such as Malaysia, Mauritius, Singapore, China and Hong Kong. For each year there will be six \textbf{eVALUate} events, which include units in Curtin's “major” study periods (e.g. Semesters 1 and 2, Summer Semester, Trimesters 1, 2 and 3) and many “minor” study periods (e.g. Special Study Periods, OLA Study Periods, Trimester 1A). These events are: \textbf{Summer School}, \textbf{Semester 1}, \textbf{Semester 2}, \textbf{Trimester 1}, \textbf{Trimester 2} and \textbf{Trimester 3}. For more information, see http://www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/info/dates.cfm.

The \textbf{eVALUate} unit survey has eleven quantitative and two qualitative items (as shown in Table 6). Eleven quantitative items ask students to report their level of agreement with statements about what helps their achievement of unit learning outcomes (items 1 to 7), their motivation and engagement in learning (items 8 to 10) and their overall satisfaction (item 11). Each quantitative item is accompanied by a “help text”. Students may indicate Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or Unable to Judge for each item.
Table 6: eVALUate unit survey items

Quantitative items seek students’ level of agreement with 11 items:

1. **The learning outcomes in this unit are clearly identified.**
   The learning outcomes are what you are expected to know, understand or be able to do in order to be successful in this unit.

2. **The learning experiences in this unit help me to achieve the learning outcomes.**
   The learning experiences could include: face-to-face lectures, tutorials, laboratories, clinical practicums, fieldwork, directed learning tasks, and online and distance education experiences.

3. **The learning resources in this unit help me to achieve the learning outcomes.**
   Learning resources could include print, multimedia and online study materials, and equipment available in lectures, laboratories, clinics or studios.

4. **The assessment tasks in this unit evaluate my achievement of the learning outcomes.**
   Assessment tasks are those which are rewarded by marks, grades or feedback.
   Assessment tasks directly assess your achievement of the learning outcomes.

5. **Feedback on my work in this unit helps me to achieve the learning outcomes.**
   Feedback includes written or verbal comments on your work.

6. **The workload in this unit is appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes.**
   Workload includes class attendance, reading, researching, group activities and assessment tasks.

7. **The quality of teaching in this unit helps me to achieve the learning outcomes.**
   Quality teaching occurs when knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching staff interact positively with students in well-organised teaching and learning experiences.

8. **I am motivated to achieve the learning outcomes in this unit.**
   Being motivated means having the desire or drive to learn, to complete tasks and to willingly strive for goals.

9. **I make best use of the learning experiences in this unit.**
   I prepare for and follow up on the learning experiences offered in this unit.

10. **I think about how I can learn more effectively in this unit.**
    I take time to think about how I can learn more effectively.

11. **Overall, I am satisfied with this unit.**
    Overall, this unit provides a quality learning experience.

Qualitative items invite students to make constructive comments (limit of 600 characters):

12. **What are the most helpful aspects of this unit?**

13. **How do you think this unit might be improved?**
eVALUate unit survey results are reported online at http://www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/reports/ immediately after Boards of Examiners. Refer to Table 7 for a list of unit survey reports. See http://www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/info/dates.cfm for report release dates.

Table 7: eVALUate unit survey reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report</th>
<th>What’s in that report?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eVALUate Full Unit Report (FUR)</td>
<td>Percentage agreement (or otherwise) with the quantitative items; all student responses to the qualitative items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Unit Coordinator and Head of School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eVALUate Unit Summary Report (USR)</td>
<td>Percentage agreement, disagreement and unable to judge with the quantitative items; and the Unit Coordinator’s (optional) response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For all staff and students (unless unpublished by Unit Coordinator)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eVALUate Course Summary Report (CSR)</td>
<td>Percentage agreement with the quantitative items for each unit in which students in that course are enrolled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Head of School, and Dean of Teaching and Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eVALUate Owning Organisation Unit Summary Report (OOUSR)</td>
<td>Percentage agreement with the quantitative items for each unit owned and offered by the school. Trend data is also available online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Head of School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Viewing Full Unit Reports: Full Unit Reports are viewable in several formats (see Figure 7) by location, attendance mode and by response type (quantitative results can be downloaded separately so that Unit Coordinators can easily share the report with other staff in the unit). To access reports, see https://evaluate.curtin.edu.au/info/reporting.cfm.
For guidelines for interpreting the Full Unit Report see http://www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/reports/unit_guidelines.cfm.

Figure 7: eVALUate Full Unit Reports can be viewed in various formats.
Improving units

Unit Coordinators play a key role in using the feedback to improve units by reviewing reports and gleaning what students see as the strengths and weaknesses in the unit. Look for trends rather than focusing on isolated comments. Reflect on what can be done to maintain the strengths and address weaknesses. Unit coordinators should share the results with other staff teaching in the unit and have the team suggest how strengths can be maintained and weaknesses addressed. For resources to improve practice see [https://evaluate.curtin.edu.au/staff/improve_response.cfm](https://evaluate.curtin.edu.au/staff/improve_response.cfm).

Unit Coordinators are expected to share quantitative unit results with their unit teaching staff. Sharing students’ comments is subject to strict constraints as follows: comments that are general in nature (that is, in which staff are not identifiable) may be shared with all staff teaching in the unit. However, comments that could identify staff may be shared only with the identifiable staff member.

Comments in which staff are identifiable are confidential to that staff member (and to those charged with the coordination and management of the unit, namely the Unit Coordinator and the Head of Owning Organisational Unit).

Student feedback considered offensive or defamatory (e.g. racist, sexist, personal or abusive, or allegations of criminal activity) may NOT be passed on to any staff member, or any student, by any staff member, Unit Coordinator or Head of School/Faculty. Curtin staff must share eVALUate results in the spirit of Curtin’s Guiding Ethical Principles and show due care for colleagues. Misuse of data from eVALUate reports will be dealt with according to Clause 74 of the Curtin University Academic, Professional and General Staff Enterprise Agreement 2012–2016 on Misconduct, or the Certified Agreement or an Individual Transitional Employment Agreement (see Section 7.2 Student Evaluation of Learning and Teaching of the Course Approval and Quality Manual Consolidated Policies and Procedures) at [http://policies.curtin.edu.au/findapolicy/#C](http://policies.curtin.edu.au/findapolicy/#C).

Under no circumstances will a comment be tracked to identify any student.

Course Summary Reports: Heads of school can access Course Summary Reports and share them with their Dean of Teaching and Learning, Course Coordinator, and those involved in course review. The Course Summary Report is a spreadsheet showing percentage agreement for the 11 quantitative items for all the units in which students in a given course are currently enrolled. The Course Summary Report (similar to Figure 8) indicates areas of strength and areas needing development: in general, where response rates and unit sizes are robust, percentage agreement of 80% or above is very good, 60–79% may require consideration, and anything below 60% is cause for further investigation.
Figure 8: Sample eVALUate Course Summary Report

Owning Organisational Unit Summary Reports: Heads of school can access Owning Organisational Unit Summary Reports, which are spreadsheets showing percentage agreement for the 11 quantitative items for all of the units offered by an owning area (a school or department). The Owning Organisation Summary Report indicates areas of strength and areas needing development: in general, where response rates and unit sizes are robust, percentage agreement of 80% or above is very good, 60–79% may require consideration, and anything below 60% is cause for further investigation.

University-wide results are published in the eVALUate University Aggregated Report; see http://www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/reports/.
Closing the Feedback Loop: Acknowledging Student Feedback

The literature in the field of student evaluation of teaching and learning states repeatedly that the biggest disincentive for student participation in evaluation systems is that they never see any changes in response to their feedback. Closing the feedback loop by being responsive to student feedback and communicating that to students is universally considered to be excellent practice in teaching and learning, and therefore strongly encouraged at Curtin.

Feedback using the Unit Summary Report

Unit coordinators can share the unit results with students using the Unit Summary Report online (see https://evaluate.curtin.edu.au/general/course_search.cfm). This report shows only the percentage agreement, percentage disagreement and percentage unable to judge with the quantitative items: no student comments are visible. Unit coordinators can add a response to students in this report.

Figure 9 illustrates the steps for adding a unit coordinator’s response to an eVALUate Unit Summary Report (also known as managing Unit Summary Report). This is an excellent way to acknowledge student feedback and let students know how their feedback will be used to improve the unit.

![Figure 9: Screenshot of eVALUate Unit Summary Report](image-url)
In the following sample eVALUate Unit Summary Report (Figure 10) the unit coordinator has included a response to acknowledge student feedback and outline planned improvements to the unit.

**Figure 10: Sample eVALUate Unit Summary Report**

**Feedback through the Unit Outline**

Include a section in your unit outline that acknowledges and reports a summary of previous student feedback from eVALUate, and inform students as to how the unit has been changed as a result of that feedback. (Figure 11 shows the boiler plate text within the Unit Outline template) This text is available from the Unit Outline template at [http://otl.curtin.edu.au/local/downloads/teaching_learning_services/unit_outline_builder/Unit%20Outline%20Template_2Sept2013_EM.docm](http://otl.curtin.edu.au/local/downloads/teaching_learning_services/unit_outline_builder/Unit%20Outline%20Template_2Sept2013_EM.docm).

We welcome your feedback as one way to keep improving this unit. Later this semester, you will be encouraged to give unit feedback through eVALUate, Curtin's online student feedback system (see [http://www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au](http://www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au)). Recent changes to this unit in response to student feedback through eVALUate include: (Insert change here as applicable).

**Figure 11: Feedback on feedback: Responding to eVALUate in the unit outline**
The eVALUate Teaching Survey

The eVALUate teaching survey asks students to report on aspects of teaching performance. It has seven quantitative and two qualitative items (see Table 8). Each quantitative item is accompanied by a “help text” (shown in italics below). Students may indicate Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or Unable to Judge for each item.

Table 8: eVALUate teaching survey items

Quantitative items seek students’ level of agreement with 9 items:

[The teacher’s name appears here]:

1. **Appears knowledgeable in this subject area**
   *The teacher seems to have a good understanding of the subject.*

2. **Is enthusiastic in teaching this unit**
   *The teacher makes the subject interesting and conveys his or her enthusiasm for the subject.*

3. **Is well organised**
   *The teacher has material prepared on time, is punctual and structures activities in ways that help learning.*

4. **Communicates clearly**
   *The teacher is easy to understand in face-to-face, online, written and other formats and explains concepts clearly.*

5. **Is approachable**
   *The teacher encourages students to ask questions and seek help.*

6. **Provides useful feedback**
   *The teacher provides timely and helpful feedback so you can learn.*

7. **Is an effective teacher.**
   *Overall, this teacher helps you to learn.*

Qualitative items invite students to make constructive comments (limit of 600 characters):

8. Please comment on [this teacher]’s teaching strengths.

9. Please comment on how you think [this teacher] might improve the teaching and learning in this unit.
The eVALUate teaching survey is not automatic; it must be requested online by a staff member. Anyone who teaches in a full-time or sessional capacity at any of Curtin’s Australian or Sarawak campuses must request at least one teaching evaluation annually for any unit in which they teach. Teaching staff are notified by email when teaching evaluation requests open (usually mid-semester). During that period, teachers can add or withdraw requests for teaching surveys within any coursework unit. See http://www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/teaching/ for further information.

The Teaching eVALUate Report is required as evidence of teaching quality in Work Planning and Performance Review (WPPR) and as formal recognition of teaching excellence.

Registering for a teaching evaluation survey

To register for a teaching evaluation survey, teachers log into eVALUate and follow a three-step process to successfully complete a request. Teachers are asked to enter details of their email address, the unit details (name/code) and teaching location (e.g. Bentley, Singapore, Sydney, Miri Sarawak).

![Figure 12: Step 1: Teaching evaluation request](image)
Teachers can also select the “View my teaching evaluation requests” to further confirm the successful registration of their teaching evaluation request. This option brings the teachers back to their eVALUate Summary page, where the registered unit should now appear under the “Teaching Evaluation” section.

**How eVALUate teaching survey results are reported**

The eVALUate Teaching Evaluation Report is only available online to the teacher who requested the evaluation. Results from teaching evaluations are not aggregated at any level.

**Responding to student feedback**

Acknowledge and enjoy the positive feedback you receive from students. Consider the content and value of feedback you see as negative or challenging. If there are critical comments, consider whether a change in practice could lead to a better learning experience for your future students and a better teaching experience for you. Consider inviting a colleague to be a peer mentor, and discuss with that person your feedback, and how you might develop your teaching practice. For resources on improving teaching, see https://evaluate.curtin.edu.au/staff/improve_response.cfm.