



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Economics and Business

Student experience of Learning and Teaching

Trends and key issues: Postgraduate coursework 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 courses

Notes

Note re number of students providing written comments in the SCEQ

The following table shows the number of domestic and international students who provided written observations on their experiences in the SCEQ (2005; 2007) and the CEQ (2006; 2007). Contrary to previous years, in the 2007 SCEQ over 70% of comments were received from international students.

		SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	80	39	197	130
	International	88	92	126	114
	All	168	131	323	244
Suggested improvements	Domestic	85	38	177	132
	International	83	93	122	108
	All	168	131	299	240

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, 65% of respondents supplied written comments in answer to the open questions; in 2007 46% of respondents supplied written observations.

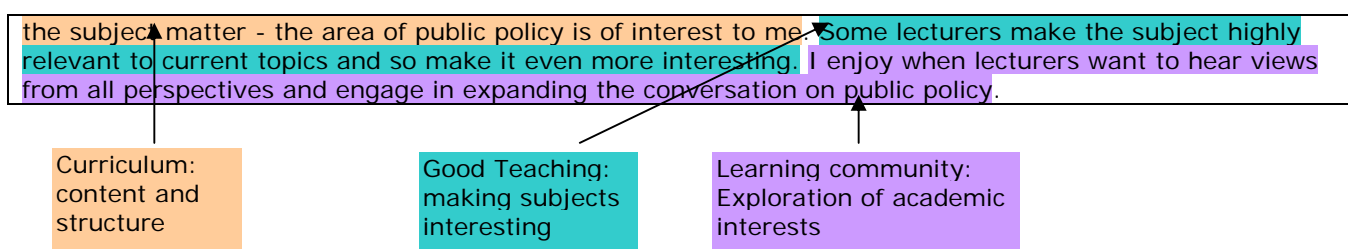
Note re illustrative sample comments

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, with those comments including more than one aspect being 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, Curriculum; and Learning Community, the comment is counted ONCE in each of the relevant categories.



¹ Available from Quality Assurance Officer (Learning and Teaching)

Executive summary

Data about the student degree experience in the Faculty of Economics and Business is collected through the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) (previous year's graduates) and the Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ) (current students).

Analysis of this data provides a comprehensive picture of trends in the student experience, and the performance of the Faculty in relation to Learning and Teaching Performance Fund Key Performance Indicators (Generic Skills; Good Teaching; Overall Satisfaction), and other related areas (Learning Community, Curriculum, Assessment and Workload).

Written observations from students about their experience provide evidence to support the percentage agreement scores, and provide detailed information about key issues in the areas of best practice or areas of concern.

Key results

- There has been a noticeable increase in student satisfaction with the development of **Graduate Attributes / Generic skills**. 70% of current students and 65% of graduates either agreed or strongly agreed with the relevant survey items. With 71% percentage agreement in both the SCEQ and CEQ, international students appear to be more satisfied with this KPI than domestic students (67% SCEQ; 63% CEQ). The University average for Generic skills is 62%. Evidence of this positive result is also provided in the qualitative data from the Student Course Experience Questionnaire. (Section 1; KPI 14)
- Faculty scores for **Good Teaching** for both the SCEQ and CEQ have remained at an average of 45-48% since 2004. Current domestic students appear to be more satisfied than international students with teaching within the Faculty (47% domestic; 42% international), while for graduates the reverse is true (48% domestic; 53% international). The University average is 52%. Analysis of the qualitative data from the 2007 SCEQ and CEQ indicates that students are generally satisfied with the standard of teaching received, with the gap between positive and negative comments on this KPI gradually decreasing over the past four years. (Section 2; KPI 15)
- **Overall Satisfaction** with the degree course currently rates at 69% for graduates and 70% for current students. The University average for graduates is 70% and for current students is 75%. Whilst students view their course experience positively, concerns are raised by students about the perceived lowering of the academic standard of their degree to accommodate NESB international students. (Section 3; KPI 17)
- Fifty three percent of students either agreed or strongly agreed with SCEQ survey items on the **Learning Community**. This is just below the University average of 54%. With a percentage agreement score of 54% in 2007 and 53% in 2005, international students continue to rate this area of their experience more highly than domestic students (49% in 2007; 52% in 2005). Analysis of the comments received in the 2007 SCEQ and CEQ indicate that students are relatively satisfied with the learning environment provided by the Faculty. However, they expressed the opinion that the presence of a large number of international (NESB) students, together with large class sizes, inhibited class discussion and interaction between staff and students.
- In 2007 45% of comments received from graduates and 41% from current students commented favourably on various aspects of the **Curriculum**. Overall satisfaction with the curriculum is indicated by the lower percentage of comments that mention this as an area in need of improvement (SCEQ: 31%; CEQ: 27%).
- The percentage agreement scores for **Appropriate Assessment** (50%) in the 2007 SCEQ has increased by 3% since 2005. The University average is 66%. On the whole students appear to be satisfied with assessment practices within the Faculty; however the nature of group assessments, particularly in relation to participation and distribution of marks ranks highly as an area of concern.
- The percentage agreement scores for appropriate workload (20%) in the 2007 SCEQ is lower than the University average of 33%.

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Conceptual framework

Student Evaluation of Teaching Surveys

The University Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ) and the DEEWR/ 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 Economics and Business between 2000 and 2007. The report also provides detailed information on the key issues highlighted in the analysis of the 2005 SCEQ and 2006 CEQ qualitative data². Reliable qualitative data for international students did not become available until the 2005 SCEQ.

Information is arranged by Key Performance Indicators (14: Generic skills; 15: Good teaching; and 16: Overall satisfaction) plus additional factors (Learning community; Curriculum; Assessment; and Workload) 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.

² Qualitative data from the surveys distributed at the end of 2007 is not currently available

1 Generic skills (KPI 14)

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

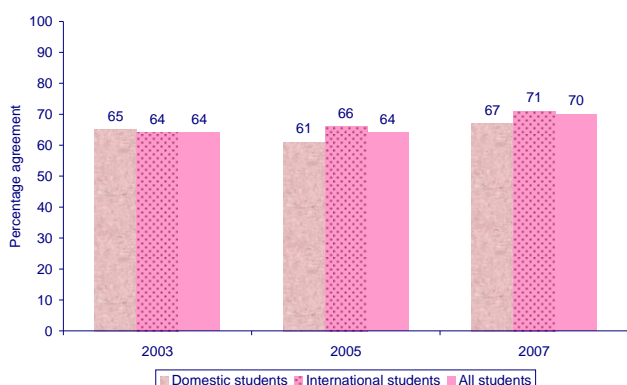
Trends

There has been a noticeable increase in student satisfaction with the development of Graduate attributes / Generic skills. 70% of current students and 65% of graduates either agreed or strongly agreed with the relevant survey items. This is an increase of between 3% and 6% on previous surveys. With 71% percentage agreement in both the SCEQ and CEQ, international students appear to be more satisfied with this KPI than domestic students (67% SCEQ; 63% CEQ). The University average for Generic skills is 62%.

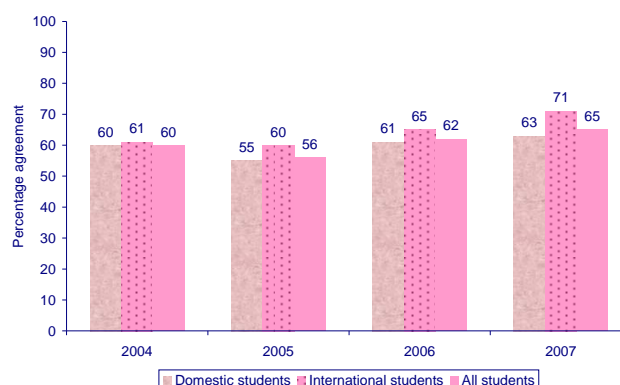
Evidence of this positive result is also provided in the qualitative data from the Student Course Experience Questionnaire.

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	28%	15%	21%	12%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	52%	33%	33%	34%
	All	12%	14%	13%	40%	27%	26%	23%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	6%	5%	6%	6%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	12%	14%	13%	14%
	All	2%	1%	4%	9%	11%	9%	10%

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

1.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=39)	International (n=92)	All (n=131)
Research and inquiry			
- The capacity to make decisions and solve problems			
- Development of analytical skills	13%	11%	11%
- Ability to apply critical judgement and thinking			
- Recognition of knowledge boundaries			
- Expanding current knowledge			
Ethical, social, professional understanding			
- Ability to work in a group/ team working skills	3%	12%	9%
- Development of discipline/ professional skills			
- Presence of work placement/ industry experience in the course			
Sample comments: domestic students			
- <i>Theoretical frameworks help in analysing problems at work</i>			
- <i>Being exposed to methodologies, systems and processes that I can apply in a work setting</i>			
- <i>Gain knowledge of Transport management which I was not aware of.</i>			
Sample comments: international students			
- <i>Commerce degree: I think it is a very practical and helps us to develop analytical skills. Logistics: I think it is very helpful for us to develop the team work ability</i>			
- <i>The degree course provides me with a lot of chances to develop my problem-solving skills and provides me with useful practical skills, because of the teaching method and the teaching facilities</i>			
- <i>Studying and doing research methods because I approach the updated information from what the lecturers suggested.</i>			

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=130)	International (n=114)	All (n=244)
Research and inquiry			
- The capacity to make decisions and solve problems			
- Development of analytical skills	8%	17%	12%
- Ability to apply critical judgement and thinking			
- Recognition of knowledge boundaries			
Ethical, social, professional understanding			
- Ability to work in a group/ team working skills	3%	6%	5%
- Development of discipline/ professional skills			
- Presence of work placement/ industry experience in the course			
Sample comments: domestic students			
- <i>Developing my research skills and analytical skills. Improving my presentation skills</i>			
- <i>It helped me to think strategically, develop my analytical skills and creative strategic thinking/planning</i>			
- <i>The knowledge and skills to be able to critically analyse political and economic developments in Australia and Internationally</i>			
Sample comments: international students			
- <i>I learned how to solve problem in a team and independently. I improved the ability to my written and communication skills</i>			
- <i>The best aspects of my course is regarding only my language ability, after I finished my courses in University of Sydney, I only feel that my English ability has improved</i>			
- <i>Improved student's self-study skill and also analysis skill</i>			

1.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=38)	International (n=93)	All (n=131)
------------------------------	--------------------	-------------------------	----------------

Ethical, social, professional understanding

- | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|
| - Ability to work in a group/ team working skills | 3% | 6% | 5% |
| - Development of discipline/ professional skills | | | |
| - Presence of work placement/ industry experience in the course | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *As a part-time student who works full time, I find group assignments difficult to complete. Group work is not an acceptable way of teaching students the cooperation skills needed in the workplace.*
- *In finance major, I suggest the uni should increase some units that really practical. I mean, more inclined to explore students' ability to solve real problems, not only tutorial questions*

Sample comments: international students

- *because this is my first semester in USYD. I think I could be improve my write ability in writing a long assignment, whatever in writing skills or time's handling*
- *This degree gives us many pressure and risk. Because, most of us in this degree want to upgrade to Master degree. And as an overseas student, doing IR and HR means to write many essays. It is bit hard to get higher marks from essay writing so as to get average 65. It would be great if there are some programs of helping us with essay writing during our course or tutorial*
- *If there is more chance to connect the degree with practical experience, that will be much better. Our school seldom provides such kind of opportunity and it is unrealistic to find the chance by ourselves especially international students*
- *My ability to work independently could be improved a lot*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=132)	International (n=108)	All (n=240)
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Ethical, social, professional understanding

- | | | | |
|---|----|-----|----|
| - Ability to work in a group/ team working skills | 5% | 10% | 7% |
| - Development of discipline/ professional skills | | | |
| - Presence of work placement/ industry experience in the course | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Analytical ability. Written and oral ability. Professional knowledge.*
- *Group assignments -> people have different agendas and interests, it doesn't really improve team work skills*
- *It doesn't address the need / skill required in work place (industry)*

Sample comments: international students

- *Team work skills. Presentation skills*
- *Practical experience. Too hard to get first job for Intl masters student in Australia after finish University*
- *Practical application, show how to use the theories into practical industry and solve real practical problems*

2 Good teaching (KPI 15)

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)

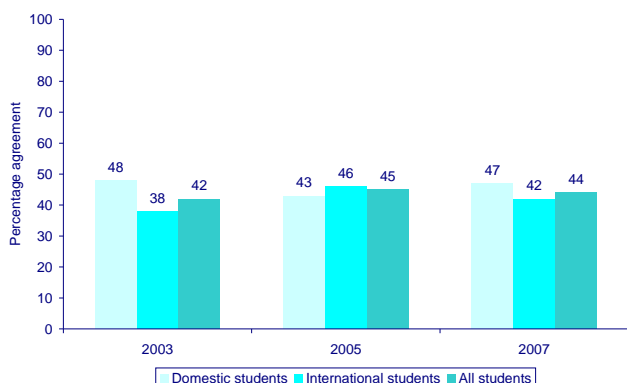
Trends

Faculty scores for Good teaching for both the SCEQ and CEQ have remained at an average of 45-48% since 2004. For current students, domestic students appear to be more satisfied than international students with teaching within the Faculty (47% domestic; 42% international), while for graduates the reverse is true (48% domestic; 53% international). The University average is 52%

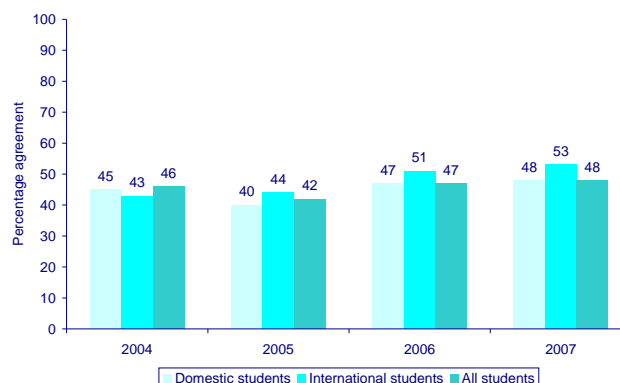
Analysis of the qualitative data from the 2007 SCEQ and CEQ indicates that students are generally satisfied with the standard of teaching received, with the gap between positive and negative comments gradually decreasing over the past four years (SCEQ 2003: 13% more negative than positive comments: SCEQ 2007: 4% more)

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.

		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	46%	51%	30%	25%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	38%	21%	25%	25%
	All	9%	27%	22%	42%	30%	28%	25%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	44%	66%	45%	37%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	29%	22%	28%	24%
	All	15%	16%	35%	36%	34%	38%	31%

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

2.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=39)	International (n=92)	All (n=131)
------------------------------	--------------------	-------------------------	----------------

Good teaching experiences

- | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|
| - Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques | | | |
| - Ability to keep students interested in the subject | 41% | 12% | 21% |
| - Encouragement to participate in discussions during lectures and tutorials | | | |
| - Learning resources are up to date, and relevant to curriculum | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The teaching was easy to comprehend and the lecturer explained the more challenging materials in a clear and concise manner*
- *Masters in Finance and Marketing. Every unit is different. I like to be pushed a little, so units that have done this to me were best. For example by pushing I mean, forcing us to take part in discussions, forcing us the present things, forcing us to do problems in class*
- *Some of the lecturers are excellent - particularly those who put effort into ensuring the lectures and recommended reading are up to date, balanced and relevant. They provide stimulating subject matter and make you think carefully about the issues*

Sample comments: international students

- *Most of lecturers teaching me are professional on what they teach. Base on their experience, they can simplify the complicated things. Most of text books recommended by the lecturers are really useful for me*
- *the best aspect is the group work method of teaching, which stimulate our ability to cooperate with others and make we study actively*
- *teaching staff work hard to make their subjects interesting and I feel motivated by their work.*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=130)	International (n=114)	All (n=244)
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Good teaching experiences

- | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|
| - Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques | | | |
| - Ability to keep students interested in the subject | 15% | 16% | 15% |
| - Encouragement to participate in discussions during lectures and tutorials | | | |
| - Learning resources are up to date, and relevant to curriculum | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Some of the lecturers were really helpful when I approached them when there's a problem. They were really patient and tried to ensure that I understood my work*
- *The quality of teaching from the lecturers and the alternative viewpoint offered in discussions*
- *Passionate teachers who knew their content well and integrated adult learning principals and made lectures interesting and fun*

Sample comments: international students

- *Many of the lecturers are very good at explaining and were very helpful to me. I was also motivated by the great personality of some of them*
- *Teachers prepared lectures very carefully and they are very patient when answering my questions*
- *Professors were passionate about the subjects, making the course very well-motivated to go through; lots of team-work-based assignments increased our problem-solving and communication skills*

2.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=38)	International (n=93)	All (n=131)
Good teaching experiences			
- Teaching methods used are outdated; Lectures were boring	39%	11%	19%
- Discussions of issues raised during lectures and tutorials are not encouraged			
- Learning resources are out of date, and not relevant to curriculum			
Good explanations received			
- Instructions and explanations are not clear	8%	4%	5%
- Lecturer's are not proficient in the English language and difficult to understand (because of accents)			
Feedback on work (from staff to students)			
- Comments on work are not constructive; do not explain where mistakes occur that can be rectified.	11%	5%	7%
- Marks only supplied, no comments			
- Feedback is untimely and not helpful			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *This is hard to do, but one of the main things you can do to change it, is make sure that you employ lecturers who are not only passionate about doing research, but also about teaching. It's really noticeable to me the difference between lecturers who actually enjoy teaching and are organised with their materials and activities in class compared to lecturers who basically see teaching as chore, are disorganised and it is obvious that they haven't changed their teaching materials for some years. Enthusiasm and passion definitely rub off on students. Perhaps you could place evaluators in classes every now and then (kind of like mystery shoppers) to get a feel for how well your lecturers are actually performing.*
- *I think the feedbacks could be improved on a macro level. we only know our own assignment feedbacks but we don't know where we are compared in comparison to the rest of the class or year. should tell us what are the overall problems and where to make improvements. and even show us an example of a HD assignment after they have been marked so we know where we have done wrong, or where to improve. we have no benchmark right now. our only benchmark are the marks*
- *Some of the lecturers seem tired and bored with their subject. There is a lack of current interest and a lack of engaging with students, instead talking at us and then leaving us in group work that is not engaging. Some lecturers have very poor facilitation/teaching skills. These could be improved*

Sample comments: international students

- *The lecturer can prepare more and do more communication with us. Some subjects I learned before that the lecturer refuse to answer my question after the lecture finished. (That lecturer said: 'Do not ask me question now, if you can not understand, send it to the black board.' And there is till at least 10 mins left for that lecture) But for me-a international student, mother language is not English, sometimes I really prefer I can ask my question to the lecturer face-to -face*
- *I don't think the feedback from our lecturers are enough. In one of my accounting courses I selected this semester, we finished our assignment and mid-term exam before the mid-term break, but we cannot get any feedback of how we did from our lecturers. We can't find our drawbacks and effectively improve our performance without feedbacks*
- *Fire XXX. It is the one of the lousiest teachers I ever had. You cannot understand him and I am around a lot of international students. It is about accent and structure of thinking and how he performs in class*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=132)	International (n=108)	All (n=240)
Good teaching experiences			
- Teaching methods and techniques used are outdated/need improvement	21%	14%	18%
- Discussions of issues during class were not encouraged			
- Lecturers were boring; did not engage with students			
- Learning materials and resources were outdated			
Concern and care for student learning			
- Students did not feel supported in their learning;	8%	6%	7%
- help and advice was not readily available			
Sample comments: domestic students			
- <i>That not all teaching staff had the same level of enthusiasm and teaching ability. Some courses were great and some were well below par and the difference was the teacher</i>			
- <i>More case studies and group discussion need to be involved; lecturers need to explain the topics and concepts not just read the lecture notes and text books.</i>			
- <i>The Finance course was badly taught with no real structure or consistency of teaching. Often I felt the lecturers come to their lectures unprepared and unfamiliar with their presentation</i>			
Sample comments: international students			
- <i>Teacher should have more time to spend on study and query or question. My experience is students have questions but the teacher was lacking of time to answer them</i>			
- <i>Teaching staff's feedback on our work, especially in the Accounting course. Sometimes there is only a check list of marks provided as their feedback on our work, but that is not very helpful to us</i>			
- <i>Unfortunately, not every lecturer put a lot of effort into their lectures. 1/3 lecturer's class were extremely boring. I had to start to teach myself by reading textbooks at home</i>			

3 Overall satisfaction (KPI 16)

Definition

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

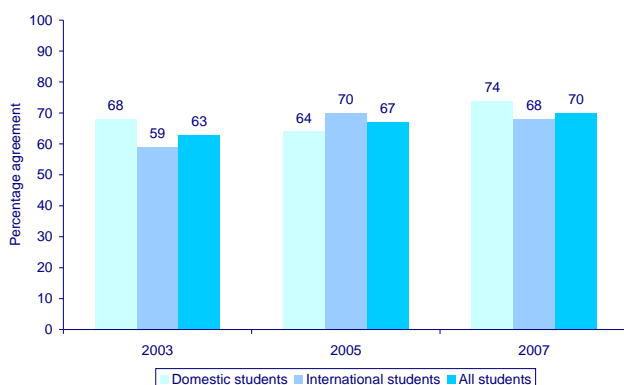
- Reputation of the University/ Faculty/ degree (including reputation in the professional arena)
- Value for money (cost of course; entry standard of students; level of course content)
- Qualifications (teaching/ subject), knowledge and relevant experience of academic staff

Trends

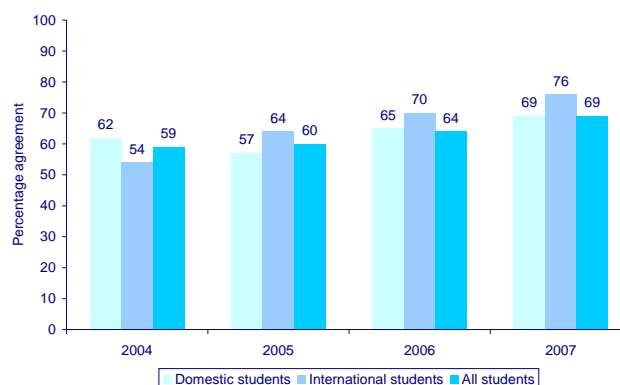
Overall satisfaction with the degree course currently rates at 69% for graduates and 70% for current students. The University average for graduates is 70% and for current students is 75%. While these scores reflect the answers to the question *'I am satisfied with the quality of my degree/ course'*, student comments in relation to overall satisfaction cover a range of issues including: the reputation/ quality of the degree/ University/ Faculty; cost of the course; entry standard; and qualifications, knowledge and experience of academic staff. Whilst students view their course experience positively, concerns are raised by students about the perceived lowering of the academic standard of their degree to accommodate NESB international students.

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	20%	8%	13%	14%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	5%	7%	9%	10%
	All	31%	24%	18%	12%	7%	11%	12%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	15%	26%	14%	20%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	8%	4%	2%	9%
	All	24%	31%	14%	12%	11%	9%	15%

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

3.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

In 2007, very few current students who provided written observations in their responses to the SCEQ mentioned aspects relating to overall satisfaction i.e. reputation/ quality of degree/ University; qualifications, knowledge and experience of staff, including guest lecturers; the entry standards or students; or the cost of the course. Only 6% of postgraduate coursework students (8/131 comments received) mentioned the aforementioned aspects as being areas of best practice.

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

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=130)	International (n=114)	All (n=244)
Staffing issues			
- Qualifications of staff in subject matter and in teaching at tertiary level	9%	7%	8%
- Relevant experience of lecturers and tutors in subject area			
- Relevant and up to date knowledge of lecturers and tutors			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Coaching Psychology - innovative area, dynamic leader of the course, world recognised, very practical*
- *Great skilled lecturers in both fields - well qualified; leaders in their respective fields*
- *Interesting subject matter, University had a good reputation*

Sample comments: international students

- *Lecturers knowledgeable and explained well. Encouraged and showed opinions*
- *The teaching staffs are good and qualified*
- *Professors did an excellent job of using experiences and guest lectures from successful outside professionals*

3.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=38)	International (n=93)	All (n=131)
Value for money			
- Funding/ financial issues relating to course	18%	1%	6%
- Cost of course too high			
- Low academic/ English language standard of fellow students			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *For a masters degree it is a lot like an undergraduate degree. I thought there would be a lot more case studies, practical aspects and interactive aspects. There is too much memorising the theory. It needs to be more skills based*
- *I'm fairly unhappy about my University experience. My degree has cost me about \$20,000 and frankly I just wish I'd used it for a couple of overseas trips. I haven't learnt anything that I can practically use in my work and I don't believe that I'm any richer for the experience*
- *Also, the class itself was 90% international students, the large majority of which had very poor English skills and were not confident enough to speak up in classroom discussion. As a Masters level student, this is part of what you are paying for - however it would appear entry standards are lowered so that more fee paying students are admitted to courses*

Sample comments: international students

- *some of teaching staff is unqualified for their job (Logistics management)*
- *tuition too expensive*
- *it would be better if the courses could be more fitting for 'postgraduate'*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=132)	International (n=108)	All (n=240)
Value for money			
- Funding/ financial issues relating to course	11%	8%	10%
- Cost of course too high			
- Low academic/ English language standard of fellow students			
Staffing issues			
- Qualifications of staff in subject matter and in teaching at tertiary level	7%	0%	4%
- Relevant experience of lecturers and tutors in subject area			
- Relevant and up to date knowledge of lecturers and tutors			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *More challenging topic. Most of the topics I've learnt in Master degrees already have been covered in my undergraduate study, I feel like it's a waste of money*
- *It would be good to have practitioners, IE experts in the industry involved in structuring part of the course. Thus, certain content could be aligned to what is practical in the real world*
- *Too many international students poor English level negatively affected my learning experience*

Sample comments: international students

- *Entry level requirements too low so it felt that I was behind the other students. Found this very frustrating with little aid given*
- *Most people in my course come from one country (China) most can't speak / write English properly. It's quite disappointing that the level of discussion learning is very elementary*
- *Knowing where the money is going from study fees and why International students pay so much more than locals, also understanding the grading system?*

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)
- Induction and orientation
- Responsiveness to student feedback

Trends

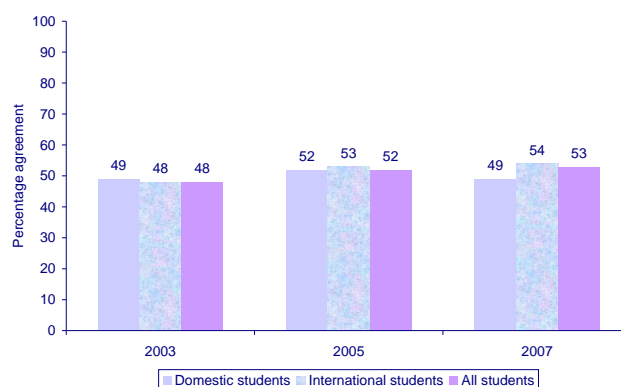
Fifty three percent of students either agreed or strongly agreed with SCEQ survey items on the Learning Community. This is just below the University average of 54%, and within the bottom quarter of faculties. It should be noted that it is similar to other large faculties such as Engineering, Science, Arts and Education, and identical to Law. With a percentage agreement score of 54% in 2007 and 53% in 2005, international students continue to rate this area of their experience higher than domestic students (49% in 2007; 52% in 2005).

Analysis of the comments received in the 2007 SCEQ and CEQ indicate that students are relatively satisfied with the learning environment provided by the Faculty and University. However, they expressed the opinion that the presence of a large number of international (NESB) students, together with large class sizes, inhibited class discussion and interaction between staff and students.

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%	13%	10%	18%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	10%	7%	7%	19%
	All	6%	9%	8%	14%	8%	9%	19%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	20%	53%	21%	17%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	20%	10%	13%	16%
	All	10%	14%	18%	20%	22%	18%	17%

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

4.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=39)	International (n=92)	All (n=131)
------------------------------	--------------------	-------------------------	----------------

Learning environment

- | | | | |
|--|-----|----|----|
| - Experienced social experience of being at university | | | |
| - Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ faculty) | 13% | 7% | 8% |
| - Academic interests were being explored with staff and students
e.g. in tutorials; in group work | | | |
| - Enjoyed the cultural mix of students in the course | | | |
| - Happy with size of class | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *the best part is where you get to listen to what other students are saying in class. it makes you think about things that you might not have thought about before. (however, that is IF they are willing to speak out in class).*
- *Interaction with other students and lecturers who are interested in learning*
- *The subjects with smaller classes, which take more of a seminar format, where issues and ideas are discussed*

Sample comments: international students

- *We have sufficient time to discuss the issues with our fellow students which is good for us to understand what we have learnt.*
- *The online learning is useful for us to get some extra from the lecturer and community with our lecturer and group members.*
- *good environment*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=130)	International (n=114)	All (n=244)
----------------------	---------------------	--------------------------	----------------

Learning environment

- | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| - Experienced social experience of being at university | | | |
| - Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ faculty) | 18% | 19% | 19% |
| - Academic interests were being explored with staff and students
e.g. in tutorials; in group work | | | |
| - Enjoyed the cultural mix of students in the course | | | |
| - Happy with size of class | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Interacting with other professionals interested in the same subject matter and the accumulation of solid professional network from fellow students*
- *Group work/atmosphere with other students*
- *Share and enjoy the most intelligent brains and ideas of world-class economists scientists*

Sample comments: international students

- *Studying in a different country, making International friends and contacts*
- *All people with different backgrounds brought together and really exposed me to different cultures*
- *Team work which is the best and most efficient way for students to learn from each other and from case studies*

4.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=38)	International (n=93)	All (n=131)
------------------------------	--------------------	-------------------------	----------------

Learning environment

- | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| - Did not feel that they belonged to a community | | | |
| - Academic interests were not explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials; group work | 45% | 10% | 20% |
| - Too many international students in course | | | |
| - NESB students language difficulties hinder class discussions | | | |
| - Lectures and tutorials had too many people in them; inhibited discussion | | | |

Staff responsive to feedback

- | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|
| - Comments and suggestions on the course are not being listened to and acted upon | 8% | 0% | 2% |
| - Lecturers and tutors do solicit feedback on their courses | | | |
| - Evaluation forms are not handed out during units of study | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The class numbers are too large to be able to invoke discussion or debate, which was one of the things I was looking forward to when I decided to go back to Uni*
- *The MIB seems to have an unusually large intake for a graduate program. I feel the level of student intake has compromised the learning environment. I also have concerns about the ability and/or level of commitment of the students I have come across. I feel this compromises my learning experience, particularly with regard to group work*
- *The psycho (coaching) part is excellent, but the workplace relations area attracts a lot of students is without interest and commitment to and often limited English skills making the courses dumped down in lecturers and causing a lack of interaction in tutorials which is frustrating for good students*

Sample comments: international students

- *I prefer more tutorials which is limited to less than 10 persons*
- *If we could have tutorial sessions for subjects, it would allow closer communications between the teachers and students. Personally I believe this would be essential to have tutorials on top of lectures*
- *I think too much Chinese in the same class is not so good, for it's not effective for all of us to improve our speaking and learning skills*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=132)	International (n=108)	All (n=240)
----------------------	---------------------	--------------------------	----------------

Learning environment

- | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| - Academic interests were not explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials; group work | 17% | 16% | 16% |
| - Too many international students in course | | | |
| - NESB students language difficulties hinder class discussions | | | |
| - Lectures and tutorials had too many people in them; inhibited discussion | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Too many students in the lectures, needs to be addressed*
- *No group activity, no interaction between students*
- *More opportunities for discussion and unpacking theories in HRM stream - more opportunities to apply theories to practice and test modules / theoretical concepts*

Sample comments: international students

- *Class sizes, particularly those of popular ones (International Business, Marketing and other introductory classes), should be reduced. Doing so could improve class interaction and overall learning experience*
- *Although I embraced cultural diversity and I am foreigner myself, I feel that the balance between International and Australian students was uneven*
- *I believe that tutorials need to be a bit more interesting and informative rather than just a chat*

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)
- 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

Trends

In 2007 45% of comments received from graduates and 41% from current students commented favourably on various aspects of the curriculum including: content and structure of the whole degree program and individual units of study; relevance to career, work and industry; and flexibility of the degree structure. Overall satisfaction with the curriculum is indicated by the lower percentage of comments that mention this as an area in need of improvement (SCEQ: 31%; CEQ: 27%). Since students do not usually mention either their degree or the Unit of Study to which the comment refers, it is not possible to isolate areas of best practice or improvement by these factors.

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	40%	51%	44%	53%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	38%	42%	33%	26%
	All	47%	47%	51%	39%	45%	39%	41%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	38%	32%	27%	30%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	24%	31%	28%	24%
	All	34%	30%	24%	31%	31%	27%	27%

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

5.2.2 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=39)	International (n=92)	All (n=131)
Content and structure			
- Satisfied with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	31%	37%	35%
- Subjects appear to be linked together			
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			
Flexibility, variety, diversity			
- Appreciate flexibility of degree structure, esp combined degrees	10%	1%	4%
- Ability to take a range of units of study			
Online method of delivery			
- Appreciate the benefits of Blackboard and WebCT	8%	4%	5%

Sample comments: domestic students

- *MIB/MCom The course structure enables a tailored program for my interests. Provides functional specific study*
- *The course topic is potentially very interesting and relevant. The course appears to have been conceived of with great intentions. The materials appear to be very thorough, yet the delivery is extremely poor, boring and unprofessional.*
- *a lot of flexibility on when I can go to lectures and tutorials. Online support is great, as I can find basically all necessary information from blackboard, and the newsletter from ceo is useful too. The staff are dedicated to teaching too. The tutorials are great. More subjects should have tutorials as well, but not mandatory ones*

Sample comments: international students

- *The balance between - Business and Law units, respectively taught by the Law School and the Business School; not only by one of them (like most of the time in other University by the Business School). This maintains Laws units in a strictly legal approach, which is much better*
- *The general panorama that is given in the subjects. The possibility of explore other areas of knowledge*
- *The units of study involved in this degree course are well integrated and mutual-related, which enables me to combine the knowledge acquired from each unit together*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=130)	International (n=114)	All (n=244)
Content and structure			
- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	40%	23%	32%
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			
Flexibility, variety, diversity			
- Appreciate flexibility of degree structure, esp combined degrees	9%	3%	6%
- Ability to take a range of units of study			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Choosing subjects -> wide range available. Greater business insight (compared to undergraduates).*
- *Interesting lecturers and relevant subject matter - my courses tended to be very up-to-date with political and economic development*
- *Expertise/coaching lectures and material and stretching different delivery modes - e.g. Winter, Summer, block*

Sample comments: international students

- *Connected with CPA or CA programme prerequisite knowledge structure*
- *Studying in a different system and language was wonderful and prepared me for work anywhere in the world. The subject was interesting as was what the course offered*
- *Multidisciplinary aspect and teamwork. Large range of courses available in different subjects*

5.2.3 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=38)	International (n=93)	All (n=131)
------------------------------	--------------------	-------------------------	----------------

Content and structure

- | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| - Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/
individual units of study | 24% | 27% | 26% |
| - Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry
requirements | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Although it is great to have an international perspective of business it seems to completely disregard domestic business altogether, rather than presenting as an integrated economy*
- *Only half of the course (MIntS) can be completed by correspondence which may result in me having to switch to a different university to complete my course*
- *More guidance with regards to subject selection. Some subjects share a lot of the same material. This sharing of content is not revealed in subject descriptions.*

Sample comments: international students

- *I think Sydney uni should be more creative in creating unit of studies. as a student of postgraduate of business I found that there are several units that have the same content. for instance, Int Bus strategy and Global Context of business. as a major with 8 cores and 4 units for major/elective, this situation really decrease our flexibility in choosing our units for our major.*
- *Allow us to get back our credits or do more units of study under the degree so as to match the 2 year full time study (16 units) requirement under the new immigration policy.*
- *international business: more academic theories and approaches should be taught finance: how to apply the knowledge to practice is really important, there is a disconnect between knowledge and practice*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=132)	International (n=108)	All (n=240)
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Content and structure

- | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| - Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/
individual units of study | 23% | 21% | 23% |
| - Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry
requirements | | | |
| - Do not like intensive courses | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *I started with Public Affairs the course was dropped with no explanation. Better communication from University*
- *Could have more required courses for this degree IE. Employment Law. Human Resources at University is still a fledging field and in some courses this is more obvious than others. As a result, some courses struggle to justify their academic status, making theoretical assumptions about some very non-academic ideas*
- *Overall the course is too general, theoretical and impractical. I suggest this program be redesigned to cover the relevant topics of International Business with actual case studies*

Sample comments: international students

- *The range of electives offered in the Majors. Most of the electives are only offered in the first semester, making clashes with other core subject unavoidable*
- *Need more links to the relevant industry, and be more practical in specific areas of the logistics and supply chain industry, e.g. procurement, demand planning, inventory control*
- *Be practical, not close to real work, provide internship during course work*

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

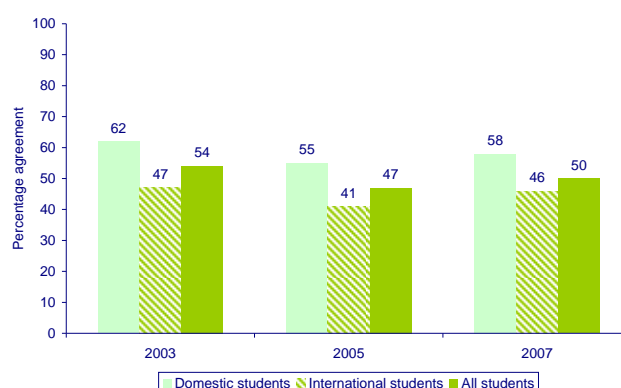
The percentage agreement scores for appropriate assessment (50%) in the 2007 SCEQ has increased by 3% since 2005. The University average is 66%.

In relation to comments received which mention assessment, the trend across the University is for there to be more comments expressing dissatisfaction than satisfaction. The Faculty of Economics and Business is no exception. On the whole students appear to be satisfied with assessment practices within the Faculty; however the nature of group work assessment, particularly in relation to participation and distribution of marks ranks highly as an area of concern.

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	1%	3%	9%	8%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	3%	3%	6%	7%
	All	6%	3%	5%	2%	3%	8%	7%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	12%	16%	12%	9%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	6%	11%	3%	13%
	All	2%	6%	7%	9%	12%	8%	11%

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

6.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

Three percent of students (i.e. 4/131) expressed satisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments and the benefit of group assignments. The majority of comments came from international students. Due to the low number of comments, and to maintain student confidentiality, no sample comments are provided.

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

Seven percent of the total number of comments received from graduates (8% of comments from domestic students and 7% of comments from international students) mentioned that they were satisfied with assessment practices in the Faculty.

The following sample comments illustrate the areas of best practice relating to assessment that graduates mentioned in their response to the 2006 CEQ:

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Practical applications to assignments: to be able to assess 'real situations' as opposed to theoretical arguments*
- *A balance of exam, group work and individual assignments*
- *The topics and materials of course are up to date; the group assignments are helpful; presentations are very helpful*

Sample comments: international students

- *The studying schedule. I mean the assignments and the mid-exam, final exam are always focused on what I am studying and makes me better understanding step by step*
- *Group assignments were good*
- *Practical, real-time based questions in final exam*

6.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=38)	International (n=93)	All (n=131)
Types of assessment			
- Unhappy with group assignments esp. in relation to marking, equal participation/ contribution of team members	24%	27%	26%
- Consider assessments do not test understanding of the subject			
- Dissatisfied with the types of assessments used			
- Unhappy with weighting of assessment components			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The written parts of the assessment are very time consuming and do not generate much value for me, more valuable would be more time spent in class*
- *I wish the assignment system could be changed. If we are working in groups, they should be smaller. Some students are not as responsible and the whole group suffers.*
- *The online quiz is a good way to keep us up to date, but they're no explanation as to those are the answers for the multiply choice questions. Answers to past exams would be nice too. More interactive exercises such as practice quiz, or simulations would be great as this will make the subjects more interesting and promote learning*

Sample comments: international students

- *I do not like a multiple choice question in examination especially for unit that need our understanding, not memorizing. especially when the choices are quite similar. it is better to give essay for knowing wether we understand the theory or not.*
- *I don't understand why there are class participations in the course. I think it is worthless. There may be other ways to access the students understand ability.*
- *Exam questions seem to be from a general pool of questions and not necessarily what has been taught in the lecturers*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=132)	International (n=108)	All (n=240)
Types of assessment			
- Unhappy with group assignments esp. in relation to marking, equal participation/ contribution of team members	5%	10%	6%
- Consider assessments do not test understanding of the subject			
- Dissatisfied with the types of assessments used			
- Unhappy with weighting of assessment components			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *More intellectually challenging and appropriate assessment -> I.E. test a wider range of skills.*
- *Group assignments with full time students who didn't pull their weight. Too much group work.*
- *Team-based assessments do not work, as many participants do not constitute to the project. Not isolated case - happened repeatedly*

Sample comments: international students

- *Define and explaining expectations for written assignments. The topics were often very broad, however the marks were given for mainly information given in class, only there by not giving appreciation/motivation for students to search and analyse their own projects.*
- *More smaller assignments would be better than one or two big assignments. Thank You !*
- *Try to keep the difficulty of exams in the same level for different subjects and for different terms of the same subject as well*

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

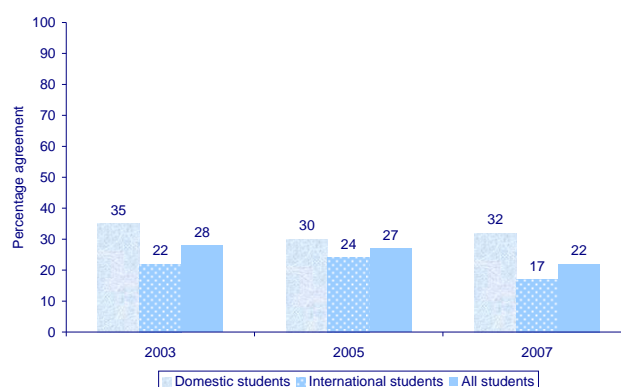
The percentage agreement scores for appropriate workload (20%) in the 2007 SCEQ is lower than the University average of 33%.

Very few students in the Faculty of Economics and Business commented either favourably or unfavourably on their workload.

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%	0%	1%	0%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	1%	0%	0%
	All	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0.3%	0%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	4%	3%	3%	2%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	5%	13%	2%	1%
	All	2%	4%	4%	4%	10%	3%	2%

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

The main issues raised by both current students and graduates related to the amount of work that was required in their courses e.g. the difficulty of getting through all the required readings; simultaneous due dates for assignments; spacing of assignments. The similarity of comments provided on this topic negates the purpose of providing sample comments to illustrate student concerns.