

Taxonomy for analysing qualitative data from the Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ)

Version 3

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Introduction

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 linked to items in the S/CEQ Factors, using a 5 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 comments on the best aspects of their degree experience and those that could be improved. These comments (qualitative data) form the basis of reports on the student experience which are distributed to university senior management; deans and associate deans; and other internal and external stakeholders.

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.

Analysis and evaluation of qualitative data from the SCEQ and CEQ

The combined automated and manual analysis and evaluation method used by the University to ascertain trends in the student experience is based on an in-house taxonomy which allows for standardisation of reporting across the university and ease of comparison with the S/CEQ quantitative analysis reports¹. Categories and sub-categories are based on the University of Sydney Learning and Teaching Key Performance Indicators, S/CEQ Factors/ Scales and additional factors which contribute to respondents' overall satisfaction with their experience of learning and teaching.

The components of these categories and sub-categories are based on recurring themes in students' comments and have been developed over many years of analysing qualitative data from students' surveys. They represent the range of aspects of the student experience which are considered to have a major influence on the quality of the degree experience.

Key Performance Indicators For Learning And Teaching

The following Core scales, and their relevant survey items from the Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) and Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ), (administered by Graduate Careers Australia in association with Australian higher education institutions) are used to measure an underlying construct which are used by all participating institutions:

- **Graduate Generic Skills**, that is the level of satisfaction with generic skills acquired
- **Graduate Good Teaching**, that is the level of satisfaction with good teaching and
- **Overall Graduate Satisfaction** that is the proportion of graduates who were satisfied with the overall quality of their courses

In addition to the above scales, the University measures student satisfaction in the following areas through the internally administered Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ):

- **Learning Community**, that is student perceptions of the social experience of learning at university. It indicates the students' sense of belonging to a community where learning with other people is a priority
- **Appropriate Assessment**, that is the extent to which assessment measures higher order thinking and understanding rather than simple factual recall
- **Appropriate Workload**, that is student perception of reasonable workloads
- **Clear Goals and Standards**, that is the establishing of clear aims and objectives for a course and clear expectations of the standard of work expected from students.

Initiative LT1 in the University Strategic Plan 2007 - 2010 states that we "Improve academic program structures to achieve greater coherence; provide choice while maintaining flexibility; and ensuring continuing relevance of our courses to students and employers²".

¹ At <http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/>

² See http://www.usyd.edu.au/strategy/learn_teach/initiatives.shtml

Respondents to the SCEQ who provide written observations on their experiences, often refer to the **Curriculum**, or programme of study being undertaken, an area that is not directly related to the numerical items on the survey. Since this may be mentioned in up to 50% of comments received, it is included in this report in order to provide a full picture of issues which were perceived by respondents to the SCEQ to be either of best practice or in need of improvement during their period of study at the University

Construct of the taxonomy

The taxonomy consists of nine sections, all of which are included in faculty and university-wide reports on trends in the student experience:

SECTION	Questionnaire Scale	Colour code ³
1. Good Teaching	SCEQ and CEQ	
2. Clear Goals and Standards	SCEQ	
3. Assessment	SCEQ	
4. Workload	SCEQ	
5. Graduate Attributes	SCEQ and CEQ	
6. Learning Community	SCEQ	
7. Overall Satisfaction	SCEQ and CEQ	
8. Curriculum		

The following information is included for all of the above categories:

1. Coverage of the category, usually taken from descriptions found in survey documentation
2. Explanatory notes where necessary
3. S/CEQ survey items (categories 1-7)
4. Sub-categories
 - Aspect or component (*These represent the coverage of each factor*)
 - Scope notes (in the form of "Answers the question"
Scope notes are used to define the sub-category, and are particularly useful when the same word or phrase is used to describe different aspects of the student experience e.g. group work may be used to describe three different aspects of the student experience of learning and teaching – developing group work skills; a teaching method; and assessment. Scope notes defining each of these elements will help to correctly place the comments mentioning group work.)

Reading the Taxonomy:

1. The **SECTION HEADING** is the name of the S/CEQ Scale or Additional item. These are used in the reporting structure in order to align the quantitative and qualitative data, and thereby provide comparative information between the qualitative and quantitative data, and standardisation across faculty and institutional reports.
2. The **SUB-CATEGORY** represents the aspects which are used in the report to identify key issues in the areas of best practice and areas needing improvement. They may be sub-divided further for analysis purposes.
3. The Aspect or component represents a further delineation or granularity of analysis, and are sub-sets of the Sub-category. Within the taxonomy there are two types of aspects:
 - a. Those that are used in the analysis and recorded in the relevant spreadsheets and NVivo projects for information. These are identified by ***bold and italic*** formatting.
 - b. Those that are provided merely as a guide to the content of the sub-category and are not used in the analysis and recording of qualitative data. These are identified by *italic* formatting

References to publications on the topic of analysing and reporting qualitative data from student satisfaction surveys, and taxonomy development are at Attachment 2

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³ Colour coding links items in all documentation relating to analysis and reporting of the qualitative data in the SCEQ and CEQ

1 Good Teaching Scale

Coverage:

The Good Teaching Scale is characterised by practices such as providing students with feedback on their progress, explaining things, making the course interesting, motivating students, and understanding students' problems. There is a body of research linking these practices to learning outcomes. High scores on the Good Teaching Scale are associated with the perception that these practices are present. Lower scores reflect a perception that these practices occur less frequently.

SCEQ/ CEQ Survey items

- *The teaching staff normally give me helpful feedback on how I am going*
- *The teaching staff of this degree course motivate me to do my best work*
- *The staff make a real effort to understand difficulties I may be having with my work*
- *My lecturers are extremely good at explaining things*
- *The teaching staff work hard to make their subjects interesting*
- *The staff put a lot of time into commenting on my work.*

There are **6 sub-categories** within the Good Teaching Scale, against which students comments are analysed. Each of these sub-categories may be further broken down into relevant aspects (or components) of the student experience of Good Teaching.

1. Good teaching experiences
2. Student motivation
3. Understanding and empathy
4. Good explanations received
5. Feedback on work
6. Research-enhanced learning and teaching

The components of these sub-categories are based on the SCEQ survey items together with recurring themes in students' comments; the section "answers the question" is based on the themes and questions raised by students in their responses.

1.1 GOOD TEACHING EXPERIENCES

There are six components to Good Teaching Experiences, each of which are counted as aspects in written observations when analysing and reporting on the student experience of learning and teaching.

Within these, *Teaching methods and techniques* may also have the sub-division of *Group work*, and *Learning Materials and Resources*, the sub-division of *eLearning materials and resources*.

Good teaching experiences	
Aspect or component	Answers the question:
<i>Make subjects interesting</i>	Do lecturers/ tutors make the subject content of the lecture/ tutorial as interesting as possible? Is students' interest in the topic maintained or are they bored?
<i>Engaging students</i>	Do lecturers/ tutors engage with students during the lecture/ tutorial? Do they seem interested in students during the lecture/tutorial? Do students perceive that lecturers/ tutors are just there because they have to be and not because they want to impart learning
<i>Teaching methods and techniques</i> (incl. tutorials; group work as a method of teaching)	Are the methods used innovative? Are they up to date? Do lecturers use modern technology such as PowerPoint? Do lecturers use a range of methods within one unit of study e.g. group; tutorials; discussions; presentations; straight lecture? Is noise and unruly student behaviour controlled? Does parallel teaching take place (i.e. undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students in same class) Do lecturers simply read from text books and/ or slides? <i>General comments on teacher quality go here</i>
<i>Discussions encouraged</i> (incl. tutorials as a way of encouraging discussions)	Do lecturers/ tutors encourage student participation in discussions about the subject matter? Are there any impediments to class discussions (from teaching experience point of view, not from class size or cultural mix point of view)
<i>Learning materials and resources</i>	Are the learning materials and resources provided up to date – i.e. learning materials and references provided? Are there any learning materials? Are learning resources available electronically?
<i>Plagiarism</i>	Do students mention cheating?

1.2 STUDENT MOTIVATION

There is only one level or component to this sub-category.

Student Motivation	
Aspect or component	Answers the question:
<i>Way taught is motivating</i>	Is the lecturer/ tutor passionate/ enthusiastic about the subject when teaching? Does the lecturer/ tutor motivate the student to do more in class; research the subject; do well? Are lecturers/ tutors inspiring?

1.3 UNDERSTANDING AND EMPATHY

NB: Prior to 2010, this category was called *Care and Concern for student learning*

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Good Teaching.

Understanding and empathy	
Aspect or component	Answers the question:
<i>Concern, care, support for students</i>	Do students feel supported by lecturers/ tutors? Are lecturers/ tutors helpful? Are lecturers/ tutors readily available for consultation out of lectures/ tutorials? Do lecturers/ tutors display concern for students as individuals?
<i>Understanding students difficulties/ problems</i>	Do lecturers/ tutors understand students' difficulties with the work? Do lecturers/ tutors assume prior knowledge without checking? Are lecturers/ tutors aware of difficulties and/ or problems (academic and personal) that may affect learning e.g. English language; health problems (special consideration etc)? Do lecturers/ tutors make a special effort to help students who are having difficulties or who have extenuating circumstances preventing learning e.g. home/ health/ academic
<i>Priority to students/ teaching not to research</i>	Are lecturers only teaching because they have to as part of their contract? Would lecturers rather be doing their research than teaching? Does this lead to disengagement with students outside and during lectures?
<i>Support for part-time/ distance education students</i>	Do part-time or distance education students feel supported in their learning? Are their specific problems understood/ catered to by faculty/ university e.g. extending consultation hours;

1.4 GOOD EXPLANATIONS

There are three components to Good Explanations, each of which are counted as aspects in written observations when analysing and reporting on the student experience of learning and teaching.

Good explanations received	
Aspect or component	Answers the question:
<i>Clarity of instruction</i>	Do the lecturers/ tutors provide clear instructions and/ or explanations on subject matter? Are examples explained clearly e.g. in accounting; formula etc
<i>Good Explanations received</i>	Are lecturers/ tutors good at explaining things/ course material/ subject? Do they make allowances for NESB students in the class? Do they make allowances for different levels of prior knowledge on subject matter?
<i>English language proficiency of staff</i>	Are lecturers/ tutors proficient in English language speaking? Does the lecturer's/ tutor's accent prevent understanding of content?

1.5 FEEDBACK ON WORK

NB: this is feedback from lecturers/ tutors on assignments and exams. Feedback requested from students on the course and/ or the teaching is included in Learning Community.

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Good Teaching

Feedback on work	
Aspect or component	Answers the question:
<i>Useful/ helpful feedback</i>	Is feedback provided on a regular basis or just at end of course? Have students ever received feedback? Is the feedback useful or helpful e.g. comments and marks? Is feedback provided in time to be of use in future assignments or exams?
<i>Constructive comments</i>	Does the feedback provide useful information regarding ways to improve? Are the comments legible? (if not then cannot be considered to be constructive) Does the student benefit from the feedback provided?
<i>Staff put time and effort into providing</i>	Are lecturers/ tutors perceived to be making an effort to provide regular and useful feedback? Is it difficult to contact lecturers/ tutors to get feedback on work?

1.6 RESEARCH-ENHANCED LEARNING AND TEACHING

Integration of research into learning and teaching; exposure to research and latest developments; knowledge of the research interests of staff; involvement in group research projects; encouragement for individual research projects; research into the scholarship of teaching. (NB: Comments relating to Research skills (techniques and training) are analysed under Generic Skills: information literacy)

NB: Data under this heading also provides the substance for a separate report on the student experience of Research-enhanced learning and teaching.

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Good Teaching

Research-enhanced learning and teaching	
Aspect or component	Answers the question:
<i>Integration of research into teaching</i>	Does the curriculum include a research component?
<i>Exposure to research and latest developments</i>	Are the latest developments in research mentioned by lecturers and tutors? Do course readings reflect the latest developments in research? Do course readings include research on the topic?
<i>Knowledge of lecturers' research</i>	Are students aware of the research interests of academic staff? Are students involved in lecturers' research projects/ interests? Do lecturers include their research in course subject matter?
<i>Involvement in research projects</i>	Are students involved in research projects with staff and/or students? Are students encouraged to undertake their own research projects?
<i>Scholarship of teaching</i>	Are students aware that research into teaching practices is being undertaken? Are students (Education and Social Work) involved in researching their own practice?

2 Clear Goals and Standards

Coverage:

Practices characteristic of this scale relate to the establishing of clear aims and objectives for a course and clear expectations of the standard of work expected from students. It is possible to employ the good teaching practices described under the Good Teaching Scale, without implementing practices characteristic of the Clear Goals and Standard Scale.

SCEQ survey items

- *I have usually a clear idea of where I am going and what is expected of me in this course*
- *It is always easy to understand the standard of work required*
- *The staff made it clear right from the start what they expected of students*
- *It has often been hard to discover what is expected of me in this degree course*

There are **3 components** within Clear Goals and Standards, against which students comments are analysed.

1. Clear aims and objectives
2. Clear expectations for standard of work
3. Clear explanation of marking criteria

These components are based on recurring themes in students' comments and have been developed over many years of analysing qualitative data from students' surveys. They represent the range of features of Clear Goals and Standards which are considered to be essential to student satisfaction with this aspect of their degree experience and/or overall satisfaction with the course. The section "answers the question" is based on the themes and questions raised by students in their responses.

2.1 CLEAR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

There is only one level or component to this sub-category

Clear aims and objectives	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Clear aims and objectives</i>	Are students aware of the aims of the course? Are students informed about course objectives? Are the aims and objectives of the course clearly explained by lecturers and tutors? Are the aims of assessments clearly explained?

2.2 STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

NB: comments on actual content of assessments goes in Assessment

There is only one level or component to this sub-category

Standards and expectations	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Clear expectations for standard of work</i>	Do students know what standard of work is required to get certain grades? Do students know what standard of work is expected for individual assignments? Do students know what is required for individual assessments? Is it made clear to students what is expected in the course?

2.3 MARKING CRITERIA

NB: comments on actual marking of assignments goes in Assessment

There is only one level or component to this sub-category

Marking criteria	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Marking criteria</i>	Do lecturers and tutors explain the marking criteria for assessment? Is information about marking criteria transparent across the course? Do different lecturers/ tutors appear to work to different marking criteria?

3 Assessment

Coverage:

This scale deals with the extent to which assessment measures higher order thinking and understanding rather than simple factual recall. This scale does not probe other important aspects of assessment practices such as congruence of the assessment with the material actually taught, the level of difficulty and the consistency of the quality of assessment.

SCEQ survey items

- *The staff seem more interested in what I have memorised rather than what I have understood;*
- *Too many staff ask me just about facts;*
- *To do well in this degree all you need is a good memory*

There are **3 components** to the Assessment Category, against which students comments are analysed to gain a picture of the student experience of Assessment in their courses.

1. Content of assessment
2. Types of assessment
3. Marking

These components based on recurring themes in students' comments and have been developed over many years of analysing qualitative data from students' surveys. They represent the range of features of assessment that are considered to be essential to student satisfaction. The section "answers the question" is based on the themes and questions raised by students in their responses.

3.1 CONTENT OF ASSESSMENTS

There is only one level or component to this sub-category

Content of assessments	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Content of assessments</i>	Do assessments only test a students' memory of the course content? Do students feel that assessments test their understanding of the subject? Are students benefiting from their assessments i.e. are they gaining an understanding of the topic? Does the method of assessment mean that they can memorise and forget afterward? Does the method of assessment encourage lifelong learning or test and forget? Does the method of assessment prepare students for the workforce? Do assessments reflect the material being taught in lecturers/ tutorials? Is material examined that is not covered in the course?

3.2 TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Good Teaching. This sub-category **may** be further sub-divided into **Group Assessment**.

Types of assessment	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Types of assessment</i>	What do students feel about the group work method of assessment? Do they like group work as a form of assessment? Would they prefer exams or assignments? Are a variety of assessment methods used by the lecturers? Do 100% exams still exist?

6.3 MARKING

NB: Comments that refer to marking criteria are placed in Clear Goals and Standards: Marking criteria

There is only one level or component to this sub-category

Marking	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Marking</i>	Is marking of assessments considered to be fairly distributed? Are certain forms of assessment weighted too heavily? Are markers fair in their distribution of marks? Are markers across the same unit of study acting equitably? Is marking standardised across the same unit of study tutorials etc? Would students prefer marks or pass/fail system of marking? Do they feel disadvantaged in a group due to 'group marks' rather than individual?

4 Appropriate Workload

Coverage:

Higher scores on this scale indicate a perception of reasonable workloads. Heavy workloads do not necessarily equate to high standards and expectations so the wording of the items probes the extent to which heavy workloads interfere with student learning. Heavy workloads tend to preclude students from engaging with and understanding the material they are learning. Instead, many students adopt surface approaches to learning as a strategy for dealing with high workloads.

SCEQ survey items

- *There is a lot of pressure on me as a student in this degree course;*
- *The workload is too heavy;*
- *I am generally given enough time to understand the things I have to learn;*
- *The sheer volume of work to be got through in this degree means it can't all be thoroughly comprehended*

All comments from students that relate to workload and/or the timing of assignment deadlines are counted under workload. There are no separate components or aspects.

The section "answers the question" is based on the themes and questions raised by students in their responses.

There is only one level or component to this sub-category

Workload	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Appropriate Workload</i>	Does the student feel pressured by the amount of work required in this course? Is the workload too heavy? Does the student consider that the workload is just right? Does the student consider that the workload is too little? Does the student consider that there is too much to read in this course? Does the student consider that there is too much to understand in this course? Does the workload for this course affects the student's ability to learn in other courses?
<i>Assessment deadlines</i>	Are all the assignments due at the same time? Do students think that there should be consultation between lecturers to avoid clashing of assignment deadlines?

5 Graduate Attributes

Coverage

The Generic Skills Scale is an attempt to take into account the extent to which university courses develop graduate attributes. Graduate attributes that may have been acquired in the process of learning discipline knowledge should endure and be applicable in a broader context. Graduate attributes typically identified in this context include communication skills, the capacity to learn new skills and procedures, the capacity to make decisions and solve problems, the ability to apply knowledge to the workplace, and the capacity to work both in teams and with minimum supervision.

SCEQ/ CEQ Survey items

- *The degree course has helped me develop my ability to work as a team member;*
- *The degree course has sharpened my analytical skills;*
- *As a result of my degree course,*
- *I feel confident about tackling unfamiliar problems;*
- *The degree course has developed my problem solving skills;*
- *The degree course has improved my skills in written communication;*
- *My degree course has helped me to develop the ability to plan my own work.*

There are **5 sub-categories** within the Generic Skills Scale, against which students comments are analysed. These match the five main University Generic Graduate Attributes.

1. Communication
2. Ethical, social and professional understanding
3. Information literacy
4. Personal and intellectual autonomy
5. Research and inquiry

The components of these sub-categories are allied to the skills and abilities for each attribute provided in the University policy framework for Graduate Attributes⁴. The scope of each attribute is provided at the head of each sub-category list; the section "answers the question" includes the indicative interpretations from the University policy framework.

5.1 COMMUNICATION

Graduates of the University will recognise and value communication as a tool for negotiating and creating new understanding, interacting with others, and furthering their own learning.

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Graduate Attributes

Communication	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Written communication</i>	Are the students' written communication skills being developed? Are written communication skills in English being improved? (NESB students) Are students being equipped with essay writing/ report writing skills?
<i>Oral communication</i>	Are students being taught to communicate orally e.g. in group work? Do they feel that their oral communication skills have improved?
<i>Communicating / relating to others</i>	Are students being provided with the skills necessary to communicate with or relate to others in a group situation? Do they know how to use communication as a tool to interact and relate to others?
<i>Communicating understanding</i>	Can students use communication (oral and written) as a tool to communicate understanding of a topic? Are presentation skills being improved?

⁴ http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/graduateAttributes/policy_framework.pdf

5.2 ETHICAL, SOCIAL, AND PROFESSIONAL UNDERSTANDING

Graduates of the University will hold personal values and beliefs consistent with their role as responsible members of local, national, international and professional communities.

There are three components to Ethical, Social, Professional Understanding, each of which are counted as aspects in written observations when analysing and reporting on the student experience of learning and teaching.

Ethical, social, and professional understanding	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Ethical, social, cultural understanding</i>	<p>Are students encouraged to strive for truth, honesty, integrity, open mindedness, fairness and generosity?</p> <p>Are there courses in ethical behaviour and responsibilities (particularly in relation to professional faculties)?</p> <p>Do lecturers/ tutors act ethically in their dealings with students (i.e. displaying skills of ethical behaviour)</p> <p>Are students developing social skills that will allow them to work with and in the wider community?</p> <p>Do students acknowledge their personal responsibility for their own value judgements and behaviour?</p> <p>Do students display an appreciation of and respect for diversity?</p> <p>Do they appreciate the range of diversity in the student and staff population?</p> <p>Are they encouraged to look at knowledge from a local, international and national perspective?</p> <p>Are all points of view presented by lecturers/ tutors?</p> <p>Are they encouraged to hold a perspective that acknowledges local, national and international concerns?</p>
<i>Group work and team skills</i>	<p>Are group work and team working skills developed during the course?</p> <p>Do these skills reflect the working environment or are they artificial (i.e. in the view of the student)?</p>
<i>Professional skills and experience</i>	<p>Are students being provided with the skills necessary to work in their industry/ discipline after graduation?</p> <p>Is professional experience in the form of practicums, work experience, industry placement available as part of the course?</p> <p>Does this experience qualify the student to work in his discipline on graduation?</p> <p><i>NB: practical work as part of the curriculum e.g. as opposed to theory, and taking place in the university, not in a workplace, is included in curriculum</i></p> <p><i>Only comments specifically mentioning the 'skills' aspect of experience are included</i></p>

5.3 INFORMATION LITERACY

Graduates of the University will be able to use information effectively in a range of contexts

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Graduate Attributes

NB: Research skills goes in Research and Inquiry

Information literacy	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Use information to construct knowledge</i>	<p>Can students use information in critical thinking and problem solving constructs to construct knowledge?</p> <p>Are they able to evaluate information and its sources?</p>
<i>Information: economic, legal, social, cultural issues</i>	<p>Do students understand economic, legal, social and cultural issues in the use of information?</p>

5.4 PERSONAL AND INTELLECTUAL AUTONOMY

Graduates of the University will be able to work independently and sustainably, in a way that is informed by openness, curiosity and a desire to meet new challenges.

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Graduate Attributes

Personal and intellectual autonomy	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Intellectually curious</i>	Are student intellectually curious? Are students able to sustain intellectual interest? Is this encouraged?
<i>Independent thinking and learning</i>	Are students capable of rigorous and independent thinking? Is independent thought encouraged by lecturers/ tutors? Does the course provide the capacity for students to engage in independent learning? Do students want to be independent in thinking and learning or do they prefer rote learning?
<i>New ways of thinking</i>	Are students open to new ideas, methods and ways of thinking? Do they appreciate these when used by lecturers/ tutors?
<i>Responsive to unfamiliar problems</i>	Are students able to respond effectively to unfamiliar problems in unfamiliar contexts? Are they encouraged to tackle unfamiliar problems? <i>May overlap with problem solving skills (Research and Inquiry)</i>
<i>Ability to meet new challenges</i>	Are students able to identify processes and strategies to learn and meet new challenges? Are they provided with these skills e.g. in assignments, group work etc?
<i>Personal vision and goals</i>	Do students mention personal vision and goals, and their quest to work towards these in a sustainable way? Are they encouraged to have their own vision and goals?
<i>Plan my own work</i>	Do students take responsibility for their own learning? Are they committed to continuous reflection, self-evaluation and self-improvement? Is lifelong learning encouraged by lecturers/ tutors/ faculty?

5.5 RESEARCH AND INQUIRY

Graduates of the University will be able to create new knowledge and understanding through the process of research and inquiry.

There are four components to Research and Inquiry, each of which are counted as aspects in written observations when analysing and reporting on the student experience of learning and teaching

Research and inquiry	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Analytical, Critical thinking, Problem solving</i>	<p>Are the students developing the ability to identify, define and analyse problems or create processes to solve them?</p> <p>Are students aware that they are developing the ability to solve problems?</p> <p>Are students developing analytical skills?</p> <p>Are students able to exercise critical judgement and critical thinking in creating new understanding?</p> <p>Are students aware that these skills are being developed?</p> <p>Are they developing them with the help of lecturers/ tutors?</p>
<i>Creativity and imagination</i>	<p>Are students aware that they are becoming creative and imaginative thinkers during their learning?</p>
<i>Expanding knowledge base</i>	<p>Are students aware that their ability to critically evaluate existing understanding and recognise the limitations of their own knowledge is being developed?</p> <p>Is the student gaining additional knowledge (expanding knowledge) in their discipline/ are they aware of this?</p> <p>Is this helped by lecturer motivation? Or by encouragement to look beyond the confines of the lecture content?</p> <p>Do students have an informed respect for the principles, methods, standards, values and boundaries of their discipline and the ability to question them?</p>
<i>Research Skills</i>	<p>Are students being provided with the skills to recognise, locate and retrieve information e.g. research skills/ methodology units of study or courses at the library?</p> <p>Do students feel capable of retrieving information from a range of sources?</p> <p>Do students know how to locate information efficiently and effectively?</p> <p>Can students use contemporary media and technology to access and manage information?</p> <p>Are students learning the technical or disciplinary skills necessary?</p> <p>Do [science] students learn how to undertake experiments?</p>

6 Learning Community

Coverage:

This SCEQ scale concerns student perceptions of the social experience of learning at university. It indicates the student's sense of belonging to a community where learning with other people is a priority. It includes: being part of a group of students and staff committed to learning; exploration of ideas with other people; students ideas and suggestions being listened to during the course; exploration of academic interests with staff and students.

SCEQ survey items

- *I feel part of a group of students and staff committed to learning;*
- *I have learned to explore ideas confidently with other people.*
- *Students' ideas and suggestions are listened to during the course;*
- *I feel I belong to the university community;*
- *I am able to explore academic interests with staff and students*

There are **6 sub-categories** within the Learning Community Scale, against which students comments are analysed.

1. Learning environment
2. Location/ isolation
3. Induction and orientation
4. Evaluation and feedback
5. Physical facilities
6. Social inclusion

Each of these sub-categories are further broken down into relevant aspects (or components) of the student experience of being part of a community where learning with other people is a priority. Respect for cultural diversity and equity for all students are an important part of this experience; as is being listened to by academic staff. Together with 7: Curriculum, Learning Community is an essential ingredient in forming the students' opinion of their overall satisfaction with the quality of their degree experience.

The section "answers the question" is based on the themes and questions raised by students in their responses.

6.1 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

There are three components to Learning environment, each of which are counted as aspects in written observations when analysing and reporting on the student experience of learning and teaching. For the purposes of analysis and reporting, *Exploration of academic interests* is divided into the following sub-components: *Tutorials* and *NESB students in class*.

Learning environment	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Belonging to a community</i>	<p>Are students enjoying the social side of university life?</p> <p>Are students making friends with fellow students?</p> <p>Do they feel isolated socially?</p> <p>Are there plenty of social opportunities to meet other students?</p> <p>Do distance education students feel isolated from other students?</p> <p>Would distance education students like some form of contact with others e.g. through residential?</p> <p>Do students feel that they are part of a community?</p> <p>Are students made to feel welcome by fellow students/peers/other student groups?</p> <p>Do international students feel part of the wider community?</p> <p>Is there a community feel to the campus; location; faculty (esp. in small faculties) ?</p> <p>Does the student belong to a close knit community e.g. in a small faculty?</p> <p>Does the student belong to a cohort that has been together since the beginning of the degree? Has this been beneficial?</p> <p>Does the student feel that they know all the members of their group?</p> <p>Does the faculty encourage students to work closely together?</p>
<i>Class sizes</i>	<p>Are the class sizes too big for adequate discussion?</p> <p>Are the class sizes too big for individual attention e.g. in tutorials?</p> <p>Is the staff to student ratio just right or too high?</p> <p>Do students feel that they are not getting enough attention due to large class sizes?</p>
<i>Exploration of academic interests</i>	<p>Do students feel that they are encouraged to explore academic interests e.g. with other staff and students?</p> <p>(may also include group work where element of exploration of academic interests mentioned)</p> <p>Do students participate in online discussion groups e.g. on WebCT?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Tutorials</i> 	<p>Are tutorials a good venue for class discussions on issues raised in lectures and tutorials?</p> <p>Are there tutorials in a course?</p> <p>Have tutorials been cancelled or decreased?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>NESB students in class</i> 	<p>Does the presence of NESB students in class inhibit discussions?</p> <p>Is the English language proficiency of other students having an effect on student learning/ understanding?</p>

6.2 LOCATION/ ISOLATION

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Learning Community

Location/ isolation	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Location of university/ campus</i>	Is the student happy with the location of Sydney University? Is the student happy with the location of the campus (i.e. main campus) ? Does the location of the campus enhance his/her learning experience?
<i>Physical environment</i>	Does the student like the physical environment e.g. architecture; grounds?
<i>Isolation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>affiliated campus</i> • <i>distance</i> • <i>international</i> 	All of the above questions are answered by this component BUT in reference to affiliated campuses? E.g. Mallet St; Conservatorium; Camden; SCA Do the students feel isolated from the rest of the student community? Does this isolation affect their learning experience? Are the services provided at these campuses the same as at Camperdown, and if not do the students feel disadvantaged cf to other students?
<i>Isolation: training hospital etc</i>	As above but for training hospitals, research institutes; clinical sites
<i>Isolation: distance/ external students</i>	Do distance or external students feel isolated from their peers; from the University/ faculty?

4.3 ORIENTATION AND INDUCTION PROGRAMS

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Learning Community

Orientation and induction programs	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>University</i>	Are students happy with the induction or orientation program they received on entry to the university? Did students feel that they were adequately prepared for life at university? Were there any special programs to help students make the transition from school to university or from undergraduate to postgraduate coursework ?
<i>Faculty/ School/ Dept</i>	As above Did the faculty offer any special programs for first year students? e.g. Flexible First Year degree programs; Advanced students; Foundation programs etc
<i>Mid year entry</i>	As above but for students entering in Semester Two – Do students feel that they missed out on induction and orientation programs due to mid year entry? Did they feel disadvantaged in any way due to entering mid year?
<i>From other university (postgraduate coursework only)</i>	Did postgraduate coursework students coming from another university feel disadvantaged? Did staff assume that all postgraduate coursework students had done their bachelor degree at USyd and would know where everything was?

6.4 EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

NB feedback on work goes in Good Teaching

There are two components to Social inclusion, each of which are counted as aspects in written observations when analysing and reporting on the student experience of learning and teaching.

Responsiveness to student feedback	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Responsive to feedback</i>	General comments on staff responsiveness to student feedback? Are students aware that their comments and suggestions on the course are being listened to and acted upon? Do lecturers and tutors solicit feedback on their courses?
<i>SCEQ and USE</i>	Are evaluation forms handed out during units of study? Would students like to receive evaluation forms but haven't? Include in here any comments relating to the S/CEQ administration etc

6.5 PHYSICAL FACILITIES

Depending on the report, there are six or seven components to Physical facilities, each of which are counted as aspects in written observations when analysing and reporting on the student experience of learning and teaching.

As indicated in the following table, for the SCEQ, comments on library services and computer access centres are included in faculty reports on the Student administration and student support services. For the CEQ, they are included in faculty reports on learning and teaching, under Learning Community: Physical facilities

Physical facilities		
Aspect or component	Report	Answers the question
<i>Physical facilities</i>	S/CEQ DEGREE	Are the buildings, lecture theatres, air conditioning, seats, toilets etc in good condition, large enough? Are renovations affecting the learning experience?
<i>Computers hardware and software</i>	SCEQ ADMIN CEQ DEGREE	Are there sufficient computers? Is the relevant / discipline specific software provided on all computers?
<i>Equipment</i>		Is equipment provided? Is it up to date/ working/ in good condition?
<i>Faculty common rooms</i>	S/CEQ DEGREE	Is there a common room (for postgraduate coursework students)?
<i>Learning spaces</i>		Are learning spaces adequate?
<i>Transport and parking</i>		Is parking a problem? Is transport a problem?
<i>Library services</i>	SCEQ ADMIN CEQ DEGREE	Are students satisfied/ dissatisfied with the library services available? Do library resources adequately cover the material needed for their studies? Are students satisfied with the provision of online resources from the library (journals; databases; course readings)?

6.6 SOCIAL INCLUSION

There are two components to Social inclusion, each of which are counted as aspects in written observations when analysing and reporting on the student experience of learning and teaching.

NB: Prior to 2010, Cultural diversity, and Equity, harassment and discrimination were included in Learning environment.

Social inclusion	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Cultural diversity</i>	Are the students aware of the cultural diversity of the class? Do students feel that they benefit from being in a class with a wide range of cultures represented ? NB cultural diversity can be international; rural and city; mature and straight from school; different backgrounds (socio economic) ?
<i>Equity, discrimination, harassment</i>	Are the students aware of discrimination in the class room? Do the student perceive that more attention is given to other student groups either in the degree itself or in the faculty e.g. domestic over international; postgraduate coursework over undergraduate? Are the students aware of racial / disability/ gender discrimination? Are there any examples of inequitable behaviour from staff?

7 Overall Satisfaction

Coverage:

This single item asks current postgraduate coursework students about their overall level of satisfaction with their degree course. In the analysis of the qualitative data, additional aspects, which are not covered in other areas of the survey, but which contribute to the overall satisfaction of the postgraduate coursework student experience are included e.g. quality of staff; quality of degree; quality of students; funding; staffing issues and resources that affect student learning.

SCEQ/ CEQ survey item

- *I am happy with the quality of this degree course*

There are **7 sub-categories**, within Overall Satisfaction.

1. General comments
2. Funding and cost of the course
3. Quality of the degree
4. Quality of the staff
5. Quality of the students
6. Reputation of the university
7. Staffing issues and resources

The components of these sub-categories are based on recurring themes in students' comments and have been developed over many years of analysing qualitative data from students' surveys. They represent the range of aspects of the student experience which are considered to have a major influence on the quality of the degree experience. The section "answers the question" is based on the themes and questions raised by students in their responses.

7.1 GENERAL COMMENTS ON QUALITY /SATISFACTION WITH COURSE

These are comments that are general in nature about satisfaction with the course, and do not fit easily into any of the above sub-categories

There is only one level or component to this sub-category

General comments	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>General comments</i>	Place here any general comments on overall satisfaction that do not fit in any of the above and which may be considered to relate to satisfaction with the quality of the degree

7.2 FUNDING AND COST OF COURSE

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Overall Satisfaction

Value for money	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Funding/ financial issues</i>	Are there any funding or other financial issues that are affecting the students' satisfaction with the course? Do resource issues within the faculty affect the delivery of the course to the detriment of student learning e.g. in relation to staff : student ratio?
<i>Cost of course</i>	Do students consider that they are paying too much money for what they are receiving in the way of support; resources; physical facilities; teaching etc? Does the cost of learning resources e.g. readers impact on their decision to buy them?

7.3 QUALITY OF DEGREE

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Overall Satisfaction

Reputation/ quality of university/ faculty/ degree	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Quality of Degree</i>	What is the student's opinion of the reputation of the degree? What is the student's opinion of the quality of the degree? Is the intellectual level of material offered in the degree of an appropriate standard? (e.g. undergraduate level in a masters course) Does the degree match the expectations of the student? Are students made aware of any changes to the degree program which will affect their degree? Does the student feel intellectually challenged by the content of the degree?
<i>Professional standing</i>	Is the degree recognised in the profession or industry? (including accreditation) Are students from Sydney University more accepted by industry/ profession compared students from other universities?

7.4 QUALITY OF STAFF

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Overall Satisfaction

Staffing issues	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Qualifications of teaching staff</i>	Are lecturers /tutors qualified to teach? Are lecturers /tutors qualified in tertiary teaching? Do the lecturers/ tutors need training in how to teach tertiary students? Are the lecturers' teaching skills evaluated? (by students; by faculty) Are lecturers /tutors qualified in the subject they are teaching?
<i>Knowledge of staff</i>	Do lecturers tutors have the relevant subject knowledge for the subject they are teaching? Do lecturers and tutors have up to date current knowledge in the subject matter? Are lecturers and tutors au fait with current industry professional practices? Are students confident that they are being taught by lecturers with relevant knowledge?
<i>Relevant experience</i>	Do lecturers/ tutors have relevant experience in the subject matter? Are guest lecturers, from the industry or profession used?

7.5 QUALITY OF STUDENTS

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Overall Satisfaction

Quality of students	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Entry standard</i>	Do students perceive that the entry standard of the course has been lowered to accommodate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International students? • Full fee paying students? • NESB students? Are lecturers 'dumbing-down' course content to cater for students with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of English language communication skills? • Lack of prior knowledge (postgraduate coursework)? • Lack of prior relevant experience (postgraduate coursework)?
<i>Academic standard/ calibre</i>	Are students perceived to be entering the course who are not academically qualified? Are students perceived to be of the right calibre (academically, socially, culturally)?
<i>Interest in course/ subject matter</i>	Are students interested in the subject matter of the course? Are they doing the course to make up units?

7.6 REPUTATION OF UNIVERSITY

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Overall Satisfaction

Reputation/ quality of university/ faculty/ degree	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Reputation of University</i>	What is the student's opinion of the reputation of the university? What is the student's opinion of the quality of the university? Did either of these inform his/her decision to come to/ stay at the university? Would they recommend the university to other students?

7.7 STAFFING ISSUES AND RESOURCES

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Overall Satisfaction

This section refers to issues and resources that affect the student experience of learning and teaching. Comments relating to the qualifications, knowledge and experience of staff are categorised under Quality of Staff.

Staffing issues	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Staffing issues</i>	Are students having problems with staff that are not resolved?
<i>Staffing resources</i>	Are there enough lecturers/ tutors for the number of students? Are qualified staff leaving to the detriment of course offerings? e.g. are courses cancelled due to lack of qualified staff, resulting in students being unable to complete majors or minor areas of study.

8 Curriculum

Coverage:

This SCEQ scale concerns student perceptions of curriculum used in their degree course. It includes: content and structure; problem based learning; flexibility, diversity and variety of uos; availability of uos; and internationalization..

Initiative LT1 in the new University Strategic Plan 2007 - 2010 states that we “Improve academic program structures to achieve greater coherence; provide choice while maintaining flexibility; and ensuring continuing relevance of our courses to students and employers⁵”. Qualitative data from the SCEQ is used to help provide evidence of change in this area of the student experience. It is collected under the category **Curriculum** in the SCEQ/ CEQ taxonomy for the analysis of qualitative data from student surveys

There are **5 sub-categories** within Curriculum, against which students comments are analysed.

1. Content and structure
2. Flexibility, diversity, variety
3. Availability of advertised courses
4. Method of delivery
5. Practical components of course

The components of these sub-categories are based on recurring themes in students’ comments and have been developed over many years of analysing qualitative data from students’ surveys. They represent the range of features of the curriculum which are considered to be essential to student satisfaction with this aspect of their degree experience and/or overall satisfaction with the course. The section “answers the question” is based on the themes and questions raised by students in their responses.

⁵ See http://www.usyd.edu.au/strategy/learn_teach/initiatives.shtml

8.1 CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Curriculum

Content and structure	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>General comments</i>	Is the course too long/ too short? Are students happy with the structure of the course (not individual units of study)? Are students happy with the subject content of the whole course? Any general comments on the content and structure of the curriculum which do not fit into any other sub-category or component.
<i>Intensive courses/ Block mode of study</i>	Do students appreciate intensive courses as a method of study? Are the courses/ units of study offered intensively satisfactory? Is the block mode of study suitable for students?
<i>Relationship of subjects to each other</i>	Do the students perceive any linkages or relationships between units of study in their degree? Does the degree fit together cohesively? Are units of study or their content repeated over years e.g. with change of degree structure and credit point alignment?
<i>Content of units of study</i>	Do units of study include both practical and theory components? (NB practical experience goes in Generic Skills) Are the students satisfied with the content of specific units of study? (usually mentioned by name) Is the content of the unit of study up to date? Do the students perceive that they are being taught non-current content and/or it hasn't changed in a long time? Is the subject level appropriate to degree level?
<i>Relevance of course to career/ work</i>	Is the curriculum relevant to the students chosen career? Can the student apply their studies to their working environment? Is the curriculum relevant to the industry/ profession? Is the curriculum up to date with relevant industry or professional practices?

8.2 FLEXIBILITY, DIVERSITY, VARIETY

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Curriculum

Flexibility, diversity, variety	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Flexibility of course structure</i>	Is the course structure flexible? Is the degree too structured with no options for diversity in subject choice? Are students encouraged to take subjects from outside their faculty/ department?
<i>Ability to take range of courses: single degrees</i>	Are students who are doing a single degree able to take a range of units of study from within and outside the faculty? Do they appreciate this facility?
<i>Ability to take range of courses: double degrees</i>	Are students who are doing a double degree able to take a range of units of study from within and outside the faculty? Do they appreciate this facility?

8.3 AVAILABILITY OF ADVERTISED COURSES

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Curriculum

Availability of advertised courses	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Courses listed in handbooks not available</i>	Are students able to take courses that they saw in the faculty handbook before enrolment? Are all the units of study in the handbook available in this/ both semester(s)? Has this affected their program of study/ completion of degree? Are students waiting for specific units of study, listed in the handbook, to be offered, before they can complete their degree? Does the lack of these courses/ units of study affect their learning experience at the University? Does the course match the advertised program?
<i>Courses listed online not available</i>	As above but for online handbooks, degree information etc
<i>Cancellation of advertised courses</i>	Have courses that students enrolled in been cancelled for any reason? E.g. lack of numbers; lack of staff; resignation of qualified staff etc

8.4 METHOD OF DELIVERY

There are three components to Social inclusion, each of which are counted as aspects in written observations when analysing and reporting on the student experience of learning and teaching.

Method of delivery	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Problem based learning (PBL)</i>	Do students appreciate the use of PBL as a method of instruction? Are the courses/ units of study offered through this medium satisfactory? Is the course offered specific for their degree or shared with other faculties? Do they feel advantaged/ disadvantaged by this sharing of the curriculum?
<i>Online method</i>	What online methods of delivery are used by the Faculty e.g. WebCT; Blackboard Do lecturers use WebCT/ Blackboard for their lectures? Are students happy with the online components of the course? How does online learning compare with face to face delivery?
<i>Distance method External method</i>	Do students appreciate the distance method of delivery? Does it suit their study requirements? Does distance delivery mean that they are able to study from home; in another country; whilst working?

8.5 PRACTICAL COMPONENTS OF COURSE

NB: this does not include the development of practical skills; or skills relevant to the industry/ profession which are placed in Graduate Attributes: Ethical Social Professional Understanding: Professional skills and experience

When analysing respondents' written observations, this sub-category is not sub-divided into further components. The following list of aspects is provided as a guide to the coverage of this sub-category of Curriculum

Practical components of the course	
Aspect or component	Answers the question
<i>Practical components</i>	Are the practical components of the course e.g. laboratories, beneficial? Are there enough practical components?
<i>Link between practical and theory</i>	Do the practical aspects of the course enhance the theoretical parts? Can students see the links between the practical and the theoretical parts of the course?

NB: only use this category when it is obvious from the comments that is an issue with students; or different to professional skills

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