

FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS
STUDENT COURSE EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE (SCEQ)
POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK STUDENTS
ANALYSIS OF OPEN RESPONSE COMMENTS: 2005

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ), is designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data about students' perceptions of the quality of teaching and learning in their degree courses, as well as their perceptions of student administration and support services. As part of the questionnaire students are asked to provide comments on the best aspects of their university experience (degree and administration) and those that could be improved. Based on the responses to these questions, this document seeks to provide an analysis of the areas of best practice, and opportunities for improvement, in the experiences of postgraduate coursework students in the Faculty of Economics and Business in 2005.

Degree experience: areas of best practice

The aspects of degree experience which attracted most positive comments from postgraduate coursework students in 2005 were:

	% of comments received	
	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>
Good teaching: standard of teaching received	29%	14%
Curriculum: content and structure	20%	31%
Skills development: graduate generic attributes	18%	12%
Overall satisfaction: quality of academic staff	13%	17%
Good teaching: group work	10%	10%
Research led teaching	10%	3%

Degree experience: opportunities for improvement

The areas of degree experience which postgraduate coursework students considered most in need of improvement in 2005 were:

	% of comments received	
	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>
Good teaching: standard of teaching received	23%	19%
Curriculum: content and structure	18%	23%
Good teaching: group work	9%	6%
Good teaching: useful and timely feedback	8%	9%
Curriculum: practical aspects of course	8%	4%
Communication	8%	2%

Student administration and student support services: areas of best practice

The aspects of student administration and student support services which attracted most positive comments from postgraduate coursework students in 2005 were:

	% of comments received	
	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>
Customer service: quality	36%	37%
Library services	22%	19%
Web communications: intranet/ internet	19%	21%
Web communications: online access to administration and support services	10%	11%
International Office	7%	5%
Administration and organisation: general	5%	

Student administration and student support services: opportunities for improvement

**Faculty of Economics and Business: Analysis of student experience:
Postgraduate coursework students: 2005**

The aspects of student administration and student support services which postgraduate coursework students considered most in need of improvement in 2005 were:

	% of comments received	
	2005	2003
Customer service: quality	30%	35%
Customer service: opening hours	12%	10%
Web communication: intranet/ internet	12%	7%
Services provided: advertisement	11%	7%
Library services	9%	9%
Administration and organisation: general (incl Faculty office)	8%	

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1 Introduction

The Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ), is designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data about students' perceptions of the quality of teaching and learning in their degree courses, as well as their perceptions of student administration and support services. As part of the questionnaire students are asked to provide comments on the best aspects of their university experience (degree and administration) and those that could be improved. Based on the responses to these questions, this document seeks to provide an analysis of the areas of best practice, and opportunities for improvement, in the experiences of postgraduate coursework students in the Faculty of Economics and Business in 2005.

In 2005 63% of students who responded to the SCEQ provided comments on their degree experience, and 50% on their experiences of student administration and student support services.

2 Arrangement

1. Degree experience
 - Analysis of comments referring to best aspects
 - Analysis of comments suggesting improvements

2. Experience of student administration and student support services
 - Analysis of comments referring to best aspects
 - Analysis of comments suggesting improvements

Within each section, responses are ranked according to the percentage of comments received for each aspect. Sample comments are provided for the six aspects that received the highest percentage of comments. For comparison, results for the previous years qualitative analysis¹ are provided in brackets after the 2005 results.

Only aspects that received more than 5% of comments in 2005 are included in this report. To preserve student confidentiality, sample comments are only provided if there are six or more comments relating to that aspect in the responses. Comments that may possibly identify the student are not been included in the sample comments. Comments are transcribed exactly as they appear in the original documents.

¹ i.e. 2000 – 2003. The SCEQ was not administered in 2004.

3 Analysis of the comments: taxonomy and process

The manual analysis and evaluation method used by the University is based on an in-house taxonomy which allows for standardisation of reporting across the university and ease of comparison with the SCEQ quantitative analysis reports. Within the taxonomy, the main categories are based on the SCEQ items, and sub-categories based on their characteristics. Additional categories, based on the frequency of occurrence in students' comments over the past four years, are also included. Categories for the analysis of comments relating to administration and support services are defined using the most commonly mentioned aspects e.g. quality of customer service, opening hours, staffing levels, online access to services; and names of individual services e.g. Counselling, Library, Student Centre.²

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation and feedback• Academic Board policies• Curriculum• Skills development• Learning community• Learning resources• Overall satisfaction• Good teaching | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear goals and standards• Appropriate assessment• Appropriate workload• Elearning• Research-led teaching• Student progression and retention• Cultural diversity• Equity |
|--|---|

Categories used in the analysis of SCEQ Open Response comments

This taxonomy is under constant revision as the need to sub-divide categories becomes apparent. For example, until 2005 the category *Online learning and resources* was used to record all comments mentioning students' experiences of elearning. In 2005, the increase of elearning across the university, and the review of its use, has necessitated the sub-division of this category into the following elements: *Online resources; Elearning: uptake by students/ staff; Learning management systems; Support provided; and Face to face vs. online learning*. NB: The SCEQ included specific questions on elearning for the first time in the 2005 survey. These additional qualitative analysis topics reflect these changes.

Each comment received is analysed according to the SCEQ Taxonomy, with those including more than one aspect being counted in each aspect mentioned.

It should be noted, however, 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 that the students are happy with their experiences, and prefer to focus on commenting on areas in need of improvement. Since 2000, more comments have been received from postgraduate coursework students in reply to questions asking students to list areas in need of improvement than those asking for areas of best practice.

² A copy of the SCEQ Taxonomy is provided as a separate attachment.

4 Degree experience

4.1 Analysis of comments referring to the best aspects³

Good teaching: standard of teaching received (2005: 29%)
(2003: 14%; 2002: 8%; 2001: 4%; 2000: 7%)

- Some lecturers are passionate about the subjects and enthuse students into taking interest – even in those that may appear very theoretical and dry, by providing additional activities to stimulate learning of the course as well as its practical application
- Engaging lecturer, makes lectures interesting and enjoyable to attend. Content, current content makes for improved understanding and interest
- The teaching was clear and easily understood. Difficult concepts to grasp were repeated from different angles so that there was complete understanding. The material was challenging. The lecturer was patient and extremely knowledgeable. The experience was enjoyable
- The teaching staff in the department of political economy were first rate. They were approachable and made every effort to help me with my learning. They made every effort to make subjects interesting and encouraged student interaction

Curriculum: content and structure (2005: 20%)
(2003: 31%; 2002: 21%; 2001: 29%; 2000: 30%)

- Keeping content in broad scope, cover broad area of concept. It's good for short courses. Students can started with a overall picture of the discipline and choose the are that they are interested in to go for their in-depth research
- Ability to link one subject with another so that at the end of the day we get a full picture on what accountancy is about
- The best aspects of my degree (Master of International Business and Master of Logistics Management) are most of the courses are inter-related and functioning as bridges between two Masters degrees
- I found intensive courses the most effective for the learning and the most engaging. They are also the only courses to create this feeling of student community (as we are all under the same pressure for a period of time and spend a lot of time together)

Skills development: generic graduate attributes (2005: 18%)
(2003: 12%; 2002: 13%; 2001: 12%; 2000: 16%)

- Develop my oral and written communication skills and let me learn how to cooperate with team member
- Through doing the homework, I have made a great progress in team work and my writing and discussion skills are improved
- Developing my analysing and problem solving ability, and oral, writing, communication ability
- It really improves the oral and writing communication skills when I do the group or individual assignments

³ Number of comment received: 2005: 161; 2003: 143; 2002: 104; 2001: 154; 2000: 83

Overall satisfaction: quality of academic staff **(2005: 13%)**
(2003: 17%; 2002: 18%; 2001: 25%; 2000: 22%)

- Being taught by staff that are currently involved in both research and consultancy provides a practical element to the course
- Having professionally accredited and experience practitioners of the course material teaching us and referring to their experience. These are good because they help stay in touch with the real world and make you feel you are learning something that can be used in the business world
- The lectures are well experienced and incorporate examples of current affairs with the relevant course topics.
- Lecturers are actual researchers on the subject matter ensuring knowledge and information they impart are credible and up to date

Good teaching: group work **(2005: 10%)**
(2003: 10%; 2002: 10%; 2001: 8%; 2000: 10%)

- Group work and collaboration. It's so important that I can communicate with people in a group effectively and efficiently. This ability can only be developed through group work. So far, most degree courses I attended requires team presentation, group assignment, I benefited a lot from them
- Group studies. We can distribute our assignment to many parts and work together to discuss them. I think it will get a better result than that done by individual. Also it can stimulate our communication and thinking.
- Best aspects are the group work as has let me learn how to operate in a cooperative environment and also how to be open to new ideas and how to work with different people e.g. ideas, personalities etc.
- Encouraging students to do group work-Different ideas and point of view

Research led teaching **(2005: 10%)**
(2003: 3%; 2002: 3%; 2001: 1%)

- I have lots of chances to research by myself. It improves my ability of researching and understanding.
- Being encouraged by lecturers to find out more information and to question the information being found. Being allowed to research areas of personal interest within the parameters of the course.
- Access to latest research in the area and experts in the field. Meet others with similar interests in the area. Developing research and analytical skills and writing quality. Creating greater social and political awareness.
- Able to actively participate in research

Other aspects mentioned included:

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>
Curriculum: relevance to work/ career	9%	10%	17%	11%	8%
Learning community: learning environment	6%	4%	8%	5%	8%
Learning resources: general	5%	2%	5%	4%	2%

4.2 Analysis of comments suggesting improvements⁴

Good teaching: standard of teaching received

(2005: 23%)

(2003: 19%; 2002: 7%; 2001: 11%; 2000: 14%)

- Quality of teaching staff- inconsistent. More towards the unstimulating side. Most teaching staff I've encountered either followed the text too closely or present ideas too academically. As masters course, they could incorporate more of practical examples and problems. What the industry practice is and how is it different from academic arguments.
- A good lecture which delivers the subject interestingly. Some lectures just read out the lecture note and cause the students to fall asleep. I got experience where the lecturer seems not ready to teach and he just jumped to the class discussion/talked from one topic to another topic that nobody understood.
- Things should be improved such as the quality of the lecturers and the way they teach. Need to make sure that they are able and have the ability to teach and get students to understand not just having only doctorate degree to teach.
- One course where lecturer was not making any effort, just read from slides. More effort should be put in. Evaluation system should be improved. Complaints against teaching methods should be taken seriously. Some sort of office should be set up where students can see how many complaints have been made.

Curriculum: content and structure

(2005: 18%)

(2003: 23%; 2002: 26%; 2001: 26%; 2000: 41%)

- Subjects should be year long, not semester long
- The content of some courses needs to be improved. Because they are too theory and lack of practical application. It's better to link theory with more cases in the real world. Then we can better learning and get more useful skills
- Provision to undertake "bridging" economics subjects, or to combine the degree with a graduate certificate/diploma in economics would be useful, it often feels like the content of the degree can not be properly understood without a background in economics.
- More options for courses in summer school in Masters of Logistics Management

Good teaching: group work

(2005: 9%)

(2003: 6%; 2002: 6%; 2001: 2%; 2000: 5%)

- If the degree of group work could be reduced in favour of more individual research assessments. I feel that the attempts to increase the amount of group work has good intentions, my experience with group work has been that it reduces the incentive of some students to take an active interest in research and analysis..
- As group work is integral to every subjects in the degree, I find it more difficult to work with students from courses that are available to everyone as it seems that the calibre of students are lower. The way in which group work is assigned tends to favour weaker students to free-ride on the stronger students.
- Group assignments should not be worth as much as they are, because part-time postgrad students are not able to make time at the same time as their group members and despite peer evaluations, hard-working students are disadvantaged by lazy students.
- More time for groupwork assignments - Sometimes groups are made just 2 or 3 weeks before the assignment is due. With many students in full-time employment, there is hardly enough time to know each other before starting research on the assignment.

⁴ Number of comment received: 2005: 164; 2003: 153; 2002: 108; 2001: 168; 2000: 95

Good teaching: useful and timely feedback

(2005: 8%)

(2003: 9%; 2002: 2%; 2001: 3%; 2000: 11%)

- Student feedback from staff as this only occurs through marks for exams/assignments when it is generally too late to do anything about how you are doing in a course.
- feedback on assignments and exams: we spend hours writing essays and reports, but never really get any feedback apart from the mark. Knowing why we have a good mark could help to repeat what was good again, while knowing why I have a bad mark would help me improve in the future
- A more detailed feedback about how we have learned especially the results of assignments and exams
- Guest lecturers (for the whole semester) should be prepared to provide comprehensive feedback and adhere to subject objectives.

Curriculum: practical aspects of the course

(2005: 8%)

(2003: 4%; 2001: 1%)

- Practical assessments, like work placements to provide students with real life perspectives (mini projects would also be good)
- More practical exercise or real case analysis during subject learning. Give a more effective and practical empirical experience in real job related learning process
- I need more real world practice and experience which uni should provide
- Practical exercise and teaching/ learning could be improved, because most of the students lack the practical background even though they have the assumed knowledge from books

Communication

(2005: 8%)

(2003: 2%; 2002: 3%; 2001: 7%; 2000: 1%)

- Communication between lecturers and students. We have few chances to communicate with lecturers face to face
- Needs better communication between teaching staff and students.
- The communication between lecturers and students should be improved, because there are few opportunities for students to communicate with lecturers in accounting units due to too many students.
- I think the communion (sic) between the teachers and students.

Other aspects mentioned included:

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>
Quality of student intake (international students)	7%	3%	8%	7%	4%
Learning community: tutorials	7%	3%	1%	4%	5%
Overall satisfaction: quality of degree	5%	3%	6%	7%	9%
Learning community: class sizes	5%	16%	11%	8%	7%
Appropriate assessment	5%	7%	6%	2%	11%
Appropriate workload	5%	5%	4%	2%	3%
Research led teaching	5%	1%			

5 Experience of student administration and student support services

5.1 Analysis of comments referring to best aspects⁵

Customer service: quality (2005: 36%)
(2003: 37%; 2002: 44%; 2001: 42%; 2000: 42%)

- For the student support services, those staff are very kind and patient to help those students who are in trouble
- The kind staff. They are really helpful for an international student
- In my opinion, I was satisfied they gave me timely information. Although Sydney University has a great deal of students, each student can get information immediately
- Speed of use. Also the friendliness of staff. Caring attitude

Library services (2005: 22%)
(2003: 19%; 2002: 16%; 2001: 22%; 2000: 6%)

- The library is excellent, especially the inter library loans, university internal as well as between universities. Although I haven't yet registered the wireless internet access available at the library is a very good service
- The library the best experience in this semester for me as it provides what I need when doing research or preparing for exams
- Library: staff are devoted to adequate and satisfactory service for me, they understand of my non-English speaking background. That really helps!
- My library, very convenient for students especially those who are working and not always in campus

Web communications: intranet/ internet (2005: 19%)
(2003: 21%; 2002: 13%; 2001: 15%; 2000: 6%)

- Blackboard is just magic. It makes the communication with the teachers really easy and makes things really clear for the student. The internet facilities (email accounts, blackboard) are really helpful
- The website is good, though I did have difficulty finding my way around it in the beginning
- Websites quite informative and online services were convenient. 6mb free internet was cool
- Information technology, like university intranet services, blackboard helpdesk, it helps us to access to the information we needed more easily

Web communications: online access to support services (2005: 10%)
(2003: 11%; 2002: 6%; 2001: 5%; 2000: 6%)

- Online is very good, not having to line up
- Mu Uni is really good. It is informative. I don't need to go to the Student Centre to get information because all I need is available. Also, if I need to confirm something through email, the feedback is fairly quick
- Access to information off site as it was difficult to get to uni outside of lecture hours
- Electronic support of most services at uni are quite time saving and effective

⁵ Number of comment received: 2005: 127; 2003: 97; 2002: 63; 2001: 93; 2000: 48

**Faculty of Economics and Business: Analysis of student experience:
Postgraduate coursework students: 2005**

International Office

(2005: 7%)

(2003: 5%; 2002: 2%; 2001: 6%; 2000: 8%)

- Service staff were extremely helpful at all times, especially those works in International Office. They have heavy workload but satisfy all those need their help
- The staff at International students office are so nice but there are not enough for the number of students
- International Office is very helpful and cooperative
- The International Office. The staffs are very patient to help me resolve problems and give me advice

Administration and organisation: general⁶

(2005:5%)

- The student administration department for the Faculty of Economics and Business is open to 6pm, catering for part-time students. The staff are friendly and very helpful, and do their best to answer questions
- Faculty/ departmental student administration gave me more help and much more useful
- The faculty (Business and Economics) is ok to deal with
- With regards to most faculty/ administration – professional customer service. Inquiries always answered in a thorough manner.

NB: *All other aspects were mentioned in less than 5% of comments received.*

⁶ In 2005, this includes Faculty Administration and Student Information Offices (where specifically mentioned in the comment). These comments were previously counted in Customer Service: Quality

5.2 Analysis of comments suggesting improvements⁷

Customer service: quality

(2005: 30%)

(2003: 35%; 2002: 51%; 2001: 43%; 2000: 39%)

- some staff are very rude. many don't seem to care about your problems and i have been redirected to other services without gaining anything from it, i.e., no one seems to know anything and it's always not their fault. they expect students to adhere to the rules and we don't get better treatment for it. instead, they forget that we are clients who pay good money for education, even more so as an international student. they have given me more problems than they have solved and i am always left to mend the problems on my own. they should be nicer and more helpful, be empathetic.. and KNOW what they are doing!
- The staff can't solve many problems face to face and have to spend more time processing or transfer responsibilities to other departments.
- Sometimes, students administration and student support services should be more responsible effective, I think. That is to say, it would be better to reduce their time of dealing with the problems and improve their efficiency.
- By actually working, in stead of taking days to process any application. I know they say that they are too busy or understaffed or any other excuse, but that it's unacceptable when you are talking to a student that it's paying \$2,700 per unit of study. Maybe you should use a bigger chunk of the money paid by international students to actually provide us a better service and not to found your undergraduate program.

Customer service: opening hours

(2005: 12%)

(2003: 10%; 2002: 10%; 2001: 7%; 2000: 13%)

- The opening hours of any offices mean I, or anyone who works, can never meet anyone face to face, get new student cards, or do anything. Stay open till 6pm!
- They need to be much more customer focused. Hours of work need to reflect the varied study hours of students. 9-5 is not good enough.
- difficulty accessing some services outside of business hours.
- Office hours can be extended to 6.30pm during work days for working people. Otherwise I need to get a few hours leave to uni for enquiries.

Web communications: intranet/ internet

(2005: 12%)

(2003: 7%; 2002: 4%; 2001: 14%; 2000: 11%)

- Student need more Internet and Intranet access services. More computer labs and time.
- I think myuni is an extremely confusing site to navigate. Stuff like "mystudies, my admin" etc all sound the same to me. I prefer it when it was not revamped.
- If all services, including computers and administration services, could be accessed by one set of usernames and passwords, this would ease the administrative burden for students accessing these services.
- Sort out the students intranet - it is medieval at best. Can't believe that you cannot enrol online - other Australian universities have used online enrolment for a good 7 or so years.

⁷ Number of comment received: 2005: 129; 2003: 107; 2002: 79; 2001: 132; 2000: 61

**Faculty of Economics and Business: Analysis of student experience:
Postgraduate coursework students: 2005**

Services provided: advertisement (2005: 11%)
(2003: 7%; 2002: 5%; 2001: 4%; 2000: 8%)

- Better knowledge of their existence might be a good start.
- I think different administration departments can send email of what service they provide to every student. Because sometimes we don't know what exactly service they are providing, as a result we do not use it, or even know it.
- It should be more clear to separate the different role of different services, sometimes, we don't know where to go for help.
- provide information that what they can offer us.

Library services (2005: 9%)
(2003: 9%; 2002: 9%; 2001: 5%; 2000: 8%)

- Resource in library is poor, books are old, need to invest more
- The library is not enough for students and the texts are not enough and quite hard to find.
- Both degrees: Fisher library is a disgrace! It need to be open longer, have more reading areas (perhaps a post grad area? Too many "kids" with mobiles)
- More library orientation sessions please.

Administration and organisation: general⁸ (2005:5%)
(2002: 1%)

- Lateness of response of questions and complaints (6 months time) Economics and Business Faculty
- Less bureaucracy in the student centre and E&B SIO, it takes far too long to get various approvals necessary to modify one's degree, do external subjects at other universities, among other things.
- - the administration services are not homogenised. When you ask for an information, different people might give different answers, which might be a real issue when you need definite answer. - people behind the desk always orientate you to someone else without explaining you why they can't answer to you - MyUni website is a bit complicated to deal with.
- More resources into email correspondence. Some emails that are sent to faculty administration (and academics) are not responded to promptly (sometimes up to a week)

Other aspects mentioned included:

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>
Administration and organisation: enrolment	6%	7%	1%		
Web communications: online access to services	5%		1%		2%

Other services mentioned included:

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>
Computer access centres: University	7%	17%	13%	26%	20%
Student Centre (University)	8%			1%	2%

⁸ In 2005, this includes Faculty Administration and Student Information Offices (where specifically mentioned in the comment). These comments were previously counted in Customer Service: Quality