

**FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS**  
**STUDENT COURSE EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE (SCEQ)**  
**UNDERGRADUATE 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 undergraduate 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 undergraduate students were:

	<b>% of comments received</b>	
	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>
Curriculum: content and structure	23%	23%
Curriculum: flexibility, diversity and variety of subjects	23%	20%
Good teaching: standard of teaching received	22%	10%
Skills development: graduate generic attributes	8%	10%
Curriculum: relevance to work/ career	6%	11%
Elearning: learning management systems (Blackboard)	6%	NA

### **Degree experience: opportunities for improvement**

The areas of degree experience which undergraduate students considered most in need of improvement were:

	<b>% of comments received</b>	
	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>
Good teaching: standard of teaching received	29%	21%
Curriculum: content and structure	14%	19%
Overall satisfaction: quality of academic staff	11%	8%
Good teaching: useful and timely feedback	10%	11%
Appropriate assessment	9%	13%
Administration and organisation: general	9%	6%

### **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 undergraduate students in 2005 were:

	<b>% of comments received</b>	
	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>
Customer service: quality	37%	37%
Web communications: intranet/ internet	18%	19%
Computer access centres: university	12%	11%
Library services	11%	9%
Web communications: online access to administration and support services	6%	10%
Services provided: variety of services	5%	3%

### **Student administration and student support services: opportunities for improvement**

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

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

	% of comments received	
	2005	2003
Customer service: quality	25%	36%
Customer service: staffing levels	14%	11%
Administration and organisation: general (incl Faculty office)	14%	2%
Computer access centres: university	10%	24%
Services provided: advertisement	9%	7%
Web communication: intranet/ internet	9%	11%

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*April 2006*

## **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 undergraduate students in the Faculty of Economics and Business in 2005.

In 2005 59% of students who responded to the SCEQ provided comments on their degree experience, and 48% on their experiences of student administration and student support services.

2% of comments referred to the fact that the respondent was happy with their experiences within the faculty and the university and could not identify any areas in need of improvement.

## **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 analysis<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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

#### **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.

Students undertaking double degrees were asked to identify which degree/s they were commenting on in their answer. Where this has occurred the comment is counted in the results for the applicable faculty; where this has not occurred, the comment is counted in the results for both faculties.

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 undergraduate students in reply to questions asking students to list areas in need of improvement than those asking for areas of best practice.

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<sup>2</sup> A copy of the SCEQ Taxonomy is provided as a separate attachment.

## **4 Degree experience**

### **4.1 Analysis of comments referring to the best aspects<sup>3</sup>**

**Curriculum: content and structure** (2005: 23%)  
(2003: 23%; 2002: 25%; 2001: 16%; 2000: 14%)

- Subjects are very appropriate to the business industry and therefore practical for employment following university. Also a good effort has been made to keep up to date with latest industry changes, legislation etc to keep the information relevant
- The subjects are intellectually stimulating and the honours unit for government (2<sup>nd</sup> year) especially was tailored in such a way to assist me in all courses I undertook which I found to be extremely helpful and a rewarding experience
- The structure of the course was relatively well defined
- The undergraduate economics program is very unique as it provides us with a taste of what is expected and required in the actual honours year. The introduction of the program to students in second year is very effective as it helps the students bond as a group and allows us to focus upon core subjects which will be needed in the progression of economics honours

**Curriculum: flexibility, diversity, variety of subjects** (2005: 23%)  
(2003: 20%; 2002: 21%; 2000: 19%; 2000: 20%)

- the best aspects about my degree would definitely be the flexibility of the course. Despite being called Economics and Social Sciences, I believe it allows me to learn and explore other subjects that are not economics-related. I have strongly recommended to others about the flexibility of the course, because as a freshman in university, it is unlikely that students would know what they are truly interested in. The flexibility have allowed me to explore different regions of studies.
- Its flexibility is its best feature as it allows you to focus on your particular interests as well as branch out into other disciplines or faculties to complement that knowledge
- The best aspect is flexibility. My degree course allows me to branch out and study a number of subject areas, this broadens my understanding and knowledge.
- The flexibility of choosing from a wide variety of subjects and courses. It helped me in exploring my interests and broadening my knowledge

**Good teaching: standard of teaching received** (2005: 22%)  
(2003: 10%; 2002: 15%; 2001: 12%; 2000: 10%)

- A few lecturers were very responsive to students' problems and enquiries, and made the subject interesting to learn during lectures i.e. they did not simply read off lecture slides, but tried to explain things and interact with students
- I feel that one of my lecturers is very passionate about what she is doing and this makes me want to come to uni to listen to her. I am engaged in her lectures and whilst the content is not particularly interesting she makes it interesting and is constantly asking for feedback
- The lecturers and tutors seem genuinely interested in student learning and student welfare
- Some lecturers integration of their own experiences associated with the degree course, in an attempt to make it more interesting and relative to real world similarities, motivates students in the strangest (sic) possible ways.

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<sup>3</sup> Number of comment received: 2005: 186; 2003: 225; 2002: 188; 2001: 273; 2000: 59

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**Skills development: generic graduate attributes**

**(2005: 8%)**

(2003: 10%; 2002: 4%; 2001: 6%; 2000: 8%)

- The focus on analytical and critical thinking – fosters a necessary skill that is useful in varied ways, beyond academic thinking
- This degree course has helped me a lot, not only in broadening my knowledge in the related subject, but also in improving my analytical skill, presentation and written skill, ability to work as a group, and developing my own perspective on social and ethical matters
- Well scheduled and planned course, developed my ability of learning, dealing with difficult tasks, improved my communication skills
- Helps develop our ability to study independently. Provides great variety of info related to this degree. Helps to improve student's communication, writing and research skills.

**Curriculum: relevance to work / career**

**(2005: 6%)**

(2003: 11%; 2002: 8%; 2001: 5%)

- Industry relevance – most subjects are developed in accordance with current industry trends and developments
- Get me to learn different aspects of the commercial world within quite a short time. (2.5yrs) and although it's not a long time, I still feel confident to be involved in commercial dealings after completing all units.
- It gives you a rounded education – which prepares you for a number of aspects of the business world
- Whiles some of the work was not particularly interesting I always felt that what I was learning was relevant, useful and a necessary part of my education

**Elearning: learning management systems (Blackboard)**

**(2005: 6%)**

(New topic: previously counted as part of online resources)

- The use of Blackboard is good as a communication tool between teachers and students
- In the Commerce degree it is good to have Blackboard to help me to check, search and ensure information about my study
- Blackboard – very helpful. Good to be able to access lecture notes etc beforehand. Discussion forums are a GREAT way to assist learning
- Blackboard and other online education tools are very useful and make studying at the university so much easier. The provision of lecture slides prior to lectures is great as it enables me to really listen and understand what is being discussed rather than solely worrying about writing what the lecturer is saying – I wish all lectures would post lecture notes!!!

**Other aspects mentioned included:**

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>
Good teaching: motivating, stimulating, challenging	6%	4%	6%	9%	10%
Appropriate Assessment	5%	5%	3%	6%	5%
Learning community: learning environment	5%	4%	7%	8%	2%
Learning community: tutorials and seminars	5%	5%	6%	10%	12%

## **4.2 Analysis of comments suggesting improvements<sup>4</sup>**

### **Good teaching: standard of teaching received**

**(2005: 29%)**

(2003: 21%; 2002: 17%; 2001: 20%; 2000: 24%)

- Better teaching in lectures. I personally cannot last more than 20 minutes in most lectures, and often fall asleep. I find this is because the lectures aren't interesting enough, and the lecturers don't do enough to involve the students, or just make the lecture more interesting
- I found that teachers who do not make lectures and tutorials interesting are those that simply read off lecture slides, and do not appear interested in teaching.
- The standard of teaching of some lecturers. They are all smart, but that does not mean they are a good teacher. Teaching skills (sic) must be improved
- The lectures. They were boring, not stimulating and were more like a long speech. There was little student interaction

### **Curriculum: content and structure**

**(2005: 14%)**

(2003: 19%; 2002: 23%; 2001: 18%; 2000: 24%)

- Some of the core subjects have not been introductory courses and seem to have a strong sense of assumed knowledge. This means that students without a strong background in the field feel marginalised.
- Understanding what courses and how many units and what is required of you is very unclear. Although the head of my degree has been helpful with this.
- I think instead of having 2 commerce majors required for this degree, students should complete 2 majors, with either both in commerce, or a major and a minor in commerce, and a 2nd major in another faculty. I found it difficult to find a 2nd commerce major that I was really interested in.
- More choice in subject units - I didn't intend to do a finance double major as I'm not interested in one subject I'm doing - but to complete my degree I need credit points, and having undertaken junior units would have meant I had 2 subjects instead of one.

### **Overall satisfaction: quality of academic staff**

**(2005: 11%)**

(2003: 8%; 2002: 12%; 2001: 9%; 2000: 7%)

- Tutors should be assessed... some are not capable of running a class, and shouldn't have the jobs if they don't know the content of the course. Tutors should attend lectures if they have forgotten the material.
- The quality of lecturers, specifically in Economics. Poor English language skills and lack of experience and ability in explaining complex concepts in more than one way
- Certain lecturers and tutors had really strong accents which made it difficult to understand and thus, learn. This can be improved by offering a little more detail in the lecture notes so students don't miss out on relevant information.
- The qualification or professionalism of the tutors. In WORK1002 tutorials it is more of a social meeting rather than learning. I have learned nothing from these tutorials. It appears that the tutors give good grades to the more 'social' people. There are signs of favourites. Unfair on those who want to learn.

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<sup>4</sup> Number of comment received: 2005: 187; 2003: 247; 2002: 248; 2001: 294; 2000: 54

**Good teaching: useful and timely feedback**

**(2005: 10%)**

(2003: 11%; 2002: 9%; 2001: 10%; 2000: 15%)

- The feedbacks are sometimes too brief; they are too general and is aimed for the majority of the class. Hence, they are unspecific and unclear. Beside just giving marks, they should evaluate the students' works and give specific and detail feedback, thus, they can learn from their mistakes and do well in final exams.
- I fell (sic) it is sometimes difficult to comprehend the commentary on assessments when they are handed back. This could be improved.
- Commerce - Feedback needs to be given. In some of my courses (Finance Honours and lead up courses in 2nd and 3rd year) NO feedback was given on some assignments! (not even a grade).
- Feedback on end of semester exams as you are left a bit in the lurch at the end with only a mark which doesn't give a great indication on what you have and haven't learnt specifically.

**Appropriate assessment**

**(2005: 9%)**

(2003: 13%; 2002: 7%; 2001: 13%; 2000: 9%)

- There could be much more assessable work, more feedback on work, and more opportunity for original thinking and ideas as opposed to mere recitation
- Assessments are too narrow in analysis of content and the structure used. It is unfair to assess all material in the same way repetitively, an essay or short answer questions should be integrated to evaluate all skills and reveal a true understanding of course content. Generally, courses should asses material using a range of assessment types.
- Less emphasis on final exams. Continuous assessment throughout semester
- How the assessments are assigned. Most economics subjects only require a mid semester exam and a final exam. This does not give students a good indication of their progress and whether they should gain some help.

**Administration and organisation: general**

**(2005: 9%)**

(2003: 6%; 2002: 8%; 2001: 9%; 2000: 11%)

- Administration and flexibility. Admin is inaccessible and unhelpful
- The administrative element is still far too bureaucratic
- The administration isn't effective or supportive or is not well organised. Could be much improved.
- Administration is inflexible and I feel constrained by the credit point limit of 144, especially when considering including an exchange into the course

**Other aspects mentioned included:**

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>
Learning community: tutorials and seminars	8%	6%	6%	5%	6%
Appropriate workload	7%	7%	7%	8%	11%
Learning community: class sizes	5%	4%	4%	6%	11%
Good teaching: clear explanations	6%	2%	2%	5%	2%
Good teaching: group work	5%	4%	5%	4%	2%
Learning resources: general	7%	2%	3%	4%	7%

## **5 Experience of student administration and student support services**

### **5.1 Analysis of comments referring to best aspects<sup>5</sup>**

**Customer service: quality** (2005: 37%)  
(2003: 37%; 2002: 38%; 2001: 34%; 2000: 21%)

- It is easy to get lost and confused by the sheer scale of services. There is always someone to ask who is willing to explain and tell you where to go to get the relevant information
- The staff. Friendly people at the counter. They are willing to help us out with any queries and confusion
- People who provide the service could give you a direct response to your need and they are patient to explain any misunderstanding and problems.
- Some staffs actually know and understand my problems and helped me in solving them. Some of them really do their job in a professional manner

**Web communications: intranet/ internet** (2005: 18%)  
(2003: 19%; 2002: 18%; 2001: 17%; 2000: 15%)

- Intranet services are user friendly and easy to navigate in; online services provide a good contact facility between students and lecturers and tutors
- I found Blackboard to be fantastic – it was good to be able to access all notes online before lectures as well as exam marks as they became available and course information in general
- Wireless internet/ network access. Fantastic. No need to line up and wait for a computer, I could use my own.
- Blackboard, WebCT, MyUni – great for information dissemination. Email is an effective communication tool

**Computer access centres: university** (2005: 12%)  
(2003: 11%; 2002: 17%; 2001: 9%; 2000: 9%)

- Computer labs are well maintained and essential to my research
- The vast number of computer facilities available
- The computer access centres are good except of course when you are forced to wait an hour to have access to a computer
- Lots of computer access

**Library services** (2005: 11%)  
(2003: 9%; 2002: 9%; 2001: 8%; 2000: 18%)

- I found the facilities in the library are excellent and the staffs working there are experienced and helpful
- The facilities at the library are top class and it is quite easy to do all your research for assignments in the library
- The massive libraries are really helpful to find information for assignments as there is so much in there
- Library services were first rate and books I requested came back on time

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<sup>5</sup> Number of comment received: 2005: 154; 2003: 177; 2002: 146; 2001: 212; 2000: 33

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Undergraduate students: 2005**

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**Web communications: online access to support services** (2005: 6%)  
(2003: 10%; 2002: 12%; 2001: 8%; 2000: 6%)

- The online pre-enrolment is good as you don't have to line up for hours re enrolling in person, unless of course there is a problem with the system
- Online service, saves time for students to pay their bills and enrol
- Online services are very good, pre-enrolment saves a lot of time, Blackboard is very good for learning resources
- Doing most administration requirements online was good – saved a lot of time

**Services provided: variety of services** (2005: 5%)  
(2003: 3%; 2002: 5%; 2001: 6%; 2000: 9%)

- The wide variety of resources on offer is great
- Generally there are a wide range of student services available, many of which are quite useful in day to day university life
- A variety of services, staff are generally responsible
- They offer a range of services for those in need

**Other aspects mentioned included:**

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>
Administration and organisation: general <sup>6</sup>	5%	2%			

**Other services mentioned included:**

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>
Casual employment service	5%	4%	1%	1%	

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<sup>6</sup> 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 improvements<sup>7</sup>**

**Customer service: quality** (2005: 25%)  
(2003: 36%; 2002: 39%; 2001: 34%; 2000: 38%)

- It would be good if the people who work there didn't give you a dirty look just for walking through the door as if you're interrupting something really important they're doing
- Some staff at student support services could be a bit more supportive! They need to realise that not all students have used the services before and may need some guidance
- Don't expect students are mind readers – if relevant forms need to be completed tell them, don't just expect procedures will be adhered to without explanation
- Sometimes different staff give different answers to the same question, which is too inconsistent and students get confused

**Customer service: staffing levels** (2005: 14%)  
(2003: 11%; 2002: 16%; 2001: 12%; 2000: 12%)

- The amount of staff sometimes is quite limited, we can't get the help as quickly as we need
- Queuing times can be very long at some stages of the semester, and should be reduced. Perhaps more casual staff can be employed during these times e.g. the start of semester to facilitate this
- Face to face student administration was very bad, maybe more staff would help especially at the start of every semester, some staff was very unfriendly and not helpful at all I don't understand why so many new students enrol at the start of semester and not before semester
- There could be more staff employed during the busy times as there are often long queues at places like students services and faculty specific information services like SIO in the Economics and Business faculty

**Administration and organisation: general** (2005<sup>8</sup>: 14%)  
(2003: 2%; 2002: 4%; 2001: 3%; 2000: 2%)

- The Business and Economics faculty student office provides appalling service to students, with extremely long queues and incompetent staff. I received conflicting advice on a number of occasions and was forced to go through a lengthy appeals process as a result
- The faculty office for example the 'student information office of the business and economics faculty' is not very efficient and effective in coordinating the communication between students and academic staff.
- Faculty student office is just awful. Sometimes students wait for 3hrs and can't see the administrator. Just one or two person working at the time..just not enough. Also people working seem to lack knowledge and can't help. They tell me to go to the faculty student office and they tell me to go to the main student office. They got no idea of what to do but just had over responsibility
- I have had times when I've spoken to administrative staff (especially at the Economics and Business Student Information Office) where I seem to be more knowledgeable than the person behind the counter. This can be quite an infuriating and unnecessary stress on students. I am aware it isn't possible for staff to know a handbook back to front, but it would be of great assistance if those who didn't know something asked their superior straight away

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<sup>7</sup> Number of comment received: 2005: 139; 2003: 190; 2002: 161; 2001: 216; 2000: 52

<sup>8</sup> 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

**Computer Access Centres: University<sup>9</sup>** **(2005: 10%)**  
(2003: 24%; 2002: 14%; 2001: 33%; 2000: 33%)

- The computer access centres can be a bit hard to find a free lab which can lead to running around the Uni to find a free one
- Accessibility to computer services. Often, especially during the 'lunch hour' many of the ACCESS labs and even the computers at the libraries on the main campus were occupied.
- Increase the number of computers on campus, or 'quick use' computers because standing in long queues during a one hour break effectively eat (sic) into study/research time
- Computer labs are often full or closed due to classes being held. Often the larger labs are closed for classes when a large proportion of the computers are unused.

**Services provided: advertisement** **(2005: 9%)**  
(2003: 7%; 2002: 9%; 2001: 11%; 2000: 8%)

- To provide more propaganda. And let more students know how those help.
- Telling students more about what they do. I am still unaware of what some services do
- Information sheets emailed to all students detailing all the aspects of student admin, and all the services that are provided
- I have not used many of the services available to me. Maybe if they were better published more students would take advantage of them

**Web communications: intranet/ internet** **(2005: 9%)**  
(2003: 11%; 2002: 7%; 2001: 10%; 2000: 15%)

- Furthermore, the "MyUni" online facility has proved to be extremely difficult to navigate. On numerous occasions, I have witnessed students become frustrated whilst manoeuvring through the maze-like portals of "MyUni". I am certain that a reassessment of the facility's design would lead to an increase in the efficiency of general student administration.
- Perhaps by making the 'search' function on the University website easier to use.
- Make the Sydney uni website easier to negotiate. It took me a long to time to find the link to the student centre, and then to find the special consideration form within that. It is too much of a mess at the moment.
- The ICT helpdesks need to be improved. Operation timings need to be longer or even 24 hours as sometimes, Blackboard and WebCT cause problems at very crucial moments when the helpdesks are closed.

**Other aspects mentioned included:**

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>
Web communications: online access to services	5%	4%	5%	4%	

**Other services mentioned included:**

	<i>2005</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>
Student Centre (University)	8%	6%	6%	1%	2%
Library services	7%	4%	7%	8%	13%
Computer access: faculty ( <u>New topic</u> )	5%				

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<sup>9</sup> Where a comment does not specifically mention Economics and Business Computer centres, it is assumed the comment refers to University wide computer access centres.