

FACULTY OF PHARMACY
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 Pharmacy 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:

| | 2005 | | 2003 |
|----------------------------------------------|------|-----|------|
| | No | % | No |
| Curriculum: content and structure | 13 | 39% | 9 |
| Good teaching: standard of teaching received | 6 | 18% | |
| Research led teaching | 4 | 12% | 2 |
| Learning community: learning environment | 4 | 12% | 1 |
| Learning community: class sizes | 4 | 12% | |
| Curriculum: clinical and practical aspects | 4 | 12% | 1 |

Degree experience: opportunities for improvement

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

| | 2005 | | 2003 |
|-------------------------------------------------|------|-----|------|
| | No | % | No |
| Curriculum: content and structure | 15 | 33% | 4 |
| Appropriate workload | 8 | 17% | 3 |
| Good teaching: useful and timely feedback | 7 | 15% | 2 |
| Overall satisfaction: quality of degree | 6 | 13% | |
| Good teaching: standard of teaching received | 6 | 13% | |
| Overall satisfaction: quality of academic staff | 5 | 11% | 5 |

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:

| | 2005 | | 2003 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|------|
| | No | % | No |
| Library services | 8 | 36% | 6 |
| Customer service: quality | 4 | 18% | 4 |
| Administration and organisation: general | 3 | 14% | 1 |
| Services provided: accessibility and convenience of services | 3 | 14% | 1 |
| Services provided: availability and existence of services | 3 | 14% | |

Student administration and student support services: opportunities for improvement

**Faculty of Pharmacy: 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:

| | 2005 | | 2003 |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|------|
| | No | % | No |
| International Office | 4 | 18% | 2 |
| Web communications: intranet/ internet (includes WebCT) | 4 | 18% | |
| Customer service: quality | 3 | 14% | 2 |
| Customer service: staffing levels | 2 | 9% | 1 |
| Services provided: advertisement of existing services | 2 | 9% | 2 |

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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 Pharmacy in 2005.

In 2005 53% of students who responded to the SCEQ provided comments on the best aspects of their degree experience, and 75% on the aspects that they considered to be in need of improvement. This substantial increase between comments reflecting on best aspects and those reflecting on areas in need of improvement contrasts with the 2005 results for most other faculties where the difference in the percentage of comments received on best aspects and those on areas in need of improvement is not so large. This possibly indicates an overall dissatisfaction by postgraduate coursework students with their experiences in the Faculty of Pharmacy.

36% of students who responded provided comments on their experiences of the 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.

In 2000 - 2003, less than 20 postgraduate coursework students provided comments in response to the open questions. Since it is statistically invalid to convert this low number into percentages, results from 2000 – 2003 are expressed as raw numbers. In 2005, more than 20 students provided comments to the open questions. Normally, when more than 20 comments are received in a year, the results are displayed as percentages of comments received. Because of the requirement of this report to provide a comparison with previous years, the results from 2005 will be expressed as both raw numbers and percentages of comments received.

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 five or more comments relating to that aspect in the responses. Comments that may possibly identify the student are not 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.

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

Curriculum: content and structure (2005: 13 (22%))
(2003: 9; 2002: 2; 2001: 3; 2000: 1)

- The introduction to Chinese and Ayurvedic Herbal Medicine, Pharmacology and evidence based approaches was also interesting for me as a Western Herbalist/Naturopath and has the potential to enhance understanding and integration between the different modalities, which could prove very valuable long-term for the whole health sector.
- Basic Chinese Medicines and formulary is a very interesting topic. From knowing nothing till now, I have learnt a lot of herbs that might be useful in my life and career. Buy understanding the busy system in TCM point of view, if broaden the diagnosis and explain well about the busy system compare with what a pharmacist learnt.
- Good integration of theory and practice. Comprehensive survey of main industry areas.
- Self directed learning - makes you think

Good teaching: standard of teaching received (2005: 6 (18%))
(2001: 1)

- Majority of teaching staff committed to imparting knowledge.
- Lecturers (especially Dr. XXX) always taught us how to think, and why to think
- Interaction with lecturers committed to learning and research which has developed my capacity for future learning and research. I value and appreciate the work lecturers have put in after hours (5.30 - 9.30pm)
- general willingness of lecturers/staff members to help when asked

Other aspects mentioned included:

NB: all the aspects mentioned below were mentioned in less than six comments

| | 2005 | | 2003 | 2002 | 2001 | 2000 |
|-------------------------------------------------|------|-----|------|------|------|------|
| | No | % | No | No | No | No |
| Research led teaching | 4 | 12% | 2 | 1 | | |
| Learning community: learning environment | 4 | 12% | 1 | 2 | 1 | |
| Learning community: class sizes | 4 | 12% | | | | |
| Curriculum: clinical and practical aspects | 4 | 12% | 1 | | | |
| Skills development: generic graduate attributes | 2 | 6% | 5 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Overall satisfaction: quality of degree | 2 | 6% | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Learning resources: general | 2 | 6% | | | | |

³ Number of comment received: 2005: 33; 2003: 17; 2002: 16; 2001: 10; 2000: 3

4.2 Analysis of comments suggesting improvements⁴

Curriculum: content and structure (2005: 15 (33%))
(2003: 4; 2002: 5; 2001: 3; 2000: 2)

- To including more quantity and quality representation of subjects of Western Herbal Medicine, to justify the title of the Masters "Masters of Herbal Medicine". It is the main herbal medicine practiced in Australia and is totally under-represented in this course. instead of what we have now, is only a few average introductory lectures in the Introduction and the rest of the year a crash course in Chinese Herbal Medicine and the evidenced based subjects which are great!).
- Since it is an intensive course and it would be beneficial for students that both physical Pharmaceutics 1 and 2 are condensed into 1st semester and having Pharmacology 3A and 3B condensed into 2nd semester.
- The actual course material needs to be more practical, it seems to have skipped the basics of some areas and concentrated far too much on others. I do not feel confident that the knowledge I have gained is enough for my registration year next year in pharmacy.
- Chemistry would really benefit from a Bridging Course before the term starts for anyone who hasn't used Chemistry actively in the last 6 years. That would help to get much more out of this very interesting subject.

Appropriate workload (2005:8 (17%))
(2003: 3; 2002: 3; 2001: 1)

- Workload. Please reduce the number of assignment. can increase the marks carry by each assignment. Student can concentrate on one hard assignment rather than doing many easy assignments.
- Multiple assessments worth very few marks mean workload is too high.
- Workload for masters degree is too heavy- should have less assignments & more lectures for masters. Other unis have more flexibility and rely less on research by students
- workload not in proportion to credit points for courses.

Good teaching: useful and timely feedback (2005: 7 (15%))
(2003: 2; 2002: 1)

- Return of assignments with feedback -assignments are not returned -so returning assignments with comments about areas which would need improvement would be very helpful. *Earlier feedback of assessments -assessments are nearly always given back after the exam - so no feedback of how one is doing during the course.
- Return of assignments and more timely feedback would help in understanding and highlights areas for improvement.
- Sometimes marks are not given for weeks and they are the only 'feedback' you get.
- In regards to assignments need comments and feedback. Had running assignments every week but no comments of progress. Pharmacy going into Masters- had 3 or 4 assessments in one week, was ridiculous. Course structure especially assessment has to be more flexible

⁴ Number of comment received: 2005: 46; 2003: 20; 2002: 15; 2001: 11; 2000: 3

Overall satisfaction: quality of degree⁵ **(2005: 6: 13%)**
(2001: 1)

- The cost of the degree - improving the value for money!!!
- The course is too expensive to be so terribly disorganised. The basic learning outcomes and objectives are not clearly defined, as a result one is unaware of what to expect or how handle the course content. Staff are unresponsive to feedback. As a postgraduate course, lectures are combined with the undergraduate course for pharmacy, which is unacceptable!
- This course was extremely disorganised. I am aware that it is a new course and therefore is bound to have aspects that require improvement, however, as a full fee paying Masters course I expected more. Overall I was dissatisfied with the organisation (or lack thereof) of this course.
- This course was extremely disorganised. I am aware that it is a new course and therefore is bound to have aspects that require improvement, however, as a full fee paying Masters course I expected more.

Good teaching: standard of teaching received **(2005: 6: 13%)**
(2001: 1)

- Level of communication between lecturers and students. As my course is new, the expectation and understanding levels of some lecturers were at times excessive and they did not seem to understand this.
- Teaching. I think the teachers in this course are very educated but do not know how to interact or in other words how to present their vast knowledge. So i think they should take teachers who can communicate effectively with students.
- Some lectures - reading straight from slides out of the text. We want life experiences, something that can be applied - anyone can read a textbook. Its life experiences we are lacking until we get out of uni.
- Some of the lecturing was poor with poor course notes

Overall satisfaction: quality of academic staff⁶ **(2005: 5 (11%))**
(2003: 5; 2002: 1; 2001: 3)

- Better language skills of l all lecturers - poor mastering of the English language and very strong accents of a few of the lecturers made it very difficult in these subjects to benefit from the lecture time.
- Some lecturers have difficulty communicating with students and explaining concepts on questioning, ESL is a banner to learning in some instances.
- practicing lecturers each in his field of excellence rather than only academic
- I do not agree with students taking lectures on therapeutic areas due to the large variability of Postgraduate students knowledge/experience. Expect experts/specialists to improve my knowledge!!

Other aspects mentioned included:

| | 2005 | | 2003 | 2002 | 2001 | 2000 |
|--------------------------------------------|------|-----|------|------|------|------|
| | No | % | | | | |
| Communication | 5 | 11% | 2 | | | |
| Appropriate Assessment | 5 | 11% | 1 | 1 | | |
| Administration and organisation: general | 4 | 9% | 2 | 1 | | 1 |
| Clear Goals and Standards | 3 | 7% | 1 | 2 | 2 | |
| Academic Board policies: parallel teaching | 3 | 7% | | | | |

⁵ Includes reputation of university/ degree; value for money; intellectual level of course content

⁶ Includes: Qualifications (as tertiary teacher); experience (in subject area); English language proficiency

5 Experience of student administration and student support services

NB: *Only one aspect in this section of the report were mentioned in more than five comments. Therefore, to preserve student confidentiality, no sample comments have been provided for the remaining top aspects.*

5.1 Analysis of comments referring to best aspects⁷

Library services

(2005: 8 (36%))

(2003: 6; 2002: 3; 2001: 1)

- Library is the best. I can help find good references in the library. Staff are very helpful and kind.
- Library. (Medical Library) was really helpful to support my study. The location, however, is too far from our building. And also the sources need to be added especially journals and textbooks.
- Library staff were very helpful.
- Libraries, helpful staff in med library

Other aspects mentioned included:

| | 2005 | | 2003 | 2002 | 2001 | 2000 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|------|------|------|------|
| | No | % | | | | |
| Customer service: quality | 4 | 18% | 4 | 5 | 1 | |
| Administration and organisation: general | 3 | 14% | 1 | | | |
| Services provided: accessibility and convenience of services | 3 | 14% | 1 | | | |
| Services provided: availability and existence of services | 3 | 14% | | | 1 | |

5.2 Analysis of comments suggesting improvements⁸

NB: *No aspects in this section of the report were mentioned in more than five comments. Therefore, to preserve student confidentiality, no sample comments have been provided. The following aspects were mentioned in 9-18% of comments received.*

| | 2005 | | 2003 | 2002 | 2001 | 2000 |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|------|------|------|------|
| | No | % | | | | |
| International Office | 4 | 18% | 2 | 1 | | |
| Web communications: intranet/ internet (includes WebCT) | 4 | 18% | | | | |
| Customer service: quality | 3 | 14% | 2 | 2 | | |
| Customer service: staffing levels | 2 | 9% | 1 | 1 | 2 | |
| Services provided: advertisement of existing services | 2 | 9% | 2 | 1 | | |

⁷ Number of comment received: 2005: 22; 2003: 15; 2002: 9; 2001: 4

⁸ Number of comment received: 2005: 22; 2003: 13; 2002: 17; 2001: 4