



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Arts

Student experience of Learning and Teaching

Trends and key issues: Undergraduate students 2001-2007

Date July 2008

Contents

GLOSSARY	3
NOTES	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	7
STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING SURVEYS.....	7
FOCUS OF THE TREND ANALYSIS REPORT	7
1 GENERIC SKILLS (KPI 7).....	8
1.1 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA 2001–2007	8
1.2 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUALITATIVE DATA 2001–2007	8
1.3 KEY ISSUES FOR COURSEWORK STUDENTS (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)	9
2 GOOD TEACHING (KPI 8)	11
2.1 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA 2001–2007	11
2.2 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUALITATIVE DATA 2001–2007	11
2.3 KEY ISSUES FOR COURSEWORK STUDENTS (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)	12
3 OVERALL SATISFACTION (KPI 9).....	15
3.1 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA 2001–2007	15
3.2 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUALITATIVE DATA 2001–2007	15
3.3 KEY ISSUES FOR COURSEWORK STUDENTS (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)	16
4 LEARNING COMMUNITY	18
4.1 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA SCEQ 2003–2007	18
4.2 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUALITATIVE DATA 2001–2007	18
4.3 KEY ISSUES FOR COURSEWORK STUDENTS (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)	19
5 CURRICULUM.....	21
5.1 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUALITATIVE DATA 2001–2007	21
5.2 KEY ISSUES FOR COURSEWORK STUDENTS (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)	22
6 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT	24
6.1 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA SCEQ 2003-2007	24
6.2 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUALITATIVE DATA 2001–2007	24
6.3 KEY ISSUES FOR COURSEWORK STUDENTS (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)	25
7 APPROPRIATE WORKLOAD.....	26
7.1 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA 2003–2007	26
7.2 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUALITATIVE DATA 2001–2007	26
7.3 KEY ISSUES FOR COURSEWORK STUDENTS (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)	26
8 FACULTY/ DEPARTMENT STUDENT ADMINISTRATION	27
8.1 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA SCEQ 2003-2007	27
8.2 COMPARATIVE RESULTS: QUALITATIVE DATA 2001–2007	27
8.3 KEY ISSUES FOR CURRENT COURSEWORK STUDENTS (SCEQ 2007)	28

Glossary

The following terms and phrases are used throughout the report

SCEQ	Student Course Experience Questionnaire Administered to current students
CEQ	Course Experience Questionnaire Administered to graduates of previous year
Graduates	Students who completed the CEQ for 2007 i.e. graduated in 2006
Current students	Students who were studying at the University during 2007; from all years of the course
Faculty scores Percentage agreement	The percentage of current students/ graduates who either agreed or strongly agreed with relevant survey items in the SCEQ/ CEQ
Qualitative data Comments	Students written observations received in response to open ended questions in the surveys. Relate to aspects of best practice in degree experience and aspects in need of improvement
Percentage of comments received	The number of times an aspect is mentioned within the comments received from respondents is expressed as a percentage of the total number of comments received

Notes

Note re percentage of respondents providing written comments in SCEQ

The percentage of students providing written observations in their answers to the SCEQ declined significantly in 2007. In 2005, 72% of respondents supplied written comments in answer to the open questions; in 2007 just over half (55%) of respondents supplied written observations. This decline is present across the University.

Note re qualitative data (international students)

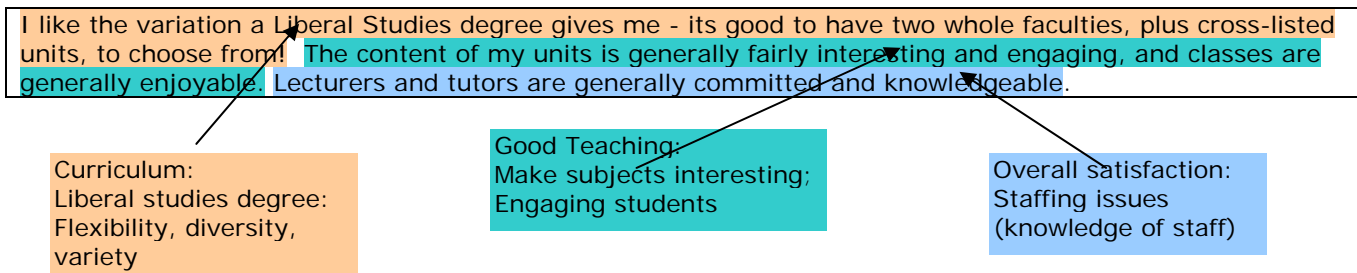
9 international students provided written observations in their response to the SCEQ; and 19 graduates provided written observations in the CEQ. Since the minimum sample size recommended for statistical analysis of SCEQ and CEQ data is 20, the analysis of the qualitative data for this group of students should be viewed with caution.

Note re illustrative sample comments

Comments are recorded as they appear in the original documents. However, minor spelling, grammatical and transcription errors have been corrected. [sic] indicates that the word appears exactly as provided by the student, and that it is not possible to ascertain an exact interpretation of the original meaning.

Note re analysis and counting of comments

Each comment is analysed according to the *Taxonomy for analysing qualitative data from the SCEQ/ CEQ*¹, which is based on the University KPIs for Learning and Teaching, with those comments including more than one aspect being counted once for each aspect mentioned. The number of times an aspect is mentioned is presented as a percentage of the total number of comments received. For example, the following comment is counted as ONE COMMENT RECEIVED; but as it is mentioned in Good Teaching, Overall Satisfaction, and Curriculum; the comment is counted ONCE in each of the relevant categories.



¹ Available from Quality Assurance Officer (Learning and Teaching)

Executive summary

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

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

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

The term "Faculty scores" refers to the proportion of current students/ graduates who either agreed or strongly agreed with the relevant survey items in the SCEQ/ CEQ for 2007.

Key results

- Faculty scores for **Generic Skills** (KPI 7; Section 1)
 - increased steadily for both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ)
 - are below the University average for current students
 - are above the University average for graduates

Whilst the full range of generic skills was mentioned in comments from both current students and graduates, it is interesting to note the absence of comments relating to the development of group work or team skills. Fewer current students provided comments on generic skills than graduates.

- Faculty scores for **Good teaching** (KPI 8; Section 2)
 - are third in the University for current students (SCEQ)
 - are the second highest in the University for graduates (CEQ)
 - for current students (SCEQ), domestic students appear to be more satisfied than international students
 - there is little difference in the experiences of graduates (CEQ).

Analysis of the qualitative data from the SCEQ corroborates quantitative results, with more positive comments being received from current students than negative; and an increase of 9% in positive comments since 2005. The distribution of comments from graduates, relating to best practice and those suggesting improvements in the area of good teaching, is evenly divided.

- Faculty scores for **Overall Satisfaction** (KPI 9; Section 3)
 - for current students (SCEQ) are the highest in the University;
 - are the second highest in the University for graduates (CEQ)
 - for current students have increased by 12% since 2005;
 - for international students are lower than domestic students
- Faculty scores for **Learning Community** (Section 4)
 - Have steadily increased since 2003;
 - are amongst the highest in the University (SCEQ).

Analysis of the qualitative data indicates that students appreciate the community feel of the Faculty, the diversity of the student base, the opportunity to explore academic interests with staff and students; and small class sizes. However, combined degree and Liberal Studies students felt isolated from their peers; and concerns were raised about library resources and the state of rooms and equipment.

- Faculty scores for **Curriculum** (qualitative data only) (Section 5)
 - in 2007, 48% of comments received from graduates were favourable; 23% suggested improvements
 - in 2007, 51% of comments received from current students were favourable; 33% recommended improvements.

The ability to take a wide range of subjects, particularly for combined degree and Liberal Studies students; together with the presence of study abroad options, was highly regarded.

- Faculty scores for **Assessment** (Section 6)
 - are higher than the University average, and place the Faculty in the top 25% of faculties

Students are satisfied with assessment practices within the Faculty; however they would prefer a wider variety of assessments e.g. essays rather than exams; group projects rather than individual assessments.

- Faculty scores for **Workload** (Section 7)
 - are higher than the University average, and place the Faculty third in the University

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

- Faculty scores for **Faculty/ Department Student Administration** (Section 8)
 - SCEQ scores have improved considerably since 2002, and currently sit at 56%
 - Whilst the experiences of domestic students has increased; that of international students has decreased considerably since 2005

Evidence from the qualitative data confirms these overall results; with the percentage of comments from current students, and expressing dissatisfaction with Faculty administration declining by two thirds since 2002. International students did not provide any written observations on this topic.

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July 2008*

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Conceptual framework

Student Evaluation of Teaching Surveys

The University Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ) and the DEEWR/ GCA Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) are designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data about students' perceptions of the quality of teaching and learning in their degree courses.

In both surveys students are asked to respond to statements using a five point Likert Scale to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement. As part of the questionnaires, students are also asked to provide written comments on the best aspects of their degree experience and those that could be improved.

Quantitative and qualitative data from the CEQ and the SCEQ provide evidence of the success of University and Faculty initiatives to improve the overall student experience in general and the student experience of learning and teaching in particular.

Difference between SCEQ and CEQ

Both surveys are administered by the Institute for Teaching and Learning. The SCEQ is distributed to a stratified sample of current students (i.e. all years of study, all degrees). The CEQ is distributed to all graduates of the University in the year following graduation.

Focus of the Trend Analysis Report

Based on the answers to these surveys, this report seeks to provide an analysis of observable trends in the student experience of learning and teaching in the Faculty of Arts between 2000 and 2007. The report also provides detailed information on the key issues highlighted in the analysis of the 2007 SCEQ and CEQ qualitative data. Reliable qualitative data for international students did not become available until the 2005 SCEQ.

Information is arranged by Key Performance Indicators (7: Generic skills; 8: Good teaching; and 9: Overall satisfaction) plus additional factors (Learning community; Curriculum; Assessment; Workload; and Faculty/department student administration) which, taken together, comprise the student experience of learning and teaching in the Faculty.

When reading this report, it should be noted that the absence of favourable comments on a particular aspect of learning and teaching does not reflect that this is not an area of best practice. Rather, it could be interpreted that the students are happy with their experiences, and prefer to focus on commenting on areas in need of improvement. Also of note is that students are increasingly providing constructive comments in response to the open-response questions, and often mention more than one aspect of their experiences.

1 Generic skills (KPI 7)

Definition

Generic skills includes:

- Research and inquiry (analytical, problem solving, critical thinking, knowledge expansion etc)
- Information literacy (retrieval and use of information)
- Personal and intellectual autonomy (independent learning; planning own work; intellectually curious etc)
- Ethical, social, professional understanding (including group/ team skills; professional skills and experience)
- Communication (written and oral; communicating with others; communicating understanding)

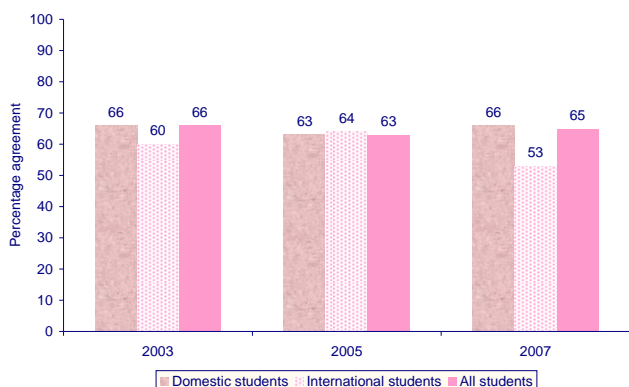
Trends

There has been a steady increase in Faculty scores for Generic Skills since 2005, with the 2007 results for current students (SCEQ) marginally below the University average of 66%. The current CEQ score of 70% is above the University average of 69%.

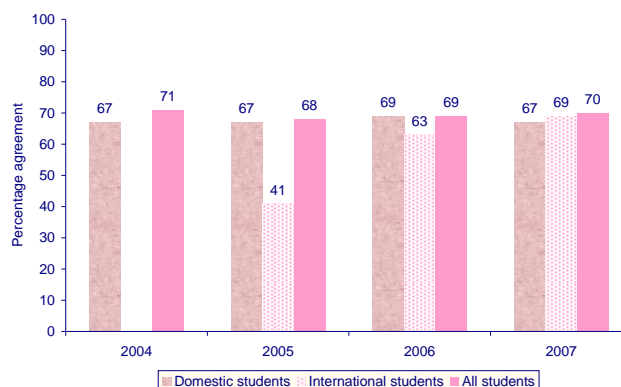
Whilst the full range of generic skills was mentioned in comments from both current students and graduates, it is interesting to note the absence of comments relating to the development of group work or team skills. Fewer current students provided comments on generic skills than graduates.

1.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2001–2007

The following tables show the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with relevant survey items for Generic Skills in SCEQ and the CEQ.



1.1.1 Student Course Experience Questionnaire: 2003; 2005; 2007 (current students)



1.1.2 Course Experience Questionnaire 2004–2007 (graduates from previous year)

1.2 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

The following table includes the percentage of qualitative comments received from respondents to the surveys that can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement. The trends provide an indication of the student satisfaction with the development of University graduate attributes / generic skills between 2001 and 2007.

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	18%	12%	27%	21%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	18%	11%	62%	63%
	All	9%	8%	8%	18%	12%	29%	23%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	4%	4%	4%	7%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	0%	8%	10%
	All	3%	4%	2%	3%	4%	4%	7%

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

1.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

The development of generic attributes by undergraduate students in the Faculty did not rate highly in areas of best practice mentioned in the SCEQ. Twelve percent of students (25/209 comments received) mentioned that they felt that necessary skills and abilities were being developed during the course of their studies. Comments were evenly spread between: Research and inquiry; Information literacy; and Communication skills. Of interest, is the fact that, contrary to some other faculties, there was no mention of the development of group or team work skills.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Skills learnt: Communication and ability to understand from variety of perspectives. Research skills broadened*
- *Tutorials - when they were run by well informed and skilled tutors were absolutely fascinating; working to consolidate lecture materials, stimulate different arguments on issues as well as developing our ability to form and then articulate our own opinions*
- *Teaching of oral and written communication skills, research and analytic skills*
- *seminar presentations give students practice in communicating effectively*
- *My degree is helping me bring discipline and organisation into my personal and work life. It allows me to think clearly and analytically about my surroundings.*

Sample comments: international students

- *It can provide much more opportunities for developing essay writing skills and doing research personally*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=436)	International (n=19)	All (n=455)
Research and inquiry			
- The capacity to make decisions and solve problems has improved	8%	37%	10%
- Analytical skills have been developed			
- Increased ability to apply critical judgement and thinking			
- Knowledge boundaries questioned and recognised			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Good learning research skills/writing/analytical skills but lacks practical aspects: e.g. Art History is all theory and no practical*
- *The course had given a new found confidence both in writing and verbal skills. I feel confident writing applications and letters and entering conversation that require articulation and knowledge*
- *Both my majors challenged me to think about issues and problems I hadn't previously engaged with. I found both courses gave me a more informed way of analysing problems and examining social/cultural/political issues*

Sample comments: international students

- *Helped me develop better skills in research methods, stronger reading and writing abilities, and to overcome unfamiliar problems*
- *Developing independent learning as well as analysis skills with regards to literally texts*
- *Research skills. The course encourages critical thinking*

1.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

Across the University, very few current students who provide written observations in their responses to the SCEQ express concern about the non-development of specific graduate attributes. The Faculty is no exception. Only 4% of undergraduate students (9/212 comments received) mentioned that they felt that necessary skills and abilities were not being developed during the course of their studies. Most of the comments related to the development of professional skills, and/or the lack of professional experience; and information literacy. No comments on this topic were received from international students.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *There isn't enough emphasis on group work considering the requirements for individuals to be confident in working in team arrangements in workplaces*
- *Needs internship and work experience component*
- *could have learnt a lot more for the development of my research and presentation skills*
- *More practical element should be made mandatory in archaeology.*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=395)	International (n=21)	All (n=416)
Ethical, social, professional understanding			
- Ability to work in a group/ team working skills	5%	10%	6%
- Development of discipline/ professional skills			
- Presence of work placement/ industry experience in the course			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The course could be improved by more diversity in activities with a greater focus on oral communication as apposed to reading and writing.*
- *Perhaps more group work could be included into the course as it is a useful tool later in life. However, I appreciate that this is a complex task in an Art degree*
- *In Archaeology perhaps there should be more emphasis on hands on experience, more practical work. Courses should also be more practical*
- *More industry/work experience. More help for graduates. Didn't develop skills far enough*

Sample comments: international students

- *Not enough focus on teamwork*
- *Work attachments need to be longer*

2 Good teaching (KPI 8)

Definition

Good teaching includes:

- Good teaching experiences (interesting, teaching methods, discussions encouraged etc)
- Motivating teaching (enthusiasm, passion of teachers)
- Concern and care for student learning
- Good explanations received (includes English language proficiency of teachers)
- Feedback on work (timely, constructive)

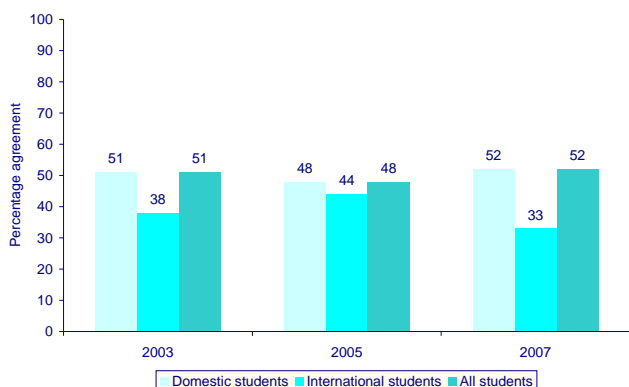
Trends

Faculty scores for Good teaching for the SCEQ have fluctuated since 2003, and currently sit at 52%, which is higher than the University average of 44%, and places the Faculty in the top three for this KPI. Excellent CEQ scores indicate that graduates of the Faculty of Arts are highly satisfied with the standard of teaching they received whilst studying at the University. The CEQ score of 61% is the second highest in the University, and higher than the University average of 48%. For current students (SCEQ 2007), domestic students appear to be more satisfied than international students with teaching within the Faculty (52% domestic; 33% international), whilst there is little difference in the experiences of graduates.

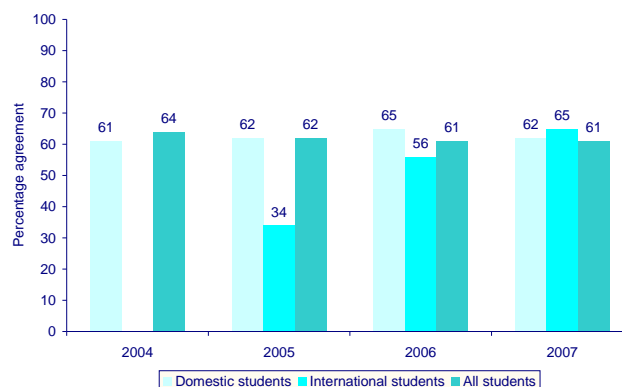
Analysis of the qualitative data from the SCEQ corroborates quantitative results, with more positive comments being received from current students than negative; and an increase of 9% in positive comments since 2005. The distribution of comments from graduates, relating to best practice and those suggesting improvements in the area of good teaching, is evenly divided.

2.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2001–2007

The following tables show the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with relevant survey item statements for Good teaching in the SCEQ and the CEQ.



2.1.1 Student Course Experience Questionnaire: 2003; 2005; 2007 (current students)



2.1.2 Course Experience Questionnaire 2004–2007 (graduates from previous year)

2.2 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

The following table includes the percentage of qualitative comments received from respondents to the surveys which can be classified as areas of best practice or areas of improvement, providing an indication of trends in the student experience of good teaching between 2001 and 2007, as indicated in the responses to open questions in the SCEQ and the CEQ.

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	24%	36%	41%	36%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	45%	0%	23%	32%
	All	38%	35%	37%	25%	34%	41%	36%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	26%	26%	35%	37%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	36%	30%	32%	24%
	All	35%	27%	32%	26%	26%	35%	36%

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

2.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=200)	International (n=9)	All (n=209)
Good teaching experiences			
- Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques	15%	0%	14%
- Ability to keep students interested in the subject			
- Lecturers perceived to be engaged with students during lectures and tutorials			
Motivating students			
- Teachers display enthusiasm for teaching/ subject	7%	0%	7%
- Teachers are perceived to be passionate and inspiring			
- Students are motivated by lecturers/ tutors etc			
Concern and care for student learning			
- Students felt supported in their learning; help and advice readily available	8%	0%	7%
- Lecturers understood problems and difficulties of students (academic and personal)			
Sample comments: domestic students			
- <i>I have found the staff to be extremely helpful and understanding, they are always available to talk to about any course requirements and to be of any help</i>			
- <i>The lecturers and tutors have an education degree so they know how to teach effectively and engage people rather than simply standing there and reading or lecturing</i>			
- <i>With my arts degree, the best aspect is that all my lecturers and tutorial teachers genuinely enjoy their subjects and some are actively involved in research projects, their enthusiasm positively affects their teaching and I enjoy being in their classes</i>			
- <i>Arts (archaeology) has a good core group of lecturers and research staff that are generally very receptive to questions and are interested in us</i>			
- <i>BA - Indonesian subjects - classes are interactive , encourage debate, teaching is helpful and highly stimulating - feedback very helpful</i>			
- <i>Media & Communications - some of the teachers are so qualified and good at communicating the course materials, it's a fun degree</i>			

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=436)	International (n=19)	All (n=455)
Good teaching experiences			
- Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques	20%	21%	20%
- Ability to keep students interested in the subject			
- Use of up-to-date and relevant course materials (print and online)			
Motivating students			
- Teachers display enthusiasm for teaching/ subject	8%	5%	8%
- Teachers are perceived to be passionate and inspiring			
- Students are motivated by lecturers/ tutors etc			
Concern and care for student learning			
- Students felt supported in their learning; help and advice readily available	7%	5%	7%
- Lecturers understood problems and difficulties of students (academic and personal)			

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=436)	International (n=19)	All (n=455)
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Sample comments: domestic students

- *Being in reasonably small departments I appreciated that the staff had the time and interest to get to know me a bit and were really encouraged me to succeed in my studies*
- *The passion the Performance Studies staff had for their subject and the ability to offer an alternative style of teaching in comparison to other subjects*
- *I greatly enjoyed the classes that were taken by enthusiastic and interesting lecturers. It was these people that made it interesting to learn*

Sample comments: international students

- *Some of the lecturers were great on delivering lectures and made them interesting*
- *The lecturers were all very helpful and enthusiastic in the study areas*
- *Good quality of teaching*

2.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=202)	International (n=10)	All (n=212)
------------------------------	---------------------	-------------------------	----------------

Good teaching experiences

- | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| - Teaching methods used are outdated | 10% | 20% | 11% |
| - Learning resources are out of date, not relevant to curriculum, and not available online | | | |

Concern and care for student learning

- | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|
| - Staff do not provide support and help for students, including one-on-one consultations | 6% | 0% | 6% |
| - Staff do not seem to understand student difficulties and problems | | | |
| - Staff are perceived to be more interested in their research than in teaching | | | |

Feedback on work (from staff to students)

- | | | | |
|---|----|-----|----|
| - Comments on work are not constructive; do not explain where mistakes occur that can be rectified. | 8% | 10% | 7% |
| - Marks only supplied, no comments | | | |
| - Feedback is untimely and not helpful | | | |
| - Perceived lack of staff effort in provision of feedback on assessment | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *All lecturers (particularly XXX in Digital Cultures, YYY in Spanish, ZZZ in Art History) should be evaluated by a panel of students and staff to determine whether they are the sort of lecturers anyone could be bothered listening to for hours at a time. There seems to be a small epidemic of lecturers who may well be well-qualified in their field but somehow think it is acceptable to read aloud from PowerPoint slides (which are available online, anyway) for an hour and call it a lecture*
- *Feedback on assessments could also be a little more comprehensive in some cases, especially in regards to end of semester exams (as opposed to simply receiving a grade)*
- *also, in some non-seminar courses, online notes would be really helpful in allowing students to listen and understand in lectures, rather than attempting to record a mass of information*
- *Some lecturers could run through their points more slowly, in order that students are able to thoroughly grasp and understand the concepts, theories and/or ideas being taught*

Sample comments: international students

- *there isn't enough time for feedback on assignments, especially end of semester assignments*
- *Additional Language materials should be provided by the lecturers*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=395)	International (n=21)	All (n=416)
Good teaching experiences			
- Teaching methods and techniques used are outdated/need improvement	13%	0%	13%
- Discussions of issues during class were not encouraged			
- Lecturers were boring; did not engage with students			
- Learning materials and resources were outdated; or not available electronically			
Concern and care for student learning			
- Staff do not provide support and help for students, including one-on-one consultations	10%	19%	11%
- Staff do not seem to understand student difficulties and problems			
- Staff are perceived to be more interested in their research than in teaching			
Feedback on work (from staff to students)			
- Comments on work are not constructive; do not explain where mistakes occur that can be rectified.	11%	5%	11%
- Feedback is untimely and not helpful			
Sample comments: domestic students			
- <i>Availability and support from lecturers and tutors, faster access to feedback from assessments and assignments</i>			
- <i>To improve - lecturers in large courses need to engage students, tutors to learn names! Some effort to give feedback and push students to improve and want to improve.</i>			
- <i>Readings! -> some lecturers don't take the time to find quality readings but lump students with 60 pages of semi-relevant information</i>			
Sample comments: international students			
- <i>It's not easy but I think it'd be very helpful if lecturers and tutors can pay more attention/spend more time with students who are left behind</i>			
- <i>Teachers have to leave personal opinion when correcting work</i>			
- <i>PHILOSOPHY: Communication with students, help with tasks and essays</i>			

3 Overall satisfaction (KPI 9)

Definition

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

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

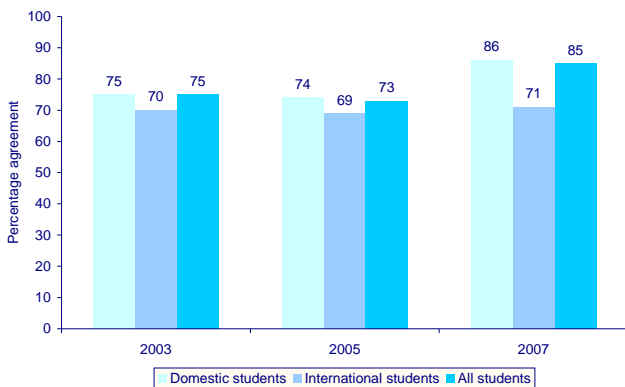
Trends

There has been a substantial increase in the overall satisfaction of current students (SCEQ) in the Faculty with the quality of their degree experience. The current score of 85% is the highest in the University, and represents an increase of 12% since 2005. International students remain less satisfied than their domestic counterparts. Whilst the overall faculty score for graduates (CEQ) has remained steady at around 77%; the experience of international students has increased considerably since 2004, with the current score of 65% representing an increase of 9% since 2006, and 31% since 2005. The University average for graduates is 71% and for current students is 73%.

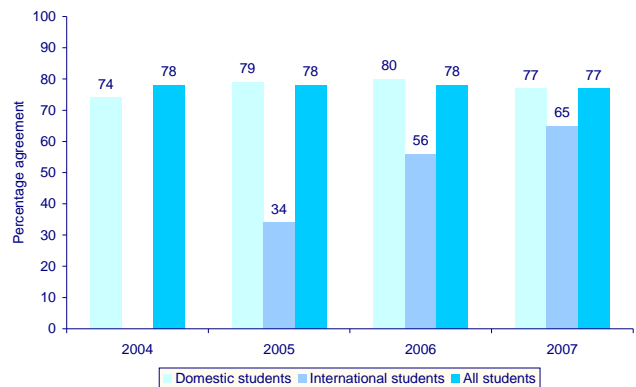
The percentage of comments received from both current students and graduates, and which mention the above areas, is evenly divided between those expressing satisfaction and those expressing the dissatisfaction.

3.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2001–2007

The following tables show the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with the survey statement 'Overall I am satisfied with the quality of this degree course' in the SCEQ and the CEQ.



3.1.1 Student Course Experience Questionnaire: 2003; 2005; 2007 (current students)



3.1.2 Course Experience Questionnaire 2004–2007 (graduates from previous year)

3.2 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

The following table includes the percentage of qualitative comments received from respondents to the surveys which can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement, providing an indication of trends in students' overall satisfaction between 2001 and 2007.

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	7%	6%	8%	8%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	9%	33%	8%	0%
	All	8%	7%	6%	7%	7%	8%	7%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	5%	5%	10%	8%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	0%	0%	10%
	All	3%	5%	3%	5%	5%	10%	8%

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

3.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

In 2007, very few current students who provided written observations in their responses to the SCEQ mentioned aspects relating to overall satisfaction i.e. reputation/ quality of degree/ University; qualifications, knowledge and experience of staff, including guest lecturers; the entry standards or students; or the cost of the course. Only 7% of undergraduate students (14/209 comments received) mentioned the aforementioned aspects as being areas of best practice. The majority of comments related to the experience, qualifications and relevant knowledge of lecturers and tutors.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Over all I am in fact absolutely loving studying at USyd and find many of my subjects and lecturers to be of a very high standard*
- *Having people who are working in the field currently, so they are able to pass their knowledge. Good teachers who actually wrote the textbook made me feel as though they really knew what they were doing.*
- *The calibre of the teaching staff. All speak Indonesian fluently and if not Indonesian, have intimate knowledge of Indonesian culture, politics and daily life. They are also very approachable and respectful of students*

Sample comments: international students

- *The staff all have been professionals in the field but have also done heaps of research into their academic interests. Very approachable. Very committed to helping students learn*
- *for B.A. I think I have learnt a lot of interesting things which I wouldn't know if I didn't study it. as well as they are very useful to me*
- *I felt like I was challenged throughout the degree, but each unit challenged a different part of my brain which was fantastic*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

In 2007, very few graduates who provided written observations in their responses to the CEQ mentioned aspects relating to overall satisfaction i.e. reputation/ quality of degree/ University; qualifications, knowledge and experience of staff, including guest lecturers; the entry standards or students; or the cost of the course. Only 7% of undergraduate students (34/455 comments received) mentioned the aforementioned aspects as being areas of best practice. The majority of comments related to the experience, qualifications and relevant knowledge of lecturers and tutors.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The staff and faculty of the dept of studies in religion were without peer. I could not praise them highly enough.*
- *Working with people who were known to be some of the best in their field.*
- *The commitment to teaching rare but necessary Semitic languages - Akkadian and Aramaic*
- *The lecturers were very professional and always extremely knowledgeable*
- *The quality of other students in my cohort*
- *The opportunity to meet people studying/interested in History and learning from the learned Professors*

3.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

In 2007, very few current students who provided written observations in their responses to the SCEQ mentioned aspects relating to dissatisfaction with the reputation/ quality of degree/ University; qualifications, knowledge and experience of staff, including guest lecturers; the entry standards of students; or the cost of the course. Only 5% of undergraduate students (11/212 comments received) mentioned the aforementioned aspects as being areas in need of improvement. No comments were received on this aspect from international students.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *My Arts major is Japanese Studies. I find it interesting to have non-native teachers (whose first language isn't even English, let alone Japanese) as lecturers for a language course*
- *teaching provided by Inexperienced staff was inadequate. Stop employing PHD students as tutors and lecturers*
- *I just cant understand how a university of Usyd's standing can have lecturers performing at such an unacceptably poor level and not have a system of checks in place to maintain its teaching quality. Surely there would be few things more important for a university than maintaining the quality of its teaching. I would actually be very interested to know what system is currently in place*
- *Arts are not funded properly and the lack of teachers and resources means that some students are not receiving an education worthy of the fees they pay. This is disappointing in a university which is traditionally very strong in the arts*
- *I am also concerned about the lack of funding for the Arts, especially in the case of Classics where at one point weekly tutorials were consequently not possible*
- *Also, there needs to be an English language proficiency test before international students are allowed to participate in group work - it's just too frustrating. Make it a verbal test (I write Spanish better than I speak it).*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

In 2007, very few graduates who provided written observations in their responses to the SCEQ mentioned aspects relating to dissatisfaction with the reputation/ quality of degree/ University; qualifications, knowledge and experience of staff, including guest lecturers; the entry standards of students; or the cost of the course. Only 7% of undergraduate students (31/416 comments received) mentioned the aforementioned aspects as being areas in need of improvement.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Class sizes too large, some academics dis interesting in teaching, too much delegation to incompetent PHD student- Tutors, showing commercialisation of education*
- *Some of the two tutors seemed less knowledgeable about their subject than should has been the case*
- *The admittance of students to the Honours course in Anthropology who have not had any previous Anthropology tuition, let above a credit average as prerequisite, brings down the standard of the course and is frustrating for other participants*
- *I fear for the Ancient History faculty in light of the loss of several cornerstone lecturers in the past years - more funding and emphasis on Ancient History and classes, not just History of modern kind*

Sample comments: international students

- *People say University of Sydney is one of the best, I was quite disappointed though with the level of education, because you expect big outcome but we do not really what this expectation looks like. I tried to follow what the teachers were asking of but always failed to meet the requirements*
- *Teachers and Departments need more funding. Need more books in the library. Money from International students needs to go towards teaching, not the lawn*

4 Learning community

Definition

Learning community includes the following:

- Learning environment (exploration of academic interests with staff and students; belonging to a community, social experiences; cultural diversity; equity issues)
- Location/ isolation (affiliated campuses, hospitals, institutes)
- Learning resources (physical facilities; library)
- Induction and orientation
- Responsiveness to student feedback

Trends

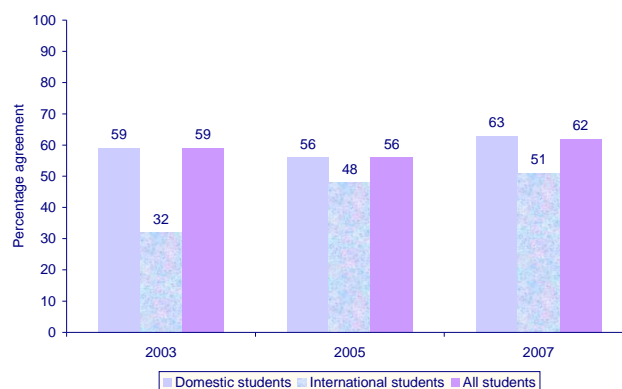
Sixty-two percent of students either agreed or strongly agreed with SCEQ survey items on the Learning Community. This places the Faculty within the top five of the University, and represents a steady increase in satisfaction, with both domestic and international students since 2003.

Analysis of the comments received in the 2007 SCEQ and CEQ indicate that students appreciate the community feel of the Faculty, the diversity of the student base, the opportunity to explore academic interests with staff and students; and small class sizes. However, combined degree and Liberal Studies students felt isolated from their peers; and concerns were raised about library resources and the state of rooms and equipment.

4.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data SCEQ 2003–2007

The following table show the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with survey item statements on Learning Community in the Student Course Experience Questionnaire.

Note: The Learning Community Scale is not included in the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ).



4.1.1 Student Course Experience Questionnaire: 2003; 2005; 2007 (current students)

4.2 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

The following table includes the percentage of qualitative comments received from respondents to the surveys which can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement, providing an indication of trends in the student experience of the learning community between 2001 and 2007.

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	23%	27%	15%	19%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	9%	0%	23%	16%
	All	21%	13%	18%	23%	26%	16%	19%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	21%	19%	24%	25%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	9%	0%	16%	14%
	All	30%	31%	21%	20%	18%	24%	24%

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

4.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=200)	International (n=9)	All (n=209)
Learning environment			
- Experienced social experience of being at University			
- Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty)	23%	0%	22%
- Academic interests were being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials			
- Enjoyed the cultural mix of students in the course			
- Happy with class sizes			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Since Semester 1 I have been taking Italian which I am really loving as it is almost entirely a class room situation 4 times a week, which fosters a nice relationship with my tutor and the other students in the class. In a university in which university life is extremely low down on the priority list, it is one way in which to make friends*
- *The small classes for ARIN are also good, as discussions are usually conducted with similarly interested people, and the lecturers tend to be more easy-going as well as engaging*
- *Meeting people with a like mind, challenging, interesting material, intelligent people*
- *I believe the best aspects of my degree course is the people I get to meet and interact with as well as the experience I gain. As one of my main focus is archaeology it is very helpful to be able to talk to people with prior experience in the field as well as people with extensive knowledge of the areas of study*
- *I enjoy going into a small, active and involved tutorial room where you feel you are truly understanding the course and your tutor is keen to assist and guide you*
- *Tutorials - when they were run by well informed and skilled tutors were absolutely fascinating; working to consolidate lecture materials, stimulate different arguments on issues as well as developing our ability to form and then articulate our own opinions*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=436)	International (n=19)	All (n=455)
Learning environment			
- Experienced social experience of being at University			
- Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty)	18%	16%	18%
- Academic interests were being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials			
- Enjoyed the cultural mix of students in the course			
- Happy with size of class			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *In Japanese friendships were able to be formed and allowed to blossom as it was accumulative. In sociology however, it was harder*
- *Senior courses which were smaller and allowed better interaction between staff and students*
- *There was an interesting mix of old and young people doing this course*
- *Being able to share and discuss ideas, to be able to have an interesting and engaging forum*

Sample comments: international students

- *Getting the chance to interact with people as passionate as I am about History*
- *Research portion, interaction with lectures*

4.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=202)	International (n=10)	All (n=212)
Learning environment			
- Did not feel that they belonged to a community (esp. combined degree and Liberal Studies students)			
- Academic interests were not explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials	10%	0%	10%
- Lectures and tutorials had too many people in them; inhibited discussion			
- Perceived inequity of treatment between student groups			

Learning resources			
- Insufficient resources in library	6%	0%	6%
- Dissatisfied with physical facilities provided e.g. equipment, rooms			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *being in a combined degree makes it difficult to meet people from my faculty. I still haven't met a single other person in my course, yet human bio is compulsory. if the prac class could have majority of people from my course I might have been able to meet people.*
- *Often class sizes can feel quite large, making it difficult for students to interact with each other and to all gain something from the learning, though I don't know how this could be improved with the current state of the funding for university education*
- *As I do Liberal Studies (International) it is compulsory that I go overseas on exchange. However, students do not automatically receive a grant to support us on exchange. The criteria for getting into this degree (over 98 UAI) and staying in this degree and thus, being eligible to go on exchange (Distinction average) are the same as those for Arts Languages). However, students undertaking the degree Arts (languages) are given a considerable amount of money when on exchange. I find this unfair, as both degrees have equally competitive entry and both require students to go on exchange. I think an improvement to my degree course would be to give students who qualify for the exchange program a grant, as going on a exchange is an important part of this degree*
- *In Renaissance History in main quadrant, repeated issues with projectors and electronic equipment creating useless lectures as much material was visual*
- *More funding to allow for smaller tutorials; the need of multiple copies of core texts on the library shelves*
- *Nothing in the courses, but some of the lecture rooms and equipment needs improving*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=395)	International (n=21)	All (n=416)
Learning environment			
- Did not feel that they belonged to a community (esp. combined degree and Liberal Studies students)			
- Academic interests were not explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials	10%	0%	10%
- Lectures and tutorials had too many people in them; inhibited discussion			
- Perceived inequity of treatment between student groups			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *I feel that linking students together who are taking the same majors may be helpful especially in courses such as Bachelor of Liberal Studies.*
- *no camaraderie between liberal studies students. In 4 years I didn't really identify any others. The constant change in courses makes it harder, but mainly to keep, friends. After a semester together, you may never see that person again*
- *Abolish tutorials with three hundred students!*
- *The leniency with which students who handed in their work late were treated. Must reinforce penalties for late work so those of us who made the effort are not disadvantaged*
- *Within my arts (English) degree I felt that the tutors were not open to rewarding students who presented a different or contacting viewpoint to the one that forward by the lectures. I found they adhered to really to the traditional opinion, and did not stay far from it*
- *More attention needs to be paid to tutorial classes across the board. They are simply not rigorous enough. Pressure needs to be put on students to present and justify their ideas*

5 Curriculum

Definition

Student perceptions of the curriculum used in their degree course include:

- Content and structure of degree(s) (intensive courses; relationship between Units of Study; content of Units of Study; relevance to work/ career/ industry)
- Mode of delivery (PBL; online)
- Flexibility of degree structure (including Combined/ Liberal studies degrees); ability to take a range of Units of Study
- Availability/ cancellation of advertised courses
- Cultural aspects i.e. inclusion of international or indigenous themes

Trends

In 2007 48% of comments received from graduates and 51% from current students commented favourably on various aspects of the curriculum. The ability to take a wide range of subjects, particularly for combined degree and Liberal Studies students; together with the presence of study abroad options, was highly regarded. Fewer students suggested improvements in the content and structure of the curriculum (SCEQ: 33%; CEQ: 23%).

Note: Specific items on Curriculum are not included in either the SCEQ or CEQ. Therefore no comparative quantitative data is available for this aspect of the student experience. Due to the high proportion of student comments on the delivery, content, structure and relevance of the curriculum this important aspect of the student experience has been included as a separate item in reports since 2002.

5.1 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

The following table includes the percentage of qualitative comments received from respondents to the surveys that can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement, providing an indication of trends in the student experience of curriculum between 2001 and 2007.

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	61%	53%	43%	48%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	45%	0%	19%	53%
	All	46%	50%	53%	61%	51%	42%	48%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	32%	34%	27%	23%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	18%	20%	28%	24%
	All	23%	27%	30%	32%	33%	27%	23%

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

5.2.2 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=200)	International (n=9)	All (n=209)
Content and structure			
- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	24%	33%	24%
- Intensive courses			
- Subjects appear to be linked together			
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			

Flexibility, variety, diversity			
- Appreciate flexibility of degree structure (incl. combined and Liberal studies degrees)	28%	0%	26%
- Ability to take a range of units of study			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The best aspect of the B.A./Commerce course is the flexibility it offers in allowing one to complete one or two majors in different faculties in the university, so broadening the student's understanding and knowledge in a variety of fields. This particular combined degree was attractive to me as it also allows me to complete a Commerce major, without doing all the (11) core units in the Commerce course which I like as some of the compulsory subjects don't appeal to me*
- *Art history and theory subjects are great. The staff are lovely, approachable and willing to help. The course content is usually well structured, being accessible to all students and moving into quite sophisticated and complex ideas.*
- *The flexibility. As a student entering university not knowing what I wanted to do, the B.A. gave me the opportunity to explore a range of disciplines and discover what I did and didn't enjoy. And then once I figured out the direction I wanted to go in, the degree allowed me to focus on this (and I ended up doing honours in preparation for further study).*

Sample comments: international students

- *In Arts, being able to do an additional major in another faculty gives a wider, more comprehensive perspective. Not only are students stimulated to learn creatively, they are allowed to undertake other courses of interest in other faculties and are not limited by overly rigid degree structures*
- *it's only a three year course. it will allow me to do further study sooner than expected*
- *It s very creative and broad*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=436)	International (n=19)	All (n=455)
Content and structure			
- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	31%	42%	31%
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			
Flexibility, variety, diversity			
- Appreciate flexibility of degree structure (incl. combined and Liberal studies degrees)	28%	0%	26%
- Ability to take a range of units of study			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Enabled me to experience the different view points and methodologies of science, arts, and management and as such I feel a well rounded individual with an ability to implement differing means to gain a solution or solve a problem*
- *Possibility to choose many different subject areas. Overseas exchange in Arts (long) program*
- *Psychology - diversity of the subjects and practical aspects of the structures. Gender - freedom allowed in the course and development of unique, individual ideas*

Sample comments: international students

- *ENGLISH: Such a fulfilling course, generally, that I will go on to do PHD.*
- *One-year exchange experience*
- *The varieties of choices of units of study. Less study pressure*

5.2.3 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=202)	International (n=10)	All (n=212)
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Content and structure

- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	21%	10%	21%
- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Arts: subjects which will actually lead to a specific degree rather than merely expanding general knowledge*
- *Explanation at the start of the course as to how it progresses. I am required to do two extra subjects that are not counted in the credit points for my degree (they are practical art subjects). I did not know this until my third year at uni!!! This should be better structured and the information given to students when they are enrolling. There were a couple of subjects that I have trouble seeing the relevance to my degree*
- *I am enrolled in the Advanced stream and I think the Faculty should allow us to waive prerequisites to enrol in certain subjects, so it can provide enough intellectual stimulation for those who are actually capable. It is very difficult to keep myself motivated when the courses feel a bit like spoon feeding and are not challenging enough. It'd be good if the Arts Faculty could offer more advanced subjects like the Science faculty. Otherwise, adding more subjects that have seminars or involve more research experience would be good.*
- *Possibly offering more 'catch up' courses in first year or similar learning sessions. I know of a lot of people who after finishing high school quickly became overwhelmed by the volumes of mathematical and physics related ideas. Some simple introductory ideas for 'moments' etc may improve pass rates and reduce drop-out levels*
- *A little more freedom to choose a range of subjects would help. Given the prerequisites for senior units in most subjects, and the restriction on the amount of junior units one is allowed to take, it's easy to get stuck doing certain subjects without having had the opportunity to experience enough of the other subjects on offer*

Sample comment: international students

- *Expanding the options available for second majors. For example, currently, under Arts, certain majors such as IR/HRM under work and organisational studies are allowed, whereas International Business is not. IBUS would provide the perfect complement for students in the Arts faculty doing sociology, anthropology, Asian studies, etc. who are looking for a practical way which their cross-cultural studies can be utilised. While keeping the compulsory major from the Arts faculty ensures that students are in fact still pursuing an Arts degree, why not expand Table B to include more subjects?.*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=395)	International (n=21)	All (n=416)
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Content and structure

- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	16%	14%	16%
- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career requirements			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *More practical training. More realistic assignments. Greater subject choices - way too limited, in fact, there was no choice in Media and Communications*
- *Advanced Italian needed to be more interesting and less elementary- it should have focused on Italian Art at least a little. The renaissance was completely ignored*
- *The introductory units in both (but especially in Asian Studies) were far too general and boring. They need to be re-thought in order to get people interested early on*

Sample comments: international students

- *Some courses needed to be organised a little more. More variety in the courses offered would have been good*
- *It'll be great if we could choose more subjects from other faculties*
- *Media = Not practical enough to help me to work in the media industry*

6 Appropriate assessment

Definition

Appropriate assessment includes:

- extent to which assessment measures higher order thinking and understanding;
- types of assessment (incl. group work as assessment practice);
- marking of assessments (weighting; marks; by staff).

Trends

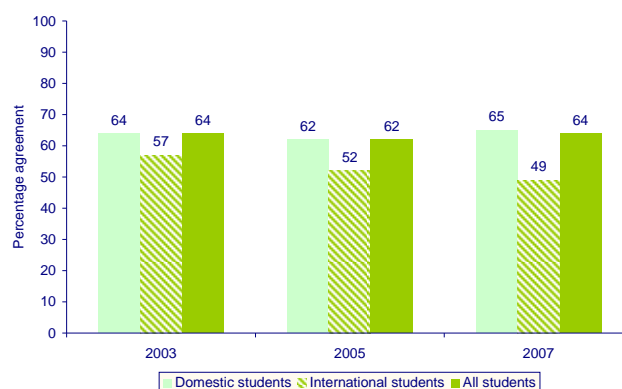
The percentage agreement scores for appropriate assessment (64%) in the 2007 SCEQ is higher than the University average of 55%, and places it among the top 25% of faculties.

On the whole students appear to be satisfied with assessment practices within the Faculty; however they would prefer a wider variety of assessments e.g. essays rather than exams; group projects rather than individual assessments.

6.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data SCEQ 2003-2007

The following tables show the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with survey item statements on appropriate assessment in the SCEQ.

NB: The Appropriate assessment Scale is not included in the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ).



6.1.1 Student Course Experience Questionnaire: 2003; 2005; 2007 (current students)

6.2 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

The following table includes the percentage of qualitative comments received from respondents to the surveys which can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement, providing an indication of trends in the student experience of appropriate assessment between 2001 and 2007.

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	5%	3%	5%	5%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	9%	0%	4%	0%
	All	4%	4%	4%	5%	3%	5%	5%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	7%	10%	8%	7%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	27%	0%	0%	0%
	All	6%	5%	5%	8%	9%	8%	7%

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

6.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

Three percent of students (i.e. 6/209) expressed satisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments. Due to the low number of comments, and to maintain student confidentiality, no sample comments are provided.

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

Five percent of students (i.e. 21/455) expressed satisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments. No international students commented on this topic.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Research assignments outside of class time; Ability to choose assignment topics*
- *lateral approach to learning /different kinds of assessments, activities*
- *I'm strongly in favour of the fact that the assessments in both major fields were predominantly essays/take home exams which allowed me to develop skills/critical analysis. The time pressure of exams isn't as relevant to life after University*
- *The freedom to choose my own topic for the final assignment in linguistics. Group work and interactive tutorials. Doing assignments and take home exams instead of actual exams*
- *Different assessment tasks (wide variety).*
- *When the lectures were clear, assessments reflected the course properly and reading was adequate*

6.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=202)	International (n=10)	All (n=212)
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Types of assessment	6%	0%	26%
- Unhappy with the forms of assessment used by the Faculty			
- General comments on assessment			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *I believe that too much of the course is tested, and thus does not really focus on how much you know but whether your knowledge is suited to the exam questions and more disappointingly how you do on the day*
- *the marking of essays is very subjective. Even in third year I feel there is a high element of luck in my marks - coincidence of happening to say the right thing and happening to get the right marker*
- *I dislike essay examinations. I would much rather do a take home exam or a much longer research essay*
- *I'd also like the assessment in my units to be a bit more varied - I get so sick of writing essay after essay after essay. It would be good to do some reports or discussions or fieldwork and so on*
- *The types of assessment are too focused on individual work.*
- *Examinations is too narrow. Does not test your knowledge of the whole semester*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

Seven percent of students (i.e. 28/416) expressed dissatisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments. No international students commented on this topic.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Psychology - exams were to bigger weight of final mark and I found not and a our way of testing knowledge*
- *The tutorial participation requirement - needed to be more structured. e.g. speeches/presentations instead of general improvised comments*
- *Some students strengths are not in exams or group work, I think to have a choice at doing take home exams or individual work gives students a sense of control and the chance to bring out their strengths*
- *Assessments need to be more fair - computerized assessments which were open for one week where answers were given out as soon as one person completed it and not fair as they encourage copying*

7 Appropriate workload

Definition

Appropriate workload includes:

- Reasonable workload
- Even distribution of assignment deadlines
- Pressure of course; not having enough time to understand the topic
- Inability to comprehend subject matter due to sheer volume of work

Trends

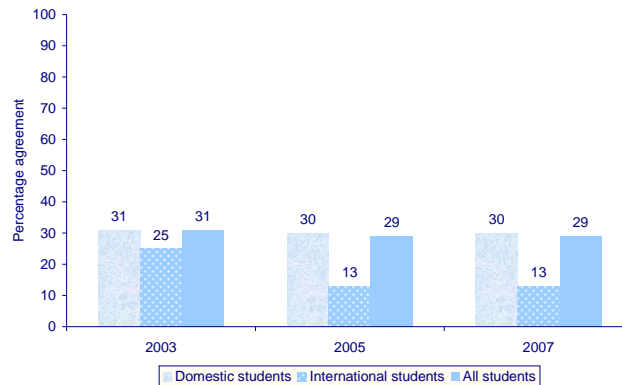
The percentage agreement scores for appropriate workload (29%) in the 2007 SCEQ is higher than the University average of 23%, and places it as third in the University.

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

7.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data 2003–2007

The following tables show the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with survey item statements on Appropriate Workload in the Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ).

NB: The Appropriate Workload Scale is not included in the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ).



6.1.1 Student Course Experience Questionnaire: 2003; 2005; 2007 (current students)

7.2 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

The following table provides an indication of trends in the student experience of appropriate workload between 2001 and 2007, as indicated in the responses to open questions in the SCEQ and the CEQ.

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	1%	1%	0%	0%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	0%	0%	0%
	All	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	4%	7%	2%	3%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	18%	20%	12%	5%
	All	4%	7%	7%	5%	8%	3%	3%

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

The main issues raised by current students who responded to the SCEQ in 2007 related to the amount of work that was required in their courses e.g. the overwhelming workload, especially in relation to combined degrees; the difficulty of getting through all the required readings; and spacing of assignments. The similarity of comments provided on this topic negates the purpose of providing sample comments to illustrate student concerns.

8 Faculty/ department student administration

Definition

Faculty / department student administration includes:

- Overall quality of Faculty administration and organisation;
- Administration of combined and Liberal Studies degrees;
- Scheduling of classes;
- Communication between staff (academic and general) and students;
- Career planning and advice

Trends

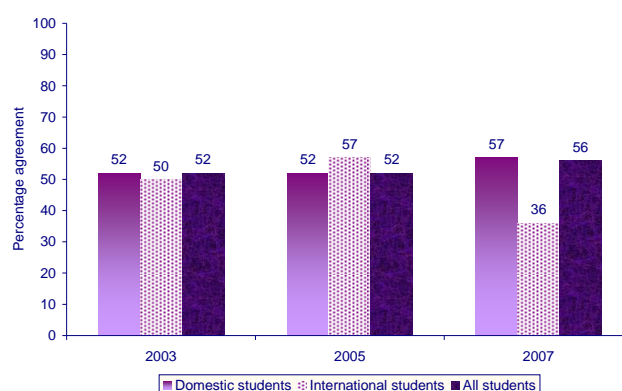
SCEQ faculty scores indicate that student perceptions of Faculty administration and organisation has improved considerably since 2002, and currently sits at 56%. The University average is 66%. Whilst the experiences of domestic students has increased; that of international students has decreased considerably since 2005.

Evidence from the qualitative data confirms these overall results; with the percentage of comments expressing dissatisfaction with Faculty administration declining by two thirds since 2002. International students did not provide any written observations on this topic.

NB: the analysis of qualitative data is limited to comments received in answer to the open questions on the degree experience. It does not include comments received in answer to the open questions on student administration and student support services. This analysis will be provided in a later report.

8.1 Comparative results: Quantitative data SCEQ 2003-2007

The following tables show the proportion of students who either strongly agreed or agreed with the SCEQ question on the Overall quality of Faculty administration and organisation.



6.1.1 Student Course Experience Questionnaire: 2003; 2005; 2007 (current students)

8.2 Comparative results: Qualitative data 2001–2007

The following table includes the percentage of qualitative comments received from respondents to the surveys which can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement, providing an indication of trends in the student experience of Faculty administration and organisation between 2001 and 2007.

		SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	1%	2%	1%	0%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	0%	4%	0%
	All	2%	2%	4%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	12%	8%	6%	7%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	0%	16%	0%
	All	9%	24%	20%	12%	8%	7%	7%

8.3 Key issues for current coursework students (SCEQ 2007)

8.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

1% of current students (3/209) provided comments on Faculty administration and organisation as an area of best practice. Due to the low number of comments, and to maintain student confidentiality, no sample comments are provided.

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

No comments relating to Faculty administration and organisation as an area of best practice were received from graduates.

8.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

8% of current students (17/212) suggested that improvements were needed in Faculty administration and organisation. Apart from general comments relating to overall administration, students expressed concern about the knowledge of office staff regarding the administration of combined and Liberal Studies degrees; scheduling of lectures and tutorials; and communication between staff and students. No comments were received on this topic from international students.

Sample comments

- *I do not think enough support has been given to Combined degree students as they are juggling the demands of 2 faculties and their paperwork, requirements, red-tape. In particular further assistance with credit point structuring and flexibility in exploring honours study in a particular area. Such as being able to do honours purely from completing a major in the honours subject rather than completing a whole degree first for combined degree students*
- *One aspect of my degree course that could be improved is the communication to the students about where you can go with your degree course. Though there are so many opportunities on the table at the University of Sydney unless you go looking for them it is hard as a first year in which to find out about them. Though the Online communication is good I believe overall communication needs to be improved.*
- *I feel that there should be an opportunity for students to take night classes as some of us find it hard to attend lectures and tutorials in the middle of the day, as our employers are disinterested in the demands of university life*
- *Some of my lectures this semester only had one available time slot, which meant I was forced to change subjects in order to accommodate this. The event was unfortunate, but it helped me cope with pressure and uncertainty, which was an added bonus!*
- *It would be beneficial to make it more clearly known which faculty and staff member oversees my degree, particularly since it alternates between Arts and Science and since I'm enrolled in the International stream*
- *making admin easier to utilise, fix problems with online functions e.g. myadimn and university email (which always loses emails)*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

7% of current students (29/416) suggested that improvements were needed in Faculty administration and organisation. Apart from general comments relating to overall administration, students expressed concern about the knowledge of office staff regarding the administration of Liberal Studies degrees; scheduling of lectures and tutorials; communication between staff and students; and the lack of career planning and advice. No comments were received on this topic from international students.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *There definitely should be a designated point of contact for B. Lib Stud students. I can't tell you how many times the Arts of Science offices have had no idea how to help me with enrolment/satisfying requirements etc*
- *Difficulties aligning Arts and Science timetables; big differences in the way those Departments functioned; back passing between the Arts and Science Faculties when it came to looking after Liberal Studies students; lack of course 'identity'.*
- *More flexibility in timetabling - I often could not enter into subjects I would have preferred due to develop of tutorials or lectures*
- *More practical focus on possible career paths or avenues of further study following course completion; use of Internet/Intranet as a learning and communication tool could have been greater.*
- *The lack of guidance in choosing subjects and direction in terms of future career and job opportunities*
- *Tutorials should be scheduled on same day as lectures as this suits most students. The number of lectures decreases each year. Why?*