



**The University of Sydney**

Faculty of Education and Social Work

Student experience of Learning and Teaching

Trends and key issues: Undergraduate students 2001-2007

September 2008

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## 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 presented as a percentage of the total number of comments received

## Notes

### 1 Coverage of report

Due to the low number of international students who provided written observations in their responses to the SCEQ and the CEQ (see note 2), results of the qualitative analysis are provided for the total student/graduate cohort. Quantitative data relating to the international student experience is provided where responses number between 5 and 20.

### 2 Data from international students

#### Quantitative data (charts)

##### *Course Experience Questionnaire(CEQ):*

2004 – 2006: Less than 5 international graduates responded to the CEQ in 2004 – 2007. Results are therefore excluded as they are unlikely to be reliable. Number of respondents is taken from the number answering the “Overall satisfaction” item in the SCEQ.

2007: Less than 20 international graduates responded to the overall satisfaction item in the 2007 CEQ. Since the minimum sample size recommended for statistical analysis of CEQ data is 20, the analysis of the quantitative data for this cohort should be viewed with caution.

##### *Student Course Experience Questionnaire(SCEQ):*

2003 – 2007 Less than 20 international current students responded to the SCEQ in 2003, 2005 and 2007. Since the minimum sample size recommended for statistical analysis of SCEQ data is 20, the analysis of the quantitative data for this cohort should be viewed with caution.

#### Qualitative data (Comparative tables and key issues)

##### *Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)*

Pre 2006 Qualitative data from the CEQ did not become available for analysis until 2006.

2006 – 2007 No international students in 2006, and less than five in 2007, provided written observations on their degree experiences in response to the CEQ. Results of the qualitative analysis are therefore excluded from the report.

##### *Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ)*

2001 – 2003 Separate data for international students was not available before 2005. The analysis of the qualitative data for these years includes both domestic and international students' experiences.

2005, 2007 Less than five international students who responded to the SCEQ, provided written observations on their experiences. Results of the qualitative analysis from these students are therefore excluded from the report.

### 3 MTeach/BTeach responses

Current students undertaking the MTeach/BTeach program are included in the undergraduate component of the **SCEQ**. The results of the analysis of their comments are included in this report.

Graduates who have completed the MTeach/BTeach program are included in the postgraduate coursework component of the **CEQ**. The results of the analysis of their comments are included in the separate report of the postgraduate coursework student experience.

### 4 Percentage of respondents providing written comments in SCEQ

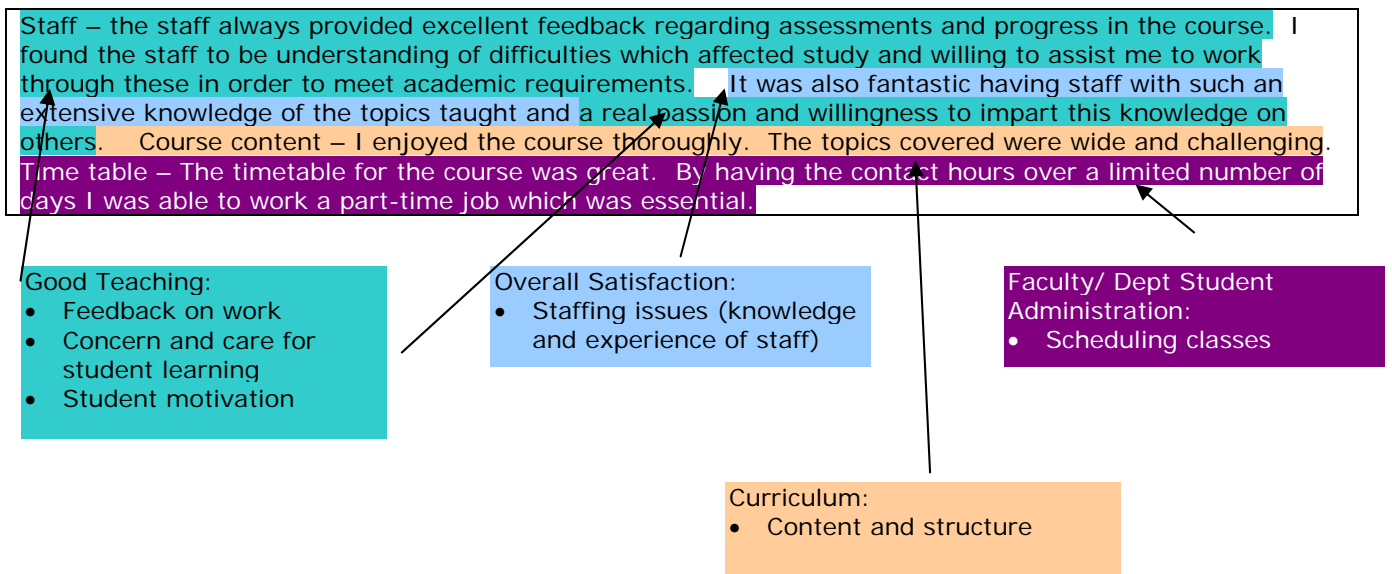
The percentage of students providing written observations in their answers to the SCEQ declined significantly in 2007. In 2005, 78% of respondents supplied written comments in answer to the open questions; in 2007 just over half (53%) of respondents supplied written observations. This reflects the results for all faculties, with an average of 20-25% less respondents answering the open responses compared to previous years (2001 – 2003, 2005).

## 5 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.

## 6 Analysis and counting of comments

Each comment is analysed according to the *Taxonomy for analysing qualitative data from the SCEQ/ CEQ*<sup>1</sup>, 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 (Feedback on work; Concern and Care for Student Learning; and Student Motivation); Overall Satisfaction (Staffing issues); Curriculum (Content and Structure); and Faculty/Department Student Administration (Scheduling Classes), the comment is counted ONCE in each of the relevant categories.



<sup>1</sup> Available from Quality Assurance Officer (Learning and Teaching)

## Executive summary

Data about the student degree experience in the Faculty of Education and Social Work 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 (LTPF) Key Performance Indicators (Generic Skills; Good Teaching; Overall Satisfaction), and other related areas (Learning Community; Curriculum; Assessment; Workload; Clear Goals and Standards; and Faculty / Department Student Administration).

Written observations, from respondents to the surveys, about their experience provide evidence to support the Faculty (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 rankings (SCEQ)**
  - have remained consistently above the University average since 1999 for all SCEQ Scales plus the Overall Satisfaction Item
  - the Faculty is the only faculty to achieve above University average status in all Scales since 1999
- Faculty scores for **Generic Skills** (KPI 7; Section 1)
  - for current students (SCEQ) have remained steady since 2003, and are currently 67%
  - are above the University average for current students (SCEQ)
  - for graduates (CEQ) are currently at 67%
  - are below the University average for graduates (CEQ)

The development of practical skills and experience, including the opportunities to acquire these through practicums, are the focus of the majority of student comments relating to this KPI. There are very few comments relating to the development of skills and abilities within the range of the remaining Graduate Attributes.

- Faculty scores for **Good Teaching** (KPI 8; Section 2)
  - for current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ), have remained in the high 40s since 2003
  - are above the University average for current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ)

Analysis of the qualitative data from current students (SCEQ) suggests that improvements in teaching practices have occurred within the Faculty. Between 2001 and 2003, fewer comments were received expressing satisfaction with teaching than those suggesting improvements; in 2005 and 2007, this trend was reversed. In 2007, 9% more positive than negative comments were received from respondents to the survey, indicating a growing satisfaction with teaching. Graduates, however, remember a different experience, with more negative than positive comments being received in both 2006 and 2007.

- Faculty scores for **Overall Satisfaction** (KPI 9; Section 3)
  - are 79% for current students (SCEQ) and 71% for graduates (CEQ)
  - are above the University average for current students (SCEQ)
  - are equal to the University average for graduates (CEQ)

Whilst the percentage of comments received on this topic from current students (SCEQ) were relatively evenly distributed; those from graduates (CEQ) focused more on the positive aspects of this area of their experiences.

- Faculty scores for **Learning Community** (Section 4)
  - have remained at 61-62% since 2003 for current students (SCEQ)
  - are higher than the University average

- Faculty scores for **Curriculum (qualitative data only)** (Section 5)
  - in 2007, 31% of comments from current students (SCEQ) were favourable whilst 48% recommended areas in need of improvement.
  - in 2007, 34% of comments received from graduates were favourable, 50% recommended areas for improvement.

The significant, and increasing difference, between the percentage of negative and positive comments received, indicates a high level of dissatisfaction with the curriculum provided within the Faculty.

- Faculty scores for **Appropriate Assessment** (Section 6)
  - SCEQ score of 65% is the third highest in the University

Whilst evidence from the analysis of the qualitative data seems to suggest that current students (SCEQ) are dissatisfied with certain aspects of assessment, this may in part be due to the fact that students rarely comment favourably on this topic in their written observations. Comments from graduates (CEQ) indicate that they are satisfied with assessment practices, with more positive than negative comments being received on this topic.

- Faculty scores for **Appropriate Workload** (Section 7)
  - are higher than the University average of 23%
  - place the Faculty in the top four faculties

Analysis of the qualitative data suggests, however, that students are increasingly dissatisfied with their workload. In 2003 and 2005, an average of 12% of comments received from respondents to the SCEQ expressed dissatisfaction with their workload, (including simultaneous submission dates of assessments). In 2007, 8% of current students (SCEQ), the lowest on record, considered this item to be of sufficient importance in their experiences to suggest it as an area of improvement.

- Faculty scores for **Clear Goals and Standards** (Section 8)
  - are higher than the University average

In relation to comments received which mention aspects of this topic, 12% of current students (SCEQ) were dissatisfied with the lack of clear aims and objectives, and required more clarity from academic staff regarding expectations of the standard of work.

- Faculty scores for **Faculty/ Department Student Administration** (Section 9)
  - are lower than the University average
  - have remained at 58% since 2005
  - have improved by 13% since 2003

The percentage of comments received from current students (SCEQ), which mention aspects of Faculty/ Department Student Administration as an area of concern, has fluctuated between 9% and 13% since 2001. 10% of graduates (CEQ) in 2007 considered that this area of their experience required improvements. The administration of practicums, in terms of placement organisation, and timing within the degree structure, was the subject of the majority of comments for this topic.

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*September 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 Education and Social Work between 2001 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; Clear Goals and Standards; 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 student dissatisfaction on the relevant topic. Rather, it could be interpreted that the students are happy with their experiences, and prefer to focus on providing written observations on areas in need of improvement. Also of note is that students are increasingly providing constructive observations, and often mention more than one aspect of their experiences in these comments.

# 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<sup>2</sup>)
- Communication (written and oral; communicating with others; communicating understanding)

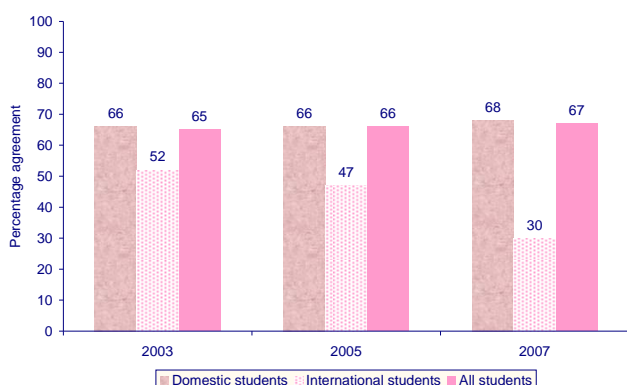
## Trends

Faculty scores for Generic Skills for current students (SCEQ) have remained around the mid-sixties since 2003, and currently stand at 67%, which is just above the University average of 66%. This score places the Faculty sixth in the overall rankings for this scale. For graduates (CEQ), scores increased from 59% in 2005 to 66% in 2006, and have remained steady since then. The current score of 67% is lower than the University average of 69%, and places the Faculty in the middle range of scores.

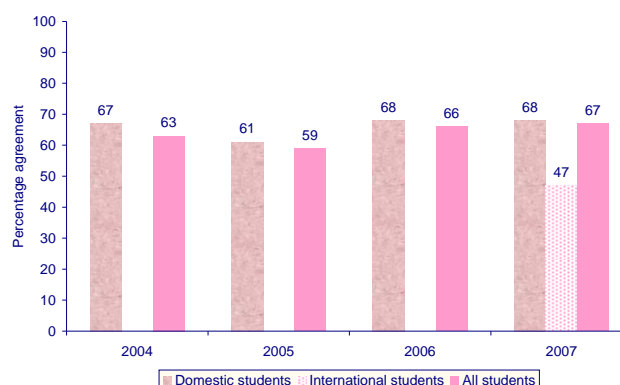
The development of practical skills and experience, including the opportunities to acquire these through practicums, form the majority of student comments relating to this KPI. There are very few comments relating to the development of skills and abilities within the range of the remaining Graduate Attributes.

### 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 comments received from respondents to the surveys, that can be classified as areas of best practice or areas for improvement under the heading of Generic Skills. 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	32%	26%	37%	35%	30%	56%	50%
Suggested improvements	13%	14%	14%	12%	9%	23%	20%

<sup>2</sup> Organisation of practicums, in terms of placement scheduling within the program/ semester; and location is analysed under Faculty/ Department Student Administration.

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

#### 1.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	(n=176)
Ethical, social, professional understanding	
- Development of discipline/ professional skills	28%
- Presence of practicums/ placements in the course	
- Development of group/ team skills	
Sample comments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>The best aspect of my course is the focus it places on working with others and group work. This is very applicable to my future degree, and the encouragement I receive to interact with others, I also find very helpful in developing better social skills</i></li> <li>- <i>Curriculum and practicum experiences (in B Ed) are the most useful and relevant and feel like they are most contributing to my developing skills as a teacher</i></li> <li>- <i>Doing an education degree with the hopes of teaching one day, I was pleased to find a subject in Year II Semester I where I could actually practice teaching. This was a ten-week course which I taught 45 minutes a week in. So, for 104 weeks of this degree, so far I've had 10 weeks of actual teaching. While that's appalling by my standards, I guess I should be glad that I've had at least ten weeks.</i></li> <li>- <i>Its good how we have opportunities to instruct an activity to the rest of the class as part of an assignment because its good experience in gaining confidence to teach</i></li> <li>- <i>The course has a real and genuine interest in the students becoming the best teachers that they can be. The degree advocates this in a positive way encouraging students to continually develop their knowledge and skills in education</i></li> <li>- <i>A degree with a vocational end (i.e. a qualification that gets me a job) Lots of practical experience through long work placements</i></li> </ul>	

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	(n=125)
Ethical, social, professional understanding	
- Ability to work in a group/ team working skills	46%
- Development of discipline/ professional skills	
- Presence of practicums/ placements in the course	
Sample comments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Practical sessions / excursions which allowed me to develop my teaching, problem solving, team skills and allowed me to put our theory work into practical</i></li> <li>- <i>Social work the topics were interesting and are field placements provided the opportunity for practical experiencing the ability to implement theory in practice.</i></li> <li>- <i>The placements provided invaluable practical experience which is essential in the field of social work</i></li> <li>- <i>Practice teaching - I found this a very valuable experience</i></li> <li>- <i>Field placement practical subjects (e.g. skills workshop)</i></li> <li>- <i>I learnt a lot about different topics and different skills which now use in teaching</i></li> </ul>	

### 1.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	(n=180)
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#### Ethical, social, professional understanding

- Development of discipline/ professional skills 8%
- Presence of practicums/ placements in the course

#### Sample comments

- *Greater use of technology as I don't feel comfortable using it in the classroom*
- *More prac would be good, because that is where you get to put everything together. A few weeks at the end of the year isn't really enough time to get comfortable in a classroom*
- *I think, if we plan to teach high school subjects, there should be unit of studies that teaches high school subjects that prepares future teachers in their role to teach.*
- *There is a lot of theory. The course could be improved by having greater emphasis on practical skills*
- *MITE a information technology course that tried to provide us with the tools of IT for our profession, only problem was that we were made to use an obsolete program Apple Claris works to create a web page*
- *More prac time, less theory. More work on relevant things like lesson plans and preparation for the classroom after university*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	(n=130)
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#### Ethical, social, professional understanding

- Development of discipline/ professional skills 20%
- Presence of practicums/ placements in the course

#### Sample comments

- *Being able to relate what we learn (the theory) into practice. Being able to see the link - feeling more prepared when entering the work place*
- *Doing some practical experience early on in the course learning more practical based work and contemporary work rather than old theories*
- *I feel that the social work degree at Sydney University is strongly lacking a practical focus. Social work is a very practical based vocation and Sydney University needs to do a better job in provided those practical skills.*
- *Make it more practical extend placement times feedback from employers is that students need more practical*
- *Preparing and providing knowledge and information of what we should be doing in our final year to aide us in our first year in the work force IE. Jobs and interviews*
- *Preparing me for workforce of teaching to much theory and not enough practise. I'm not coping very well with full time teaching. Would love to go back to uni and ask all the cos[sic] I now have found and more prac experience where allocated teacher to help us now little support*

## 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)

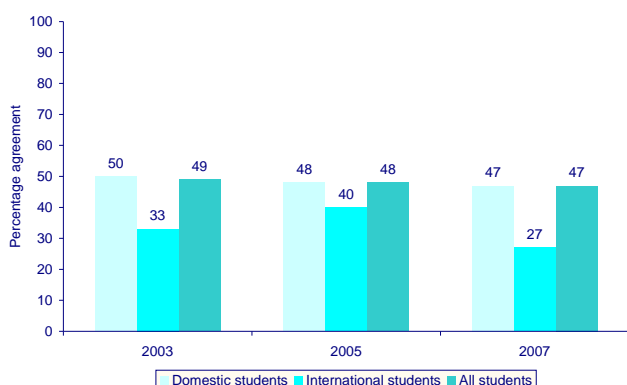
### Trends

Faculty scores for Good Teaching in 2007 have remained in the high forties since 2003, and currently stand at 47% for current students (SCEQ) and 49% for graduates (CEQ). The University average for current students (SCEQ) is 44% and for graduates (CEQ) is 48%.

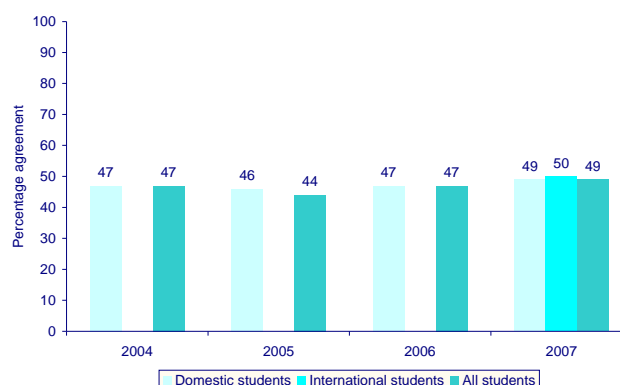
Analysis of the qualitative data from current students (SCEQ) suggests that improvements in teaching practices have occurred within the Faculty. Between 2001 and 2003, fewer comments were received expressing satisfaction with teaching than those suggesting improvements; in 2005 and 2007, this trend was reversed. In 2007, 9% more positive than negative comments were received from respondents to the survey, indicating a growing satisfaction with teaching. Graduates, however, remember a different experience, with more negative than positive comments being received in both 2006 and 2007.

### 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 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 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	19%	20%	20%	32%	35%	20%	21%
Suggested improvements	28%	29%	31%	29%	24%	24%	24%

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

### 2.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	(n=176)
Good teaching experiences	
- Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques	
- Ability to keep students interested in the subject	11%
- Engaged with students during lectures	
- Encouragement to participate in discussions during lectures and tutorials	
- Learning resources are up to date, and relevant to curriculum	
Concern and care for student learning	
- Students felt supported in their learning; help and advice readily available	11%
- Lecturers understood problems and difficulties of students (academic and personal)	
Sample comments	
- <i>Lecturers who genuinely care about the needs of their students, who are professional in their teaching and give a good role model for their students. Lecturers and tutors who are genuinely concerned about how their might best equip and train us as pre-service teachers, who are interested in developing our skills and knowledge. Having lecturers and tutors who love learning and show this through their teaching, who encourage their students to be life long learners and even to continue in university study</i>	
- <i>some of the teaching staff have been useful and helpful and very approachable. Some teaching staff are so passionate, that I see the passion and dedication required to be an effective teacher</i>	
- <i>the staff, are excellent they are committed to helping the students do well, they go the extra mile in ensuring students are settled and understand the work that is given</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>A lot of the tutorial leaders go well beyond the call of duty. They are more than happy to assist you with your study. I believe that it makes a significant difference to understanding and appreciation of subjects when the tutorial leaders are motivated and well prepared for the lessons</i>	
- <i>Also, teaching staff are very motivated and help us to understand the benefits of being a good and motivated teacher. I think this is important in keeping students in the course</i>	
Graduates (CEQ 2007)	(n=125)
Concern and care for student learning	
- Students felt supported in their learning; help and advice readily available	11%
- Lecturers understood problems and difficulties of students (academic and personal)	
Sample comments	
- <i>xxx- the only lecturer that was genuine in her work and efforts in helping students develop and progress in their studies</i>	
- <i>Dedicated staff that were very inspiring and clearly passionate about teaching</i>	
- <i>Education - most lectures were friendly and helpful - could see real life applications</i>	
- <i>The teaching staff were empathetic and genuinely care about my work</i>	
- <i>Feedback and support (when needed)</i>	
- <i>Supportive attitude of some staff, hands-on experience / activities, group work, choice of subjects</i>	

## 2.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	(n=180)
<p>Good teaching experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teaching methods used are outdated; Lectures were boring</li> <li>- Discussions of issues raised during lectures and tutorials are not encouraged</li> <li>- Learning resources are out of date, and not relevant to curriculum</li> </ul>	11%
<p>Concern and care for student learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students did not feel supported in their learning;</li> <li>- Help and advice was not readily available</li> </ul>	6%
<p>Sample comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>A number of tutorial leaders have openly suggested that they do not want to be contacted outside of tutorial class times, and contacting them by e-mail is not acceptable. This is highly restrictive to our furthered understanding of the subject. I believe that this handful of tutorial leaders do a dis-service to those who put a great deal of time and effort into their class sessions.</i></li> <li>- <i>There also seems to be a general attitude of non-caring. I understand with a university so big, it can be difficult to develop relationships with students, but there is no sense that anyone cares enough to (e.g.) help if you don't understand a topic or help if you need some general advice on your degree. Lecture sizes are too big and impersonal and are often given in a way that makes me feel I would get just as much information or if not more from reading the text than attending the lecture</i></li> <li>- <i>Support for students out on practice teaching - the role of the supervisor and the cooperating teacher could be made more clear. It can be unfair that some students have more support than others. Prac. students can feel that all they are receiving is criticism from everybody. Prac. students should feel that teachers are there to help and show how you can improve on what you are doing rather than there to find fault and drag you down</i></li> <li>- <i>Some lecturers are also taking up valuable learning time, simply reading from overheads that we already have copies of. Teachers should be aware that using the 'guess what I am thinking to reach the right answer' model is not an effective way for students to learn subject content</i></li> <li>- <i>Overall teacher feedback was lacking as most the students who had difficulties with any assessment task felt they were treated dismissively by teacher in an unit that was compulsory to all enrolled in the course. This made students unclear on how to improve on their academics</i></li> <li>- <i>The lectures could be more interesting if there were greater opportunities for student/lecturer active interaction, rather than have us attempt to passively absorb an overload of information recited by the lecturer</i></li> </ul>	

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	(n=130)
<p>Good teaching experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teaching methods and techniques used are outdated/need improvement</li> <li>- Discussions of issues during class were not encouraged</li> <li>- Lecturers were boring; did not engage with students</li> <li>- Learning materials and resources were outdated</li> </ul>	10%
<p>Sample comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Interest in lectures not many lectures made the effort to provide lectures that were anything but reading off power points</i></li> <li>- <i>Delivery of some of the lectures- to much talk. Need to make them more interactive</i></li> <li>- <i>Readers were to large and often contained irrelevant articles</i></li> <li>- <i>Some bad lecturers made some of my course dull and un motivating</i></li> <li>- <i>the teachers did not make an effort to assist the students</i></li> <li>- <i>Lecturers that could speak a descent[sic] level of English</i></li> </ul>	

### 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

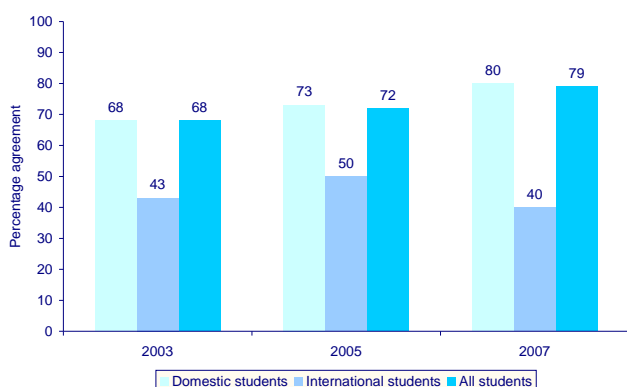
#### Trends

Overall Satisfaction with the degree course currently rates 79% for current students (SCEQ) and 71% for graduates (CEQ). The University average for current students is 73% and for graduates is 71%.

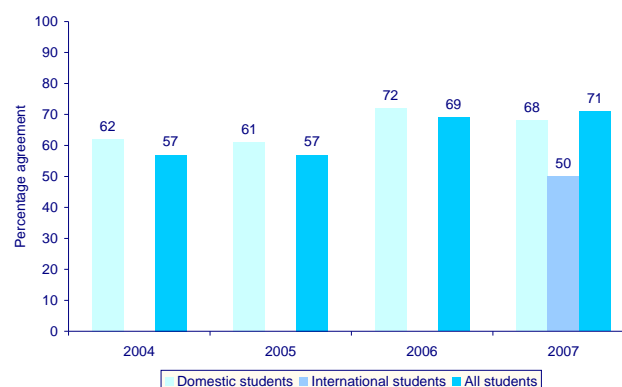
Whilst the percentage of comments received on this topic from current students (SCEQ) were relatively evenly distributed; those from graduates (CEQ) focused more on the positive aspects of this area of their experiences.

#### 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 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 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	12%	11%	17%	5%	7%	8%	7%
Suggested improvements	6%	8%	8%	6%	10%	2%	2%

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

#### 3.3.1 Areas of best practice

##### Current students (SCEQ 2007)

7% of current undergraduate students (i.e. 13/176 comments received) mentioned that they were satisfied with the relevant experience and knowledge of academic staff, and considered that this enhanced their degree experience.

##### Sample comments

- *It is great that most of our lecturers have teaching experience and speak about their own experiences*
- *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*
- *There is no doubt all our lecturers are extremely knowledgeable of their subjects. Most (although not all) are able to communicate effectively the relevance of what they are teaching*
- *In the B education (secondary: humanities) the fact that the lecturers are well experienced and are ex school teachers etc is very encouraging, and assists in getting a first hand account.*
- *It was also fantastic having staff with such an extensive knowledge of the topics taught and a real passion and willingness to impart this knowledge on others*
- *the teaching staff's experiences provide knowledge into the real world which we will be entering, after graduation*

##### Graduates (CEQ 2007)

7% of undergraduate graduates (i.e. 9/125 comments received) mentioned that they were satisfied with the whole experience; with the quality of the degree; or with the qualifications, knowledge and experience of academic staff as being areas of best practice.

##### Sample comments

- *It was a very enjoyable course and made my experience at university extremely satisfying. Some of our tutors were very good and put a lot of effort into their teaching*
- *Lecturers who themselves taught using student centred techniques they were teaching us to use*
- *For teaching we were taught by experienced teachers and they were still in the industry*
- *Felt well prepared for the job*
- *The teachers were knowledgeable and interested in students.*
- *Did not need to study much to gain a pass or even a credit. Not a lot of pressure good learning environment and easy going lectures / program director*

### 3.3.2 Suggested improvements

#### Current students (SCEQ 2007)

10% of undergraduate students (i.e. 18/180 comments received) expressed dissatisfaction with their overall experience; with the quality of the degree; with the hidden financial costs of practicums; and with the knowledge and experience of academic staff.

##### Sample comments

- *In answer to the question of where this degree would get me -I would have to answer no where useful. It is merely a piece of paper without the backing of producing people who have knowledge or skills*
- *Two lectures on child sexual abuse is not adequate. I think we need an extra year, because we are competing with UNSW students for jobs after we graduate and a lot of agencies consider our degree to be substandard. UNSW don't undertake any arts study, but jump straight into social work.*
- *The curriculum staff for science was also limited to one main person which made it hard to always see the relevance of what was being said as there were times when I felt that we were being given the same perspectives, by the same person on different situations. I think that with exposure to more diversified opinions and methods of teaching that my experience in studying the curriculum area could have been enhanced.*
- *The tutors in the education faculty are absolutely dreadful. They are unprofessional, their ideas are outdated and they cannot communicate properly with students*
- *the selection criteria for entry, there seem to be great deal of people not suited to this course or its career directions. Levels of participation and enthusiasm as a result are often pathetic in group tasks and seminars. In saying this there is a great core of heavily committed students. The other thing we are keen for is a longer and more diverse set of prac experiences and less academic nonsense.*
- *Some external aspects of the course require financial independence, and are near impossible to fund independently (i.e. 4 weeks practicum, no pay, + mandatory first aid certificates that are not covered by HECS, 9 week internship with no room for work, so no pay).*

#### Graduates (CEQ 2007)

2% of graduates (i.e. 3/130) who responded to the CEQ expressed concern about the quality of their degree/ course experience: the cost of course; and the reputation/ quality of the degree.

Due to the low number of comments, and to protect student confidentiality, no sample comments are provided.

## 4 Learning Community

### Definition

Learning Community includes the following:

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

### Trends

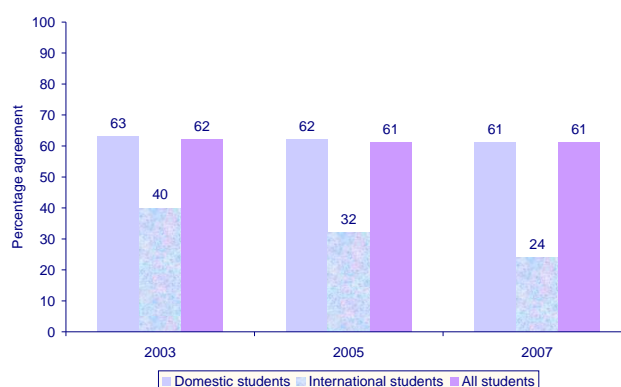
The Faculty score for Learning Community has remained at 61-62% since 2003, indicating that students are very satisfied with the Learning environment and community engendered within the Faculty.

The percentage of comments received on this topic, from both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ) are relatively evenly distributed between those who are satisfied with their experiences and those that consider improvements are necessary.

#### 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 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 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	26%	26%	19%	17%	21%	13%	17%
Suggested improvements	10%	16%	5%	16%	17%	15%	15%

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

#### 4.3.1 Areas of best practice

##### Current students (SCEQ 2007)

(n=176)

##### Learning environment

- Enjoyed University social life
- Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty/ profession) 27%
- Academic interests were being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials and during group work

##### Sample comments

- *BEd/BArts A part of the reason of why I find my degree so enjoyable is because of the 'education community' that you find yourself slowly belong to over the years at the uni. It is nice to feel like you belong to a cohort of people who are all working towards the same goal as you, with the same sort of mentality for education. I feel that it is the feeling of belonging to a 'community' which makes any university degree worthwhile and enjoyable.*
- *Education: the teaching staff have been very successful in creating in us a sense of a professional community, which has been great. A large part of the course has revolved around professional discussion, which has helped us all to understand the central concepts of education as well as to develop our own teaching philosophies. There has also been obvious effort to include relevant guest speakers, which makes the information itself a lot more relevant for myself and my peers*
- *Good aspects include group work via online discussion as it is easy to productive to share ideas and knowledge, practical components such as working in schools to experience the 'real world' as a teacher and being given the rubric for assessment tasks also help with planning and writing assignments*
- *Interaction with peers - due to the interaction with my peers, I was able to explore and discover new ideas in Education that didn't cross my mind. To go through the course with people who are like-minded and in the same boat allowed the experience of uni to be worthwhile and fun*
- *The collegiality experienced through my class groupings has been really helpful - interacting and working with the same people on a daily basis has definitely helped my learning*
- *Education- the best aspects of my degree course are the tutorials where students have the opportunity to discuss and debate ideas*
- *There is ample time and opportunities to redirect class content. We can ask our tutors to give us more lessons on unit outlines or lesson plans and they can do so. Tutorials were democratic, safe learning environments and the tutors were flexible and willing to listen to our needs as overwhelmed pre service teachers.*

##### Graduates (CEQ 2007)

(n=125)

##### Learning environment

- Enjoyed University social life
- Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty) 20%
- Academic interests were being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials; during group work
- Appreciated cultural diversity of fellow students
- Happy with size of class

##### Sample comments

- *Education had relatively small numbers so staff got to know students and were more approachable for help. There was a closer relationship where students were nurtured better*
- *The structure of this course allowed me to mix and work with a great variety of people. I was also able to engage in a wide range of learning activities*
- *Tutorials were also helpful to discuss issues with tutors and classmates*
- *The course numbers were small so interaction with other people was great. Great resources and up to date equipment for practical subjects*
- *Student life style*
- *class discussion was always interesting*

### 4.3.2 Suggested improvements

#### Current students (SCEQ 2007)

7% of current students (i.e. 12/180 comments received) provided comments expressing dissatisfaction with the Learning Community aspects of the degree course, including: isolation from other students; exploration of academic interests in tutorials; large class sizes; the lack of an "orientation into degree" program for first year students; and the lack of staff responsiveness to student feedback on the course.

#### Sample comments

- *I have no contact with other social work students, and it would be much appreciated if there was a way that we could all get in contact and get to know each other*
- *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*
- *the tutorials in most cases need to be more interactive, I think that sometimes the presentations only allow one group to understand the topic without appropriate discussion within the tute- tutors should make up some interesting questions to bring out what students need to learn, too often I felt like at the end of semester the tutorials were a waste of time esp. if as students we did not know anything about the topic that we were meant to be discussing- perhaps stimulus or readings would of helped even if these were done in class*
- *Though I am only in my second year of uni, I am unaware as to how my degree is structured. I feel that the degree could be improved by having some sort of orientation or introduction into the degree, where professionals/administrators talk about the actual structure of the degree in a way that is communicable and understandable. When coming from high school, university is totally different, and so when you listen to how a degree is structured in university terminology, you feel that the course is rigid and unable to be questioned, as well as often not understanding the jargon. Not knowing how the degree is structured, i.e. what years do you study your methods, what is the difference between major and minor, what type of compulsory subjects are there and why are they in a certain year and not in another. All this information could be made available through an accessible online document, giving ease to other students in the degree. There needs to be a reassurance in knowing the reasons why the degree asks you to take certain subjects at certain times, rather than entering each year and having your course coordinator tell you once, and have you forget and feel even more confused as to how your degree is structured*
- *When students email the head lecturers or put their hand up in a lecture to tell them of the problem they are met with contempt. The lecturers are constantly telling us to give them feedback and let them know of problems/discrepancies and yet when we do we seem to be in trouble for opening our mouths. There have been many incidents this year where this has happened and it makes it very difficult to find out what is going on*
- *There should be more online discussions for every subject so we can share our views and opinions*

#### Graduates (CEQ 2007)

4% of graduates (i.e. 5/130 comments received) expressed dissatisfaction with areas of the Learning Community Scale, including: lack of discussions in tutorials; large class sizes; computer access; and the lack of staff response to feedback from students.

Due to the low number of comments, and to preserve student confidentiality, no sample comments are provided.

## 5 Curriculum

### Definition

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

- Content and structure of degree(s) (relationship between Units of Study; content of Units of Study; relevance to work/ career/ industry)
- Online mode of delivery (WebCT)
- Flexibility of degree, including ability to take a range of Units of Study
- Availability/ cancellation of advertised courses

### Trends

In 2007 31% of comments received from current students (SCEQ) and 34% from graduates (CEQ) commented favourably on various aspects of the Curriculum; whilst 48% of comments received in the SCEQ and 50% in the CEQ suggested improvements in this area of their experience.

The significant difference between the percentage of positive and negative comments received, indicates a high level of dissatisfaction with the curriculum provided within the Faculty.

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 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	31%	27%	37%	30%	31%	41%	34%
Suggested improvements	41%	31%	38%	42%	48%	45%	50%

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

### 5.2.2 Areas of best practice

#### Current students (SCEQ 2007)

(n=176)

##### Content and structure

- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study 27%
- Subjects appear to be linked together
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements

##### Sample comments

- *I also believe that Sydney University has many subjects for Primary Education students that are relevant to our study. As pre-service teachers we want to consistently be able to see a relevant link between tutorial content, and classroom implementation*
- *BA/BE: Craft Knowledge and professional practices was fantastic. I found the practicality of the content very valuable, as it helped me to consider how to best tackle realistic situations within the classroom*
- *EDSE2001 was the first subject that I saw relevance into teaching and also gave me an insight in the teaching profession. It was very sad for me to find that it went for only up to week 7.*
- *I am doing edu/arts. the best aspects I would say are: - expanding my mind in regards to education. esp. the edse2001 craft knowledge course, it really related directly to being a teacher, rather than learning about psychology, social perspectives etc., that inevitably most students forget and do not take into account in their teaching*
- *I really enjoyed EDSE because it showed how to put what I had learnt into effect. It wasn't peppered with ideologies of which I questioned the relevance; there was always a practical application for the knowledge I had been taught. The best friends I have made at University I made through this course, and I really enjoy having people at University with which I can share stress, knowledge and fun times*
- *Psychology for social work is the best course ever as it is suited specifically to my degree, rather than a more generalised course of psychology. It's easier to develop a passion for what I'm learning as I can easily recognise the usefulness of the course*

#### Graduates (CEQ 2007)

(n=125)

##### Content and structure

- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study 31%
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements

##### Sample comments

- *Learning specific content needed to teach in xxx secondary schools IE. Syllabus documents, scope and sequence for planning units of work, designing assessment tasks*
- *The physical education lessons relating to Physical Education and the theory units of study that related to my major field*
- *The last two years were specific to SW and it was great to have on SW students in class and relevant material taught*
- *A wide range of content was covered throughout the course. A friendly environment for learning, staff and students*
- *Being able to work and learn in a number of different mediums in TAFE / UNIVERSITY/ PRACTICE*
- *Interesting and diverse course work. Practical experiences - field placement*

### 5.2.3 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	(n=180)
<b>Content and structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study</li> <li>- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry requirements</li> </ul>	38%
<b>Online delivery of content</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unhappy with aspects of WebCT</li> <li>- Online components not utilised</li> </ul>	7%
<b>Sample comments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>I find the online components waste time and do not contribute a great deal to my learning experience</i></li> <li>- <i>Many of the concepts being taught are out of date irrelevant. We are not being taught the basics needed out in the workforce that we will be expected to graduate with. A course - IT in the primary classroom was being taught by people who did not know how to use the technology correctly or effectively - for instance, Smart boards are (hopefully) soon going to be a part of the regular classroom and we (the students) had to teach ourselves to use it as the tutor could not find anyone from the faculty to show her how to use it. 3 1/2 of our 4 years of study involved hardly any use of the university technology. One semester, most of our subjects used WebCT but it was just that one semester.</i></li> <li>- <i>lose most of the stuff on adolescent development and learning theories. compact them all into one subject of one semester. it gets done 3 or 4 times over the 4 years and get VERY BORING. extend the length of the practicum to 6 or even 8 weeks. you can spend the 1st week getting into it, the 2nd and 3rd week really going for it, but by the 4th week its time to wind it all up again. the teaching profession is very reliant on sharing resources and a few of our subjects allowed us to do that but it should be better facilitated through the university</i></li> <li>- <i>Many overlaps in the course. Especially 2nd and 3rd year Professional Experiences, there is a huge overlap in the content covered. More collaboration needs to be put in between lecturers and tutors as to not double on teaching the same thing twice or even three times. Research and Design (4th Year Subject) should really have been taught in 1st or 2nd year uni. Prior to this subject, we had already covered 2 separate subjects about conducting school research etc. Research &amp; Design seemed to be more like an introductory course than a final year subject (we were learning things that we should have learnt early in our degree)</i></li> <li>- <i>Sometimes the work is based too heavily on theory rather than practical. Feel that we could all benefit from more practical hours integrated in the course because it could then allow us to put into practice what we are learning</i></li> <li>- <i>The EDUF units of study seem to be irrelevant. I fail to see how writing a research paper will help me become a better teacher. We don't really have the time or motivation to do irrelevant, boring work like that</i></li> </ul>	

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	(n=130)
<b>Content and structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study</li> <li>- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry requirements</li> <li>- Do not like intensive courses</li> </ul>	42%
<b>Sample comments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Course overall, management, policy, core subjects and their purpose. Relevance's [sic] of course and subjects to actual teaching area profession and content knowledge needs to relate more to social syllabus</i></li> <li>- <i>Education; need to teach more about working in schools- not just theories about teaching practice</i></li> <li>- <i>I believe that staff at Sydney University are lazy generally speaking. The subjects learnt aren't useful to me nor as a teacher and the work completed at Sydney University hasn't helped me teach better lessons. Too much theory, no practice teaching .... LOTS MORE</i></li> <li>- <i>Some general education subjects especially first and second year seemed unnecessary. Too much teaching theory and not enough specific content on education</i></li> <li>- <i>Some units of work were in need of refinement to prevent too much overlap between units</i></li> <li>- <i>Subjects that were of no relevance. First year was just ?. Would be better to have at least one social work subject considering that what we chose to study</i></li> </ul>	

## 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) (*explanation of marking criteria* is included in Clear Goals and Standards).

### Trends

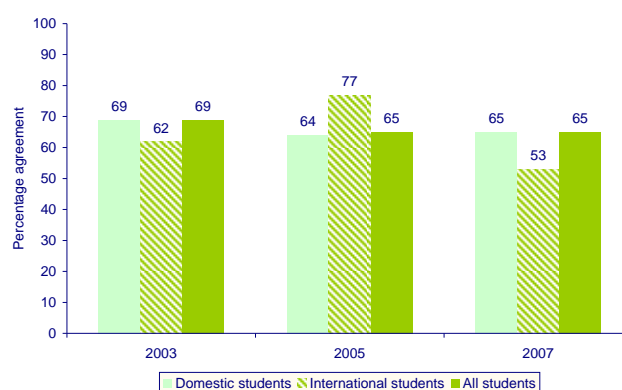
The percentage agreement scores for Appropriate Assessment (65%) in the 2007 SCEQ is the third highest in the University. The University average is 55%. The Faculty has been consistently above the University average for this topic since the SCEQ commenced in 1999.

Whilst evidence from the analysis of the qualitative data seems to suggest that current students (SCEQ) are dissatisfied with certain aspects of assessment, this may in part be due to the fact that students rarely comment favourably on this topic in their written observations. Comments from graduates (CEQ) indicate that they are satisfied with assessment practices, with more positive than negative comments being received on this topic.

### 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 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 Appropriate Assessment between 2001 and 2007.

	SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	6%	8%	7%	5%	7%	1%	8%
Suggested improvements	4%	8%	7%	11%	11%	1%	5%

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

### 6.3.1 Areas of best practice

#### Current students (SCEQ 2007)

7% of students (i.e. 12/176 comments received) who responded to the SCEQ expressed satisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments.

##### Sample comments

- *Education: I like the assessment tasks in this subject, I feel that they relate to the professional work I will undertake when I become a teacher*
- *Pedagogy - having assessments based on active movement which is necessary for the degree as a PDHPE teacher*
- *A variety of forms of assessment makes some units of study more interesting. Essays can be tedious and simply a test of who has analytical skills rather than assisting students in developing these skills*
- *I also enjoy the type of assessment in education, group presentations are very helpful and I find that they vary learning and make it more interesting and fun, and you also get to meet new people in your degree, and often maintain friendships with these people. I find the essays and exams to be relevant to my degree also*
- *No exams! I am able to work on my assignments at my own pace*
- *Also the way we were trained and the way most of our work was assessed reflected the way we were supposed to teach etc. - so this was also good*

#### Graduates (CEQ 2007)

8% of graduates (i.e. 10/125 comments received) who responded to the CEQ expressed satisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments.

##### Sample comments

- *Assessments rather than exams in third and fourth year that's on things*
- *Group assignments any assignments that involved working at a school (besides designed pracs) amount of reading analytical skills involved*
- *Tutorial groups and presentation assessments that allowed me to best show my teaching skills*
- *Practicum Assessments involving planning units of work that could be implemented in schools*
- *Group assignments any assignments that involved working at a school (besides designed pracs) amount of reading analytical skills involved*
- *Fair assessment and clearly defined marking procedures*

### 6.3.2 Suggested improvements

#### Current students (SCEQ 2007)

11% of students (i.e. 20/180 comments received) who responded to the SCEQ expressed dissatisfaction with the choice, aptness, design and marking of assessments.

##### Sample comments

- *Assessment is incredible vague, staff get aggressive when clarification is sort. Assessment is often meaningless and doesn't engage with what is being learnt*
- *The 90% attendance rule and the subsequent marking of roles is a problem....Students need to work to get through University.*
- *While I understand the importance of professional experience, the fact that such an intense experience is reduced to a Pass/Fail seems demotivating*
- *The organisation of every subject (apart from one curriculum area) is very poor, assessment questions are usually vague and its not very clear what is expected from you. Especially in Art curriculum for the B.Teach, I have found that the assessments are poorly organised.. Also the pass/fail grades don't allow for any indication of area for improvement*
- *ICE (computer test) 10% test that, if failed means you can not pass the education course, I think most people are able to use computers adequately. Just because and assessment is not done properly, students shouldn't have to do the education course again*
- *Academic writing and essays are a heavily assessed. A wider variety of assessments should be used if possible*

## Graduates (CEQ 2007)

5% of graduates (i.e. 6/130 comments received) who responded to the CEQ expressed dissatisfaction with the choice, aptness, design and marking of assessments.

### Sample comments

- *Assignments relating to practical experience - needed more*
- *Some assessments in units of study were irrelevant to what needed to be achieved or learnt*
- *When you're not happy with the mark or grade you received, so you couldn't dispute the mark and the work wasn't there*
- *A great deal of assessment involved group presentations and its hard to do so much co-ordination with other people*
- *Assessment and supervision for field study. Content of psychology topics*
- *Too much group assignments*

## 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

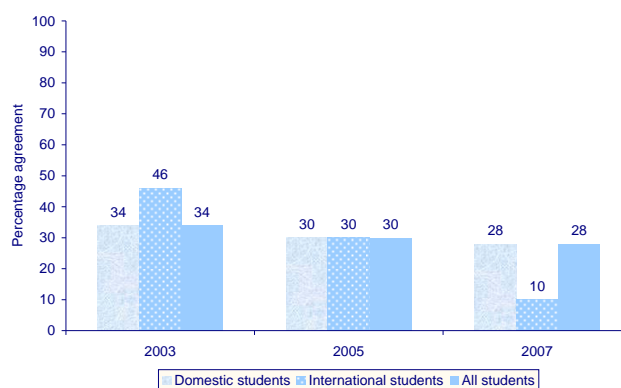
The percentage agreement scores for Appropriate Workload (28%) in the 2007 SCEQ is higher than the University average of 23%, and places it in the top four faculties.

Analysis of the qualitative data suggests, however, that students are increasingly dissatisfied with their workload. In 2007, an average of 14% of comments received from respondents to the SCEQ expressed dissatisfaction with their workload, (including simultaneous submission dates of assessments) representing an increase of 4% on previous years. Comments from graduates (CEQ) were evenly divided at 2-3%.

#### 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	0%	1%	2%	0%	2%	0%	3%
Suggested improvements	8%	10%	11%	10%	14%	5%	2%

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

The main issues raised by current students related to the amount of work that was required in their courses e.g. the overwhelming workload; the difficulty of getting through all the required readings; and the simultaneous due dates of assignments. The similarity of comments provided on this topic negates the purpose of providing sample comments to illustrate student concerns.

## 8 Clear Goals and Standards

### Definition

Clear Goals and Standards includes:

- Clear aims and objectives for a course;
- Clear expectations of the standard of work expected from students;
- Clear explanation of the marking criteria used (*marking of assessments* is included under assessment).

### Trends

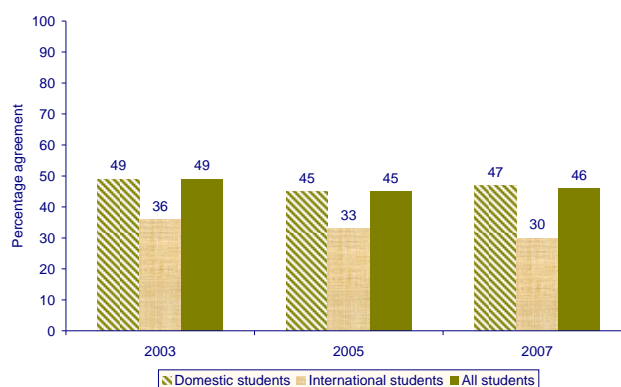
In 2007, the percentage of students who either agreed or strongly agreed with items in the SCEQ relating to Clear Goals and Standards was 46%, which is above the University average of 42%. The Faculty has performed consistently above the University average in this area of the student experience.

In relation to comments received which mention aspects of Clear Goals and Standards, 12% of current students (SCEQ) were dissatisfied with the lack of clear aims and objectives, and the lack of clarity regarding expectations of the standard of work expected, particularly in relation to assessments.

### 8.1 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 Clear Goals and Standards in the SCEQ.

NB: The Clear Goals and Standards Scale is not included in the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ).



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 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 Clear Goals and Standards between 2001 and 2007.

	SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Suggested improvements	3%	3%	3%	10%	12%	2%	2%

## 8.3 Key issues for coursework students (SCEQ 2007; CEQ 2007)

### 8.3.1 Areas of best practice

#### Current students (SCEQ 2007)

1/176 students mentioned that the learning expectations were clear.

#### Graduates (CEQ 2007)

No graduates mentioned this topic in their answers to the open questions in the CEQ.

Due to the low number of comments received from current students, and to preserve student confidentiality, no sample comments are provided.

### 8.3.2 Suggested improvements

#### Current students (SCEQ 2007)

12% of current students (i.e. 21/180) expressed concern about the lack of clear aims and objectives for the course, required a clearer explanation as to the standard of work expected, and would appreciate an explanation of the marking criteria used.

#### Sample comments

- *Some subjects have been unclear as to the objectives within the course or marking criteria for certain crucial assignments*
- *Expectations and direction of the degree should be clearly explained in first year. I am learning that I need to do something new each year to graduate and qualify as a psychologist. This information should be clearly specified in first year*
- *Another thing is that the assignment marking criteria should be less strict and should focus more on what the student teachers opinions and reflections are rather than rely heavily on teaching theories*
- *Also clear assessment expectations were not given. The marking sheet for the website needs reviewing?! It would of been worth while if taught with the tools and programs we can actually use once we graduate.*
- *For me the most difficult thing to deal with was the uncertainty about what was expected in many of our assessment tasks. We are being taught that as teachers we need to provide students with explicit quality criteria, i.e. showing them what a fail/pass/exceeds expectations looks like. This is not usually the case with this course. Some people are failing for misinterpreting the requirements. So far I have not failed but this is largely due to the fact that I have to spend an inordinate amount of time trying to work out what is being asked of me and often I suspect I have to overdo it just to make sure all my bases are covered. As this is a pass/fail course, I feel I am having to spend far longer than is necessary in deciphering expectations. I cannot afford to fail because as a mature age (or indeed any) student, every semester that has to be repeated is an extra semester out of one's career/life etc. Also, while academic rigour is certainly vital, it should be remembered that if failing a student because of a misunderstanding or technicality, society might be losing an excellent future teacher.*
- *The outlines of the assignments, this as been a major problem as the outlines are unclear therefore lectures are wasted going through the essays as so many students do not understand what is being asked from them. I find this frustrating, I have walked out of too many lectures and some classes thinking that I have learnt nothing new or interesting or anything that helps me understand. I think that the coordinators really need to look at what is relevant in this degree and focus in on those in particular so students are encouraged to attend lectures and classes.*

#### Graduates (CEQ 2007)

2% of students (i.e. 2/130 comments received) expressed concern about vagueness of assessment requirements. Due to the low number of comments, and to maintain student confidentiality, no sample comments are provided.

## 9 Faculty/ Department Student Administration

### Definition

Faculty / Department Student Administration includes:

- Overall quality of Faculty administration and organisation;
- Administration and organisation of practicums;
- Scheduling of classes;
- Communication between staff (academic and general) and students;

### Trends

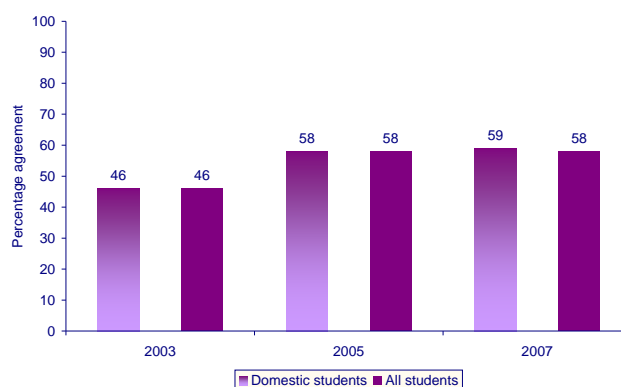
SCEQ faculty scores indicate that student perceptions of Faculty / Department Student Administration has improved considerably since 2003, and currently sits at 58%. The University average is 66%. This is the only area of the current student (SCEQ) experience which rates lower than the University average.

The percentage of comments received from current students (SCEQ), which mention aspects of Faculty/ Department Student Administration as an area of concern, has fluctuated between 9% and 13% since 2001. 10% of graduates (CEQ) in 2007, considered that this area of their experience required improvements. The organisation of practicums was the subject of the majority of comments from both current students and graduates.

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: *Student experience of administration and student support*.

#### 9.1 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 / Department Student Administration.



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

NB: less than 5 international students provided answers to the question on Faculty/ department student administration; therefore the results are not included in the above chart.

#### 9.2 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 / Department Student Administration between 2001 and 2007.

	SCEQ 2001	SCEQ 2002	SCEQ 2003	SCEQ 2005	SCEQ 2007	CEQ 2006	CEQ 2007
Areas of best practice	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Suggested improvements	9%	13%	13%	9%	13%	4%	10%

### 9.3 Key issues for current coursework students (SCEQ 2007)

#### 9.3.1 Areas of best practice

##### Current students (SCEQ 2007)

2/176 students who responded to the SCEQ provided comments on Faculty / Department Student Administration as an area of best practice.

##### Graduates (CEQ 2007)

1/125 students who responded to the SCEQ provided comments on Faculty Department Student Administration as an area of best practice.

Both respondents expressed satisfaction with the timetabling arrangements, and the organisation of practicums.

#### 9.3.2 Suggested improvements

##### Current students (SCEQ 2007)

13% of current students (i.e. 24/180 comments received) suggested that improvements were needed in Faculty/ Department Student Administration. Apart from general comments relating to overall administration, students expressed concern about the scheduling of lectures and tutorials; communication between staff and students; and the organisation of practicums (arrangements with participating schools; placement in structure of degree i.e. semester/year of program)

##### Sample comments

- *Faculty admin is terrible. Timetables are a nightmare, spread very thinly over the whole week ( some students need to work!) Admin staff often can not answer basic administrative queries and send students on wild goose chases across campus as everyone seems to refer you on to someone else. 3 hour classes are too long without a decent break*
- *Staff are absent from class far too frequently to the disadvantage of students in particular tute groups. Email notification that a class has been cancelled is often not given, so students travel to uni for no reason.*
- *At times I there was a lack of communication with regard to the administration of the course - such as access to course notes, readers and room allocation. Also online resources such as WebCT and email were not utilised enough - particularly when communicating room and class allocation*
- *Adjustments to dates of practicum- possibly being put at end of year*
- *Students who are in my degree have yet to experience first-hand teaching compared to those who are doing primary education who actually went out on prac in their first year. Whereas, those who are doing similar degree to me, we have to wait till our third year. This area really could be improved. Sometimes, we don't really know whether we want to be a teacher or not so giving us the opportunity to experience first-hand teaching or go out on observation would have been great. It also works the other way round, sometimes potential future teachers leave the course because they are disinterested in the whole psychology of education that we teach but do really love to teach*
- *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!*

## Graduates (CEQ 2007)

10% of graduates (i.e. 13/130 comments received) suggested that improvements were needed in Faculty / Department Student Administration. Apart from general comments relating to overall administration, students expressed concern about the scheduling of lectures and tutorials; communication between staff and students; and the organisation of practicums (arrangements with participating schools; placement in structure of degree i.e. semester/year of program).

### Sample comments

- *Administration continually mucking up paper work xxx- little experience in coordinating very inconsistent in his work, unreliable*
- *Communication between TAFE, UNIVERSITY and the department of education*
- *Structure of field placement (unable to do paid employment at same time)*
- *When allocating field placements to students to consider student needs and requests and distance to travel*
- *Work placement requirements of individual not considered no complaints considered*
- *Timetabling. Practical application organisation of practicums.*