



The University of Sydney

Faculty of Law

Student experience of Learning and Teaching

Trends and key issues: Undergraduate students 2001-2007

October 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 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, 71% of respondents supplied written comments in answer to the open questions; in 2007 less than half (40%) of the 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).

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 – 2006. 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 CEQ.

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.

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 Less than 10 international students who responded to the CEQ in 2007 provided written observations on their experiences. Since this number falls within the lower range of statistics that can be viewed with caution (5-20), the results of the qualitative analysis for international students in 2007 have been excluded from the report. This is indicated by the phrase *Too few* in the comparative tables for qualitative data. However, sample comments from international students are provided in the Key Issues sections of the report where available.

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 20 international students who responded to the SCEQ, provided written observations on the *best aspects of their experiences* in the Law component of their degree¹. Since the minimum sample size recommended for statistical analysis of SCEQ data is 20, the analysis of the qualitative data from this cohort, and which relates to *best aspects* should be viewed with caution.

3 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.

4 Analysis and counting of comments

Each comment is analysed according to the *Taxonomy for analysing qualitative data from the SCEQ/ CEQ²*, 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 Curriculum (Content and Structure); Learning Community (Exploration of academic interests); Overall Satisfaction (Staffing issues); and Good Teaching (Student motivation; Concern and care for student learning; Good explanations received) , the comment is counted ONCE in each of the relevant categories.

The best aspect of studying law at Sydney Uni is that law is both intellectually stimulating and challenging. It is inspiring to be taught law by practitioners and academics who share a real passion for what they teach and always encourage students to critically analyse the law and not just mechanically learn it. The lecturers are all very dedicated to helping students understand concepts and are always willing to answer questions even outside of class hours.

Curriculum:

- Content and structure

Good Teaching:

- Student motivation
- Concern and care for student learning
- Good explanations received

¹ Students undertaking double degrees are asked to state which degree/ units of study their comments refer to; those that directly refer to other faculties are removed from the count of comments received. When it is not obvious which faculty is being referred to in the comment, they are included in the reports for both relevant faculties.

² Available from Quality Assurance Officer (Learning and Teaching)

Executive summary

Data about the student degree experience in the Faculty of Law 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; and Workload;).

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 scores for **Generic Skills** (KPI 7; Section 1)
 - have remained steady at 69% for both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ)
 - are above the University average for current students (SCEQ)
 - are equal to the University average for graduates (CEQ)

Analysis of the qualitative data indicates that students are aware that they are developing the full range of University graduate attributes during their studies. Evidence suggests that the main emphasis is on the cluster of skills and abilities encompassed by the Research and Inquiry graduate attribute (problem solving, analytical, critical thinking skills). However, concern about the lack of legal training skills, e.g. mooting, legal writing, interviewing, was mentioned in comments from both current students and graduates.

- Faculty scores for **Good Teaching** (KPI 8; Section 2)
 - are identical to the 2005 scores (36%) for current students (SCEQ)
 - are below the University average for current students (SCEQ)
 - are amongst the lowest in the University for current students (SCEQ)
 - are lower than the 2006 scores for graduates (CEQ) and are currently at 45%
 - are below the University average for graduates (CEQ)

These results are corroborated by the analysis of the qualitative data, where the major focus of comments relating to teaching practices from both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ) was on suggesting improvements in this area of their experience. Students experienced a range of teaching methods, from best practice to needing improvement, and were motivated by passionate and enthusiastic teachers; however, concern was expressed about the lack of constructive and timely feedback on submitted work.

- Faculty scores for **Overall Satisfaction** (KPI 9; Section 3)
 - are 72% for current students (SCEQ) and 70% for graduates (CEQ)
 - are above the University average current students (SCEQ) and below for graduates (CEQ)
 - place the Faculty 9th in both rankings with other faculties

Evidence from the qualitative data suggests that students appreciate the qualifications, knowledge and experience of academic staff and external lecturers, and are aware that they are part of a cohort of high calibre students. However, they are concerned about the lack of teaching skills evident in some staff, visiting lecturers, and tutors.

- Faculty scores for **Learning Community** (Section 4)
 - are 49% for current students (SCEQ)
 - are the lowest in the University
 - have increased by 1% since 2005

Analysis of the qualitative data indicates that whilst students appreciate the Faculty learning environment, including the location of the Law School, the support of their peers, and the exploration of academic interests with staff and students; they feel the poor state of campus facilities is detrimental to their learning experience. They do, however, indicate that the move to the main campus will improve this situation. The large seminar style classes are also raised as an area of concern, with the perceptions that these inhibit discussion and are contrary to one of the advertised benefits of a University of Sydney law degree.

- Faculty scores for **Curriculum (qualitative data only)** (Section 5)
 - in 2007, 41% of comments from current students were favourable whilst 34% recommended areas in need of improvement.
 - in 2007, 36% of comments received from graduates were favourable, 25% recommended areas for improvement.

The significant difference between the percentage of positive and negative comments received, indicates a high level of satisfaction with the curriculum provided within the faculty, particularly in relation to the flexibility of the degree structure. However, students would appreciate a wider range of electives, and greater flexibility in first and second year subjects.

- Faculty scores for **Appropriate Assessment** (Section 6)
 - SCEQ scores of 47% are amongst the lowest in the University
 - have decreased by 7% since 2005

Evidence from the SCEQ qualitative data supports this result, with substantially more comments being received from both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ) expressing dissatisfaction with Faculty assessment practices, particularly in relation to the types of assessments used.

- Faculty scores for **Appropriate Workload** (Section 7)
 - are lower than the University average of 23%
 - have decreased steadily since 2001
 - place the Faculty in the bottom third of faculties

The main focus of comments relating to this factor, was the high, and sometimes overwhelming, level of reading required by students for each unit of study.

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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 Law 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; and Workload) 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)
- Communication (written and oral; communicating with others; communicating understanding)

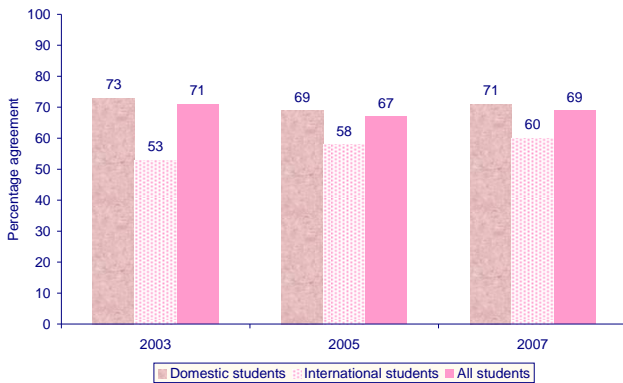
Trends

Faculty scores for Generic Skills for both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ) have remained steady since 2003, and currently stand at 69%. These results place the Faculty 4th for current students (SCEQ) and 7th for graduates (CEQ) in the University rankings. The University average for Generic skills is 66% for current students and 69% for graduates. Domestic students continue to experience better outcomes than international students for this KPI.

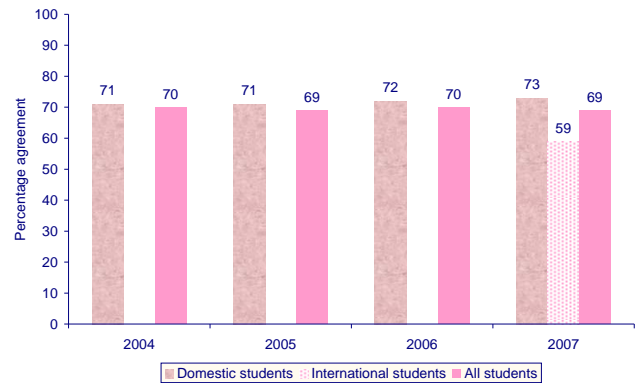
Analysis of the qualitative data indicates that students are aware that they are developing the full range of University graduate attributes during their studies. Evidence suggests that the main emphasis is on the cluster of skills and abilities encompassed by the Research and Inquiry graduate attribute (problem solving, analytical, critical thinking skills). However, concern about the lack of legal training skills, e.g. mooting, legal writing, interviewing, was mentioned in a number of comments from both current students and graduates (see Section 1.3.2)

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	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	22%	18%	17%	18%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	35%	13%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	10%	14%	14%	23%	17%	17%	17%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	12%	9%	9%	10%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	9%	7%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	9%	10%	6%	11%	8%	8%	9%

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

1.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=124)	International (n=16)	All (n=140)
Research and inquiry			
- Developed the capacity to make decisions and solve problems	8%	6%	8%
- Development of analytical skills			
- Ability to apply critical judgement and thinking acquired			
- Recognition of knowledge boundaries			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The opportunity to engage in individual research and produce substantial pieces of work has undoubtedly developed very useful research and inquiry, written communication, and analytical skills.*
- *Arts/Law Law: the content is very stimulating and really pushes students past what they perceive their limitations to be. Encourages tight analytical skills and critical perspectives*
- *The degree does teach you the essential legal skills e.g., critical analysis, problem solving, effective communication. I feel that the degree course has a strong emphasis on learning these skills rather than pointlessly memorising facts, which is good.*
- *The way in which the degree extends us as students intellectually and fosters independence (learning and otherwise). The degree has also sharpened my analytical abilities and communication skills, which will doubtless prove invaluable once I venture join the fulltime workforce*

Sample comments: international students

- *Personally, I'm finding the Law degree intellectually stimulating, because we as students are really encouraged to think. I definitely wouldn't say that having a good memory is enough to do well in this degree. Rather, it is how you apply what you've learnt that gets you good marks*
- *The best aspects of my law degree course is the type of skills that we are being taught: analytical/problem solving skills. I find this to be a good thing because those are the type of skills I will need as a lawyer*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=83)
Research and inquiry	
- Developed the capacity to make decisions and solve problems	
- Development of analytical skills	6%
- Ability to apply critical judgement and thinking acquired	
- Recognition of knowledge boundaries	

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Emphasis on problem-solving and case studies; very practical*
- *Learning to communicate (in written and verbal forms) much better. Learning from experts in their fields. Learning skills of analysis*
- *Team work and theoretical analysis*
- *It improved my language skill and problem solving skill*
- *The independent research subjects such as Sydney Law review. They allowed me to work on and produce quality research and developed my academic skills*

Sample comments: international students

- *Comprehensive legal training*

1.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

8% of undergraduate students (i.e. 13/156 comments received from respondents to the SCEQ) felt that necessary skills and abilities were not being developed during the course of their studies. Most comments related to the perception that the skills and abilities encompassed by the Ethical, Social and Professional Understanding University Graduate Attribute were not being developed during the undergraduate course.

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Also, I think that there is an insubstantial emphasis on developing skills of oral communication. For example mooting, negotiation and client-interviewing skills are only learned in particular electives. These are skills used every day in legal practice and should be emphasised accordingly*
- *I also think that there should be a greater emphasis on skills that would actually be used in the workplace, and a greater emphasis on experiential learning. For example, how can we study criminal law and never see a court case. How ridiculous that I will have a law degree at the end of this year and have attended court once in first year as part of my degree! Like many of my cohort I gained work experience beyond my study, however, I think this should be part of the degree*
- *I would include drafting and legal writing courses. Some form of mooting or legal debating should be more integrated into the course as opposed to leaving to SULLS. Almost every judge I have spoken to has consistently said how important this is, not as a competition but as an experience.*
- *I feel that not enough subjects encourage independent thinking, particularly when I compare this degree with the skills I gained studying History in the Arts faculty at the University of Sydney. I feel like these two things are part of a vicious cycle at the law school. Lecturers teach safe, unchallenging subjects in response to a student body that does not want anything else.*

Sample comments: international students

- *Work placements during the holidays would also be advantageous*
- *Apart from that, I also think that practical skills such as mooting, client interviewing skills and etc should be given more emphasis in my degree course*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

9% of graduates (i.e. 8/91 comments received from respondents to the CEQ) mentioned that they felt that necessary skills and abilities were not being developed during the course of their studies. Comments were fairly evenly divided between the University Graduate Attributes: Research and Inquiry; Ethical, Social and Professional Understanding; and Communication Skills

Sample comments: domestic students

- *lack of commercial /practical legal skills*
- *Preparing student to tackle unfamiliar problems*
- *The 'dry' subjects of Law (e.g. contracts, equity, real property), too much emphasis was placed on the intricate details of the particular Law at the expense of a development of actual problem solving knowledge, skills and practice*
- *Team work in law was not enhanced but is necessary for the work force*
- *more of a chance to do practical applications*
- *Law: Less emphasis on pumping out answers, more on thinking. Often too many readings. Encourages people to learn by rote rather than understand*

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)

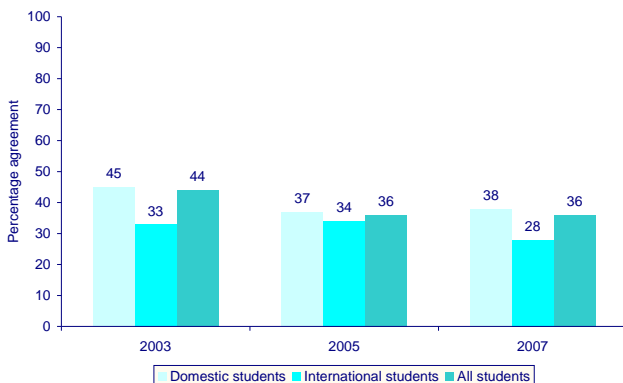
Trends

There has been no change in the Faculty score for Good Teaching for current students (SCEQ) since the previous survey, and a decrease of 8% since the 2003 survey. The current score of 36% is the lowest for the Faculty since 2000, when it stood at 47%. The Faculty is currently 13th equal in the University rankings for this KPI. For graduates (CEQ), the Faculty has maintained scores in the mid 40th percentile since 2004, with the current score of 45% being lower than the University average of 48%, placing it in the mid range of faculties.

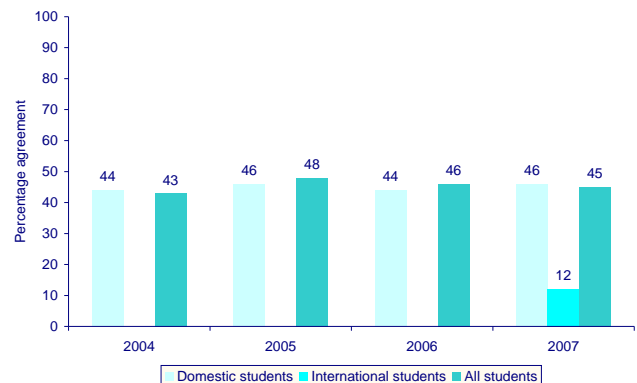
These results are corroborated by the analysis of the qualitative data, where the major focus of comments relating to teaching practices from both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ) was on suggesting improvements in this area of their experience. Students experienced a range of teaching methods, from best practice to needing improvement, and were motivated by passionate and enthusiastic teachers; however, concern was expressed about the lack of constructive and timely feedback on submitted work.

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	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	25%	42%	40%	43%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	58%	56%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	42%	37%	38%	53%	44%	42%	41%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	48%	52%	26%	51%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	72%	47%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	41%	39%	43%	51%	51%	28%	49%

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

2.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=124)	International (n=16)	All (n=140)
------------------------------	---------------------	-------------------------	----------------

Good teaching experiences

- | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|
| - Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques | | | |
| - Ability to keep students interested in the subject | 19% | 31% | 20% |
| - Encouragement to participate in discussions during lectures and tutorials | | | |
| - Learning resources are up to date, and relevant to curriculum | | | |

Motivating students

- | | | | |
|---|-----|----|-----|
| - Teachers display enthusiasm for teaching/ subject | 10% | 6% | 10% |
| - Teachers are perceived to be passionate and inspiring | | | |
| - Students are motivated by lecturers/ tutors etc | | | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Law - generally interesting subject matter, mostly well-taught by lecturers who are interested and interesting, I am happy I studied law, and I found it interesting*
- *The enthusiastic staff and the varied and challenging subjects. Good because they are motivating and exercise abilities you don't think you previously had*
- *Law- The teachers are almost universally brilliant, and the discussions in class are good*

Sample comments: international students

- *The best aspect of my degree would probably be the very impressive and admirable academic staff that I have had the honour of being taught by. They were good because they were well-versed in their material, always came very prepared, was highly organised and had a clear structure for the course who were very open to class discussion and student feedback*
- *I think the teaching quality is good, because I always can easily understand the stuff I was doing, and clearly know how to learn*
- *Clear and detailed course outlines are extremely helpful as they indicate exactly what needs to be learned and in the best cases indicate how different topics interact for a clear overall understanding of the course material.*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=83)
----------------------	---------------

Good teaching experiences

- | | |
|---|-----|
| - Use of innovative and up to date teaching methods and techniques | |
| - Ability to keep students interested in the subject | 19% |
| - Encouragement to participate in discussions during lectures and tutorials | |
| - Learning resources are up to date, and relevant to curriculum | |

Motivating students

- | | |
|---|-----|
| - Teachers display enthusiasm for teaching/ subject | 12% |
| - Teachers are perceived to be passionate and inspiring | |
| - Students are motivated by lecturers/ tutors etc | |

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The staff were generally very responsive and engaging- it was inspiring to meet such passionate lecturers*
- *Some outstanding lectures who not only were extremely intelligent, but fantastic lectured who made their subjects interesting*
- *Some subjects were very well planned and constructed, and used innovative teaching techniques*
- *The standard of education was fantastic. The teaching staff was generally excellent in motivating me to do my best work and in challenging me*

Sample comments: international students

- *The high level of expectations and the great feedback received from assignments*
- *Teaching staff- encouraging, interest developed in specific legal areas*

2.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=126)	International (n=30)	All (n=156)
Good teaching experiences			
- Teaching methods used are outdated; Lectures were boring	26%	23%	26%
- Discussions of issues raised during lectures and tutorials are not encouraged			
- Learning resources are out of date, and not relevant to curriculum			
Concern and care for student learning			
- Staff do not provide support and help for students, including one-on-one consultations	8%	7%	8%
- 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.	14%	7%	13%
- 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			
- <i>So I guess, in short, the quality of the lecturers should be improved, with more emphasis on good teaching skills (because some can be brilliant researchers, but be poor teachers) and their teacher-student skills should be worked on - as we are one of the reasons they are there for, a major source of university funding, and should not be treated as second rate citizens</i>			
- <i>Overall I have been dissatisfied with studying law at the University of Sydney and wish I had chosen to go to another university for my law degree. With a few exceptions the lecturers have been uninspiring and some have been ineffective. I feel like most lecturers treat us with disdain and do not put effort into teaching or giving feedback. Perhaps this is a response to the majority of the student body being fairly unenthusiastic about learning. They just want a degree to get a job</i>			
- <i>More feedback on exam papers or quizzes to enable us to understand bits more, to facilitate more questions to be asked and to answer our questions on cases/statutes more thoroughly and explain more in class</i>			
Sample comments: international students			
- <i>Some of the staff are not really friendly, especially when there are international students here. Academic staff sometime are not responsive to questions and sometime asking questions simply feels uncomfortable and stressful</i>			
- <i>The feedback received on assignments is generally unhelpful To be told that it unstructured, lacking analysis etc is all well and good, but to fail to point out in the body of such an assignment where analysis could have been given, or how to improve the structure, It shouldn't be, but unfortunately was, a case of trial and error</i>			
- <i>The instructors tend to be knowledgeable, though in many cases, their teaching ability leaves much to be desired. There is no reason to pay lots of money and be forced to attend class when my time would be better spent at home reading the textbook</i>			
Graduates (CEQ 2007)		All (n=91)	
Good teaching experiences			
- Teaching methods and techniques used are outdated/need improvement	30%		
- Discussions of issues during class were not encouraged			
- Lecturers were boring; did not engage with students			
- Learning materials and resources were outdated			
Concern and care for student learning			
- Students did not feel supported in their learning;	8%		
- help and advice was not readily available			
Feedback on work (from staff to students)			
- Comments on work are not constructive; do not explain where mistakes occur that can be rectified.	9%		
- Feedback is untimely and not helpful			

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

All
(n=91)

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Staff taking time to teach properly, rather than just read notes (or just lecture). Staff taking time to make their subjects interesting*
- *Some of the compulsory courses were very disappointing in terms of how they never taught, some lecturers sat in a chair and read from a set of notes for two hours without a break! not very inspiring!*
- *Feedback in law was lacking. A lecturers' priority is rarely the students*

Sample comments: international students

- *Teaching means communicating with students - most Professors have no time for students*
- *Teaching methods should be revised to make it more interactive. Separate methods should be used in law school*
- *The quality of law lecturers varied greatly*

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

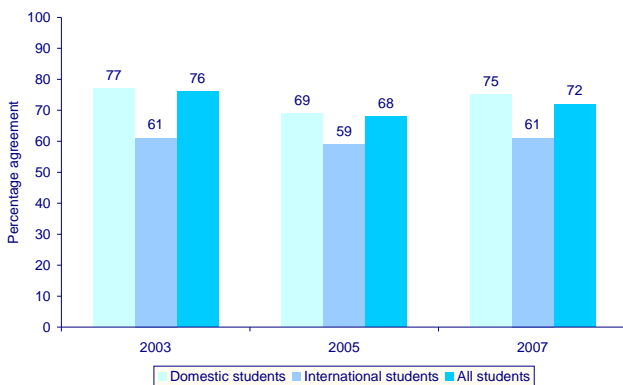
Trends

Overall Satisfaction with the degree course currently rates 72% for current students (SCEQ) and 70% for graduates (CEQ). The University average for current students is 73% and for graduates is 71%. This places the Faculty 9th in both University rankings for this KPI. Whilst this score represents an increase on the previous score for current students (SCEQ); for graduates (CEQ) it is identical to the previous score, and lower than the 2003 score.

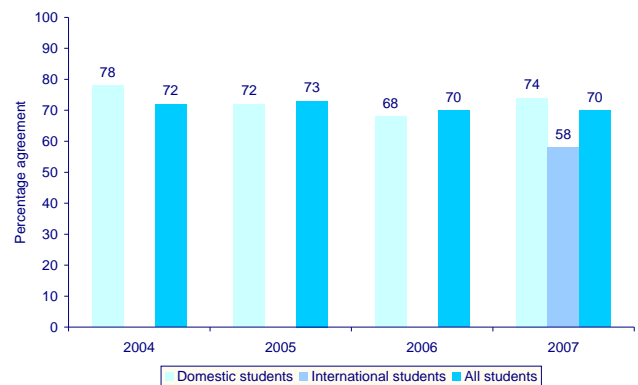
Evidence from the qualitative data suggests that students appreciate the qualifications, knowledge and experience of academic staff and external lecturers, and are aware that they are part of a cohort of high calibre students. However, they are concerned about the lack of teaching skills evident in some staff and tutors (see Section 3.3.2)

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	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	22%	26%	24%	26%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	19%	31%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	17%	19%	22%	22%	26%	23%	24%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	16%	16%	11%	4%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	9%	27%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	14%	6%	9%	16%	18%	13%	3%

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

3.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=124)	International (n=16)	All (n=140)
------------------------------	---------------------	-------------------------	----------------

Staffing issues

- | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| - Qualifications of staff in subject matter and in teaching at tertiary level acknowledged | 16% | 13% | 16% |
| - Relevant experience of lecturers and tutors in subject area recognised | | | |
| - Relevant and up to date knowledge of lecturers and tutors appreciated | | | |

Value for money

- | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|
| - The academic standard and quality of students in the course are highly regarded by their peers | 7% | 6% | 7% |
|--|----|----|----|

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The Law lecturers are usually very knowledgeable in their fields. It is great to see some of the people who have written the text books are our teachers*
- *It is great having members of the legal profession participating in the teaching of some of the units. This gives us a chance to learn from people who have really interesting, relevant, and practical experiences to share regarding the material.*
- *Working alongside very gifted peers is also a privilege, improving the quality of discussion in class and ultimately the depth of learning*

Sample comments: international students

- *The students: I find it valuable and conducive to learning to be surrounded by so many intelligent and curious people*
- *The University Name: In Law, the University of Sydney has an excellent reputation for producing top quality graduates*
- *Also, most lecturers that I've had are very professional, and it is obvious that they know their subject really well and are interested in it. I especially enjoyed one of the subjects where we had a lot of guest speakers who were obviously very passionate about their profession, and each of them seemed to bring a completely different perspective to the course. That was an amazing and inspiring experience, as it really made the course come alive for me*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)		All (n=83)	
----------------------	--	---------------	--

Staffing issues

- | | |
|--|-----|
| - Relevant experience of lecturers and tutors in subject area recognised | 20% |
| - Relevant and up to date knowledge of lecturers and tutors appreciated | |

Sample comments

- *Lecturers of a high quality; dedicated and interested in their respective fields*
- *High quality lecturers*
- *Professors and lecturers who were leaders in their field*
- *Being surrounded by like-minded people*
- *Some Law Professors were good*
- *External lecturers*

3.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=126)	International (n=30)	All (n=156)
------------------------------	---------------------	-------------------------	----------------

Staffing issues

- Academic staff lack the ability to teach at tertiary level	10%	13%	11%
- Tutors do not have relevant experience			
- More guest lecturers would be appreciated			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *While I feel that my lecturers are highly knowledgeable in their specialised field, I have not found that their method of teaching and communication is helpful or effective - they need to develop their actual teaching skills more so that they can actually impart their knowledge to us as students.*
- *Also, employing part-time Barristers as lecturers meant that the teaching styles and standard across one single course (say Equity) differed greatly. This is inconsistent and unfair. Often, the Barristers would also be too busy to prepare for class*
- *In my Law degree I found that some teaching staff frequently made disparaging comments about other universities. I found this elitist and arrogant. Staff should show students through their teaching that Sydney University is the best rather than simply claiming this while criticising other institutions*

Sample comments: international students

- *MOST IMPORTANTLY/CRITICAL, the law faculty would improve greatly if they hired exceptionally well-qualified lecturers, or required their tenured professors to actually teach graduate law courses, because some of the lecturers at this law school should not be teaching. There are really great professors in this law school that are not contributing to the educational experience of the graduate law program (either because they are abroad or doing research!?). I feel like I pay too much money as an international student from the U.S. to be getting a sub-par law education*
- *Further, for a world class Law school, there were some very inexperienced and incapable lecturers. This did not help students or teaching at all. It is quite disappointing to know that one is paying over \$18,000 a year as an international student to attend one of the most prestigious law schools in the world, to be put before a clearly inexperienced, and confident lacking lecturer. With such expense paid also, the ease at which lecturers end class early, or fail to attend to class is quite unacceptable and should be addressed*
- *I find that tutors are sometimes not as helpful as they could be. E.g. Trying to finish the tutorial earlier than usual. Unable to answer the questions out from the textbook. etc. I think more quality tutors are needed in this university*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

3% of graduates (i.e. 3/91) who responded to the CEQ expressed concern about staff, who though knowledgeable in the subject matter, lacked teaching skills.

Due to the low number of comments, and to preserve 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
- Physical resources (physical facilities; library)

Trends

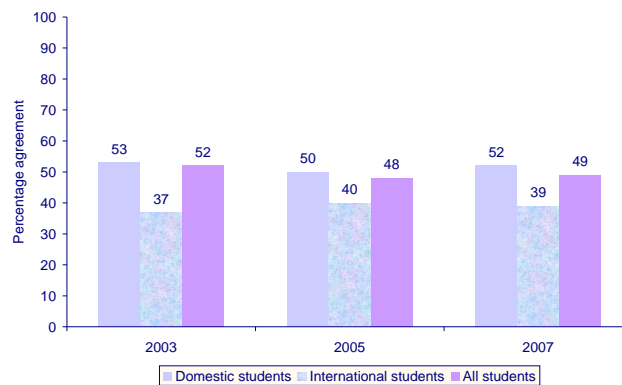
49% of current students either agreed or strongly agreed with SCEQ survey items on the Learning Community, placing the Faculty lowest in the University rankings. The University average for Learning Community is 58%. Although this is marginally higher than the 2005 results, Faculty scores for this SCEQ Scale have declined since the 2001 score of 54%.

Analysis of the qualitative data indicates that whilst students appreciate the Faculty learning environment, including the location of the Law School, the support of their peers, and the exploration of academic interests with staff and students; they feel the poor state of campus facilities is detrimental to their learning experience. They do, however, indicate that the move to the main campus will improve this situation. The large seminar style classes are also raised as an area of concern, with the perceptions that these inhibit discussion and are contrary to advertised benefits of a University of Sydney law degree.

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	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	29%	30%	19%	23%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	12%	38%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	21%	28%	24%	28%	31%	18%	24%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	36%	44%	33%	33%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	9%	40%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	37%	25%	28%	33%	43%	35%	33%

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

4.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=124)	International (n=16)	All (n=140)
Learning environment			
- Enjoyed University social life			
- Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty)	20%	25%	21%
- Academic interests were being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials;			
- Class sizes were satisfactory			
Physical resources			
- Library services are satisfactory	6%	6%	6%
- Computer facilities provided are satisfactory			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *I would say the best aspect of the degree are the peers which I study with. The strong determination in the student community is both at once challenging and competitive while still remaining stimulating*
- *working and talking with other students who are committed to learning and genuinely interested in the course and the field of law*
- *The Law Library and its staff are fantastic; the holdings are extensive and the librarians are always willing to help out with particularly difficult research questions*

Sample comments: international students

- *The sense of being with other like-minded peers and academics, you really feel part of a law community. I also enjoy the various seminars, talks, lectures and extra-curricular activities offered to law students*
- *The library resources are sufficient to assist my learning. There are lots of valuable resources in the library as well as access off campus, which I think it is really good*
- *The best aspects have definitely got to be the interactions I've had in and outside of classes with my professors. Most especially in the senior electives I took, where there was definitely a lot more opportunity to explore topics without the constant pressure of covering every area necessary to fulfil professional knowledge requirements for legal practice. The seminar style of teaching tends to allow us to discuss matters to a greater degree than was possible in many of the lectures I had in my Bachelor of Arts degree.*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=83)
Learning environment	
- Enjoyed University social life	
- Felt that they belonged to a community (degree/ Faculty)	23%
- Academic interests were being explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials;	
- Happy with size of class	

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Interesting, diverse range of subjects - small tutorial groups, independent research, indigenous content, NOT only vocational*
- *Class discussions. Social interaction and networking*
- *Small tutorial or classes become more opportunity to discuss, explain and contribute*

Sample comments: international students

- *the students that the University attracts were of a high calibre and were of diverse backgrounds which makes for an exciting time on campus*
- *Able to explore subjects and topics that interests me and allow me to engage with them*
- *Relatively small classes in law*

4.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=126)	International (n=30)	All (n=156)
Learning environment			
- Did not feel that they belonged to a community	22%	13%	21%
- Academic interests were not explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials;			
- Class sizes too large for productive discussions			
Physical resources			
- Physical facilities inadequate	19%	27%	21%
- Dissatisfied with library services			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Law: better integration with other faculties and students; the law school at Philip St is too separated from the rest of the other students. The relocation of the law school on the main campus is to be commended but a pity that I would have graduated already*
- *Classes need to be smaller. It is impossible and intimidating to participate in classes of 50 students. As a suggestion - perhaps in the 4 hours per week allocated to each subject there could be 2-3 hours of lectures which the whole course attends, and then 1-2 hours of small (i.e. 10 or less) group tutorials to work through problems*
- *The classes are larger than promoted through the website when I was researching the universities. There is very little time to ask questions (although those that are asked, are answered) you do feel that you are taking up time, where the lecturer just wants/has to get through that section of the course. I believe sacrificing part of a lecture for a smaller tutorial would be better time spent. This could even allow the 'lecturer' classes to be larger as there would be no push to ask the question in class.*

Sample comments: international students

- *The facilities in the Phillips Street Campus (Law School) are a bit inadequate, notably the lack of adequate power points for laptops in some of the lecture theatres. This can be quite inconvenient. The library facilities were in some ways lacking as well, notably in the area of more recent American scholarship on corporate law and other such areas. This resulted in some frustration when trying to explore areas of corporate finance and other areas of interest*
- *The facilities. The classrooms are not always conducive to learning. Outlets don't work in many of the classrooms. Some classrooms don't have internet access. There is poor circulation which makes it difficult at extreme temperatures*
- *The size of some classes (especially some of the electives in Semester 1, 2007) were too large, it certainly was NOT the 30 - 40 students that the brochure stated, closer to 70 - 110 instead*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=91)
Learning environment	
- Did not feel that they belonged to a community	24%
- Academic interests were not explored with staff and students e.g. in tutorials: during laboratory work	
- Class sizes too large for productive discussions	
- Issues of equity/ discrimination identified	
Physical resources	
- Facilities not adequate for requirements	8%
- Computer equipment inadequate	
- Library services not satisfactory	

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Classes too big. Need lectures and tutorials as structure, need space to ask questions and discuss. No childcare on Law Campus!!!*
- *Too large lecture and tutorial groups*
- *The Law Campus in Philip street had terribly outdated facilities*
- *Computer facilities in the Law library*

Sample comments: international students

- *Facilities e.g. PowerPoint's for laptops*
- *Number of teachers/tutors to students, for law we need tutors*

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)
- Online mode of delivery (WebCT)
- Flexibility of degree, including ability to take a range of Units of Study
- Availability/ cancellation of advertised courses
- Combined/ Cross faculty degrees

Trends

In 2007 41% of comments received from current students (SCEQ) and 36% from graduates (CEQ) commented favourably on various aspects of the Curriculum; whilst 34% of comments received in the SCEQ and 25% 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 satisfaction with the curriculum provided within the faculty, particularly in relation to the flexibility of the degree structure. However, students would appreciate a wider range of electives, and greater flexibility in first and second year subjects.

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	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	28%	41%	31%	36%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	19%	38%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	34%	33%	40%	27%	41%	31%	36%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	33%	33%	23%	24%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	13%	40%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	20%	19%	21%	31%	34%	22%	25%

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

5.2.2 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=124)	International (n=16)	All (n=140)
Content and structure			
- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	28%	25%	28%
- Subjects appear to be linked together			
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			

Flexibility, diversity, variety			
- Students appreciate the range of subjects available	11%	13%	11%
- Students appreciate the ability to choose units from other faculties			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Law: the content is very stimulating and really pushes students past what they perceive their limitations to be. Encourages tight analytical skills and critical perspectives*
- *Its a specialised field and Sydney Law School offers specialised courses such as Intellectual Property and Competition Law. This is good because it gives one the opportunity to explore specialised fields to get a feel for whether one would enjoy it in the future*
- *Electives have been the best. Subjects which show the relationship between law and the business world, rather than law in isolation*

Sample comments: international students

- *well, I reckon the degree course covers a whole range of different courses, which is very good in terms of teaching students about useful knowledge in real life*
- *The degree offers a wide range of courses*
- *The best aspect of the law degree was the interesting case material covered. However, this was largely at the students own doing. There was little made of the great challenging cases throughout the course (it would be fantastic to be able to spend more time on those kinds of cases, to enliven the passion which so many students lacked). Some teaching was absolutely fantastic. While some was not so*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=83)
Content and structure	
- Content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	25%
- Subject content is relevant to work/ career and industry requirements	
Flexibility, diversity, variety	
- Students appreciate the range of subjects available	11%
- Students appreciate the ability to choose units from other faculties	

Sample comments: domestic students

- *The choice of electives in final year; final year small classes and specialised teachers; Jurisprudence subjects were great*
- *The range of elective subjects available. The scope allowed to pursue our own research interests*
- *Final year, when I was able to choose my electives*

Sample comments: international students

- *Able to explore subjects and topics that interests me and allow me to engage with them*
- *Learning subject which is practical to the real world*
- *The Coursework was interesting*

5.2.3 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=128)	International (n=30)	All (n=156)
------------------------------	---------------------	-------------------------	----------------

Content and structure

- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	19%	30%	21%
- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry requirements			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *There is no opportunity for students to suggest areas of law they are interested in, as possible areas that could be taught in the future, we appear to have 3 contract lecturers on staff and yet as one is going away on sabbatical (which is understandable) there are no elective units to do with contracts being offered this semester and no notice was given to allow students to take the elective early. In similar situations students should be aware that units will not be offered, to allow them the opportunity of taking the elective early.*
- *There is no room to manoeuvre and if you fail a subject you have to overload or stay on extra years, there should be at least 6 spare credit points to make life easier in the event of failing or choosing an incorrect unit*
- *The Socratic method advertised is not being used in the university. More than one teacher has commented that the course 'used to be taught over a year', there appears to be a tension of cramming the same amount of stuff into a smaller amount of time. This puts a lot of pressure on the teachers to get through a large amount of work which is often left then to the student to fill in. We seem to learn more at a lower quality, rather than a smaller section at a higher quality. There needs to be a realisation that what the student will be leaving the course will be less than before or break the course into more sections. So that those are interested can go on to do more selective units. It certainly seems to be the impression from professionals that speak to us that a lot of our learning of a particular subject will happen 'on the job' rather than presuming we learned it all at university.*

Sample comments: international students

- *Greater flexibility in 1st and 2nd year courses would be great. Certain core units may not be relevant to student's chosen major's/career path and may demotivate students*
- *If summer school subjects list is released earlier, it would help students plan their studies (a lot !) - by 'earlier', I mean at least before the commencement of semester*
- *There is too much emphasis on theory. Maybe more practical modules are needed*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=91)
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Content and structure

- Unhappy with content and structure of whole degree program/ individual units of study	22%
- Subject content is not relevant to work/ career and industry requirements	
- Do not like intensive courses	

Sample comments: domestic students

- *In Law, the structure of the course could improve IE. do more engaging legal subjects early on to promote high attention rate and do year long (rather than semester long) subjects.*
- *Legal Institutions course was not helpful - lots of Sociological stuff but very little useful information - no one taught us how to answer problem questions!*
- *The teaching of Black-Letters Law should be improved. It is too policy oriented*
- *Law - the disorganisation of the Litigation course in 2005*

Sample comments: international students

- *It would be good to offer graduate Diploma with the Bachelor program*
- *First law subject should be improved did not know much about real law world, too much theory and no practical-useless. More variety of subjects*

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

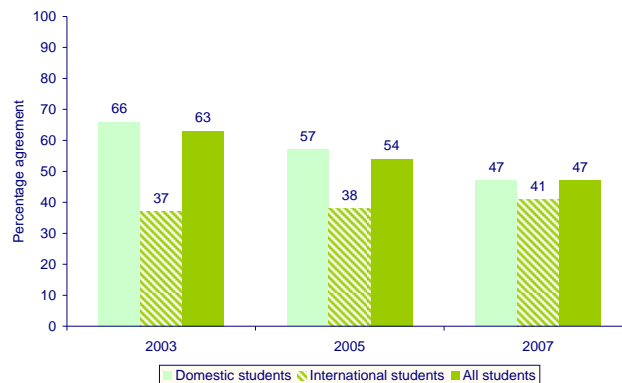
The percentage agreement scores for Appropriate Assessment (47%) in the 2007 SCEQ lower than the University average of 55% and places the Faculty in the bottom range of faculties. Scores for this factor have decreased considerably since 2001, when the score was 68% and amongst the highest in the University.

Evidence from the SCEQ qualitative data supports this result, with substantially more comments being received from both current students (SCEQ) and graduates (CEQ) expressing dissatisfaction with Faculty assessment practices, particularly in relation to the types of assessments used.

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	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	8%	5%	0%	1%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	8%	6%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	6%	3%	5%	8%	5%	0%	1%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	29%	24%	20%	16%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	13%	7%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	17%	12%	14%	27%	21%	19%	16%

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

6.3.1 Areas of best practice

Current students (SCEQ 2007)

5% of students (i.e. 7/140) who responded to the SCEQ expressed satisfaction with the choice, aptness and design of assessments.

Sample comments

- *LLB: The later year - electives are usually (except Private Intl law) assessed in a more intellectually stimulating manner*
- *I found a number of my subjects use a range of mediums for teaching and assessments which ensures a well rounded understanding of the material*
- *The rigour of assessment mean that the words 'University of Sydney' at the top of my testamur actually have some cache in the wider world*
- *There are plenty of assignments and quizzes*
- *Units which only have 2 assessments all semester (otherwise there is too many assessments to keep up with)*
- *If tutes are compulsory they are better particularly if they have compulsory homework*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)

1/83 graduates who responded to the CEQ appreciated online assessments. Due to the low number of comments, and to preserve student confidentiality, no sample comments are provided.

6.3.2 Suggested improvements

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=126)	International (n=30)	All (n=156)
Types of assessment	14%	7%	13%
- Unhappy with the forms of assessment used by the Faculty			
- General comments on assessment			

Sample comments: domestic students

- *Sometimes assessment during semester does not prepare you for the final exam. E.g.. no problem question assignments or practice but then the final exam is mostly problem questions*
- *Assessment was typically based on 'problem questions', in the form of either take-home assignments or sit-down exams, and although there is obviously a need for these in a law degree, they valued application of stated principles, rather than any deeper understanding of the theory behind those principles. More assignments allowing exploration of the jurisprudential context of the material would, I think, provide a better experience. This is particularly the case, I suspect, for those of us with an interest in the subject beyond immediate employment in the law - but the degree structure leads me to believe that we are considered to be a minority*
- *The variety of assessment. This semester in my three units of study the assessments are: 2 multiple choice closed book tests (Litigation and Corporate Law); 1 closed book mid semester exam (Equity); 3 final exams; and an optional short assignment in Litigation that has been scheduled to clash with the compulsory Corporate Law test (which means I can't attempt it). That is , 100% of my marks in all my units of study this semester will come from exams, with two-thirds of those exams being closed book exams. Furthermore, two of the units of study have used multiple choice exams which is quite patently ridiculous in a discipline that is supposed to value written expression. This assessment regime reflects very poorly on the Faculty and the University. The rote-learning needed to pass multiple-choice exams has flow-on effects, too*
- *One last really important point I wish to make is that students should be made aware of assessment regimes from the beginning of their degree (or the beginning of each unit of study if they differ from one another). By that I mean whether a bell-curve scaling practice will be applied, how Honours will be calculated etc. I have never been told by a single lecturer whether marks will be scaled. Students gossip about this sort of thing, and that creates confusion and uncertainty. But we are never given any authoritative answer by lecturers. Also, I did not know that Honours will be calculated based on the WAM of all units of study taken and what WAM is until my penultimate year. Had I been informed of such things since first year, it would have made significant differences to my pattern of studies and allocation of time and resources*

Current students (SCEQ 2007)	Domestic (n=126)	International (n=30)	All (n=156)
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Sample comments: international students

- *The assessment: I HATE 100% exam study units. I would be able to learn far more effectively if there were constant little pieces of assessment. I realise this would become onerous for lecturers to mark, but they are paid to teach. Furthermore, the constant feedback would be timely and allow me to correct any deficiencies in learning prior to the final exam. If the final exam is the first time anything is assessed, it serves no instructive purpose for the student. It merely indicates what has been learned but gives no useful feedback*
- *Having a final exam worth over 70% does not seem to be a very accurate way to assess how well the student understands the material and seems to promote procrastination (or short term learning) and lends itself to chance*

Graduates (CEQ 2007)	All (n=91)
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Types of assessment

- Unhappy with the forms of assessment used by the Faculty
- General comments on assessment

10%

Sample comments: domestic students

- *I found that in some situations the assessment regime was limited; for example 80% formal sit-down examination. This meant that at time assessment did not measure the full breath of my knowledge and understanding*
- *Assessment - no emphasis on team work - most courses sought to divide students and teach them to be competitive with each other rather than bring them together*
- *Assessments left gaps in legal education-need oral assessment*
- *Multiple choice exams are shortcuts that don't demonstrate real skill*

Sample comments: international students

- *Assessments need to be diversified. More small quizzes or mid term assessments are necessary to check whether students are following up in the middle of the semester*
- *Law - Type of assignments - Needs more variety*

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

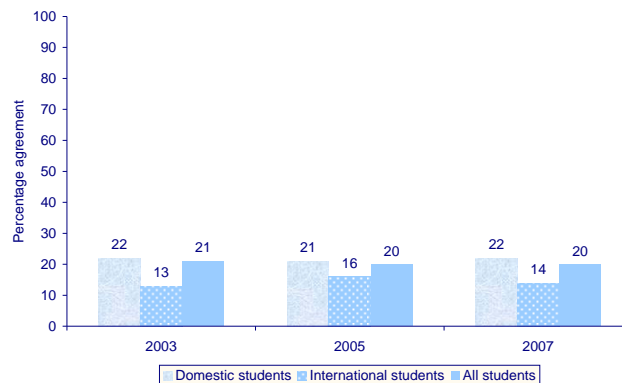
The percentage agreement scores for Appropriate Workload (20%) in the 2007 SCEQ is lower than the University average of 23%, and places it in the bottom third of faculties.

The main focus of comments relating to this factor, was the high, and sometimes overwhelming, level of reading required by students for each unit of study.

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%	0%	1%	0%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	6%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Suggested improvements	Domestic	n/a	n/a	n/a	8%	13%	5%	5%
	International	n/a	n/a	n/a	13%	7%	<i>Too few comments</i>	
	All	12%	11%	5%	9%	12%	5%	4%

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

The main issue raised by current students related to the difficulty of getting through all the required readings. The similarity of comments provided on this topic negates the purpose of providing sample comments to illustrate student concerns.