

Procedure: Student surveys and evaluations

Purpose

To outline the processes for conducting student surveys and evaluations.

Procedure

1. The University gathers formal student feedback via:
 - a. The Student Experience of Learning and Teaching surveys (or equivalent);
 - b. Standard University surveys, including routine sector-wide surveys approved by government or peak bodies, and internal surveys approved by the Vice-Chancellor, or a Deputy Vice-Chancellor; and
 - c. Non-standard student surveys; including any one-off or infrequent surveys exploring a specific question or theme as approved by the Director, Planning and Service Performance Division (PSP).
2. Teaching staff, either individually or as a team, may also gather informal, local feedback from students in their class to improve the immediate experience of teaching and learning for those students.

Student Experience of Learning and Teaching (SELT) Surveys

3. Student Experience of Learning and Teaching (SELT) surveys (or equivalent) are used for both quality assurance and quality improvement of classes and teaching, and may be used to support research following approval from the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) and a duly constituted Human Research Ethics Committee. SELT surveys are standardised across the University to allow for benchmarking.
4. SELT surveys are conducted using standardised questionnaires, mode of delivery and survey dates.
5. SELT surveys are delivered online for efficiency and consistency. Only intensive classes taught in the field or offshore may request paper-based surveys by emailing evaluations@anu.edu.au. All such requests require approval by the Director, PSP.
6. SELT survey responses are confidential. This means that identifying information is recorded alongside student responses to SELT. Students are advised SELT survey responses are confidential as part of invitations to participate in SELT surveys.

7. The circumstances under which confidentiality may be broken are established in Paragraphs 18, 22 and 25, or as required by law. Where a student is identified through a SELT survey response, the circumstances are recorded in the Register of SELT Confidentiality maintained by PSP. Access to the Register of SELT Confidentiality is subject to approval from the Director of PSP (including, but not limited to, the [Australian Privacy Principles](#) and [ANU Privacy policy](#)) or as required by law.
8. Unless required by law, SELT feedback remains anonymous to teachers. If required to make the identity of a student known to a teacher by law (e.g. a threat of harm to a teacher), the circumstances are recorded in the Register of SELT Confidentiality.
9. SELT surveys consist of class and teaching surveys.
10. Mandatory SELT surveys (both class and teaching) are administered at every offering of a class, with the following permitted exemptions:
 - a. Classes excluded by PSP via the Student Administration System (SAS) (or equivalent) as Administrative, Thesis Research, Transfer Credit, or similar.
 - b. Classes that do not lend themselves to the SELT survey (for example individually supervised project based or research classes). Such exemption requests are made in writing to the relevant Associate Dean (or nominee), whose approval is required to exempt the class.
 - c. Exceptional extenuating staff or student circumstances that are not covered by the above. Such exemption requests are made via the relevant Associate Dean to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), whose approval is required to exempt the class.
11. Reports summarising feedback from class and teaching surveys become available to staff and students after the release of student grades, in accordance with the survey timetable.
12. In accordance with the survey timetable, a report on quantitative and qualitative feedback given in the class survey is provided to all staff known to be teaching the class, and the relevant course convener, regardless of the number of responses. Class feedback (quantitative and qualitative) is also available to the relevant management line, the Executive of the School, the College and University Executive and ANU staff nominated as a reviewer for the purposes of a course review. Feedback reports provided for these purposes do not contain identifying student information and content must not be disclosed to third parties not listed in this paragraph.
13. In accordance with the survey timetable, a report on quantitative and qualitative feedback given in teaching surveys are provided to the staff member that the survey is about. Quantitative and qualitative feedback given in teaching surveys are available to the relevant management line of a teacher, the Executive of their School, their College

Executive and the University Executive. Feedback reports provided for these purposes do not contain identifying student information and content must not be disclosed to third parties not listed in this paragraph.

14. Course conveners can access past class feedback summary reports online (quantitative and qualitative components) for courses they have convened or are convening, to facilitate quality improvement of the class or their teaching.

15. All students access past class feedback summary reports online (quantitative component only) where there are greater than four responses, to facilitate their decision making on future enrolments.

16. Reports summarising feedback from surveys with fewer than five responses are not available for general access by staff and students.

17. Prior to releasing qualitative comments to staff, PSP applies processes to flag comments that may suggest a threat of harm to self or others, or may contain potentially offensive comments, including, but not limited to, abusive, discriminatory, malicious and/or demeaning language.

18. PSP forwards comments flagged as suggesting a threat of harm to self or others to the Manager of Student Incidents and Support (or nominee) and Associate Dean of the relevant College (or nominee) to determine what, if any, action needs to be taken. This may include, but is not limited to, contacting police and advising those who have been threatened with harm. If the Manager of Student Incidents and Support (or nominee) deems a threat of harm to self or others requires an immediate response and/or support, they may direct PSP, in writing, to make the identity of the student known to them for the purposes of immediate response and/or support. Where a student threatens harm to another, the police may direct that the identity of the student making the threat be made known to the person who has been threatened. Directions to make the identity of a student known following a threat of harm to self or others and a summary of circumstances is then entered into the Register of SELT Confidentiality.

19. PSP forwards comments flagged as potentially offensive to the relevant Associate Dean for review. The Associate Dean may submit a request to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) for approval to redact or remove comments they deem to be offensive.

20. Following receipt by PSP of an approval to redact or remove a comment from the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), PSP amend the SELT record before the edited qualitative comments are made available to staff identified in Paragraphs 12-14.

21. A staff member may apply to have comments redacted or removed from the feedback record. The staff member submits their request to the relevant Associate Dean. If the Associate Dean supports the staff member's request, the Associate Dean submits the request to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) for approval to redact or remove comments.

22. Where a comment has been redacted or removed as an offensive comment, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) (or nominee) may direct PSP, in writing, to make the student known to them in order to provide that student with guidance on standards of acceptable feedback. PSP provides the contact details of the student who has made the offensive comment to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) (or nominee) and enters a summary of circumstances onto the Register of SELT Confidentiality.
23. Associate Deans prepare a report of classes reviewed in light of quantitative and/or qualitative SELT feedback in a given year, for discussion with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) and relevant Dean on the quality of the learning and teaching experience.
24. PSP prepares a report reviewing the quantitative and qualitative aspects of SELT after the feedback has been released to course conveners and teachers each semester. This report includes aggregated summaries of class and teaching feedback that is made available to enable benchmarking.
25. Where a staff member reviewing class or teaching qualitative comments (such as part of a course review or peer review process) identifies an allegation of misconduct by a staff member, the comment may be referred to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student and University Experience) (or nominee) for assessment of whether follow on action is required. The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student and University Experience) may direct PSP, in writing, to make the identity of the student known to them for the purposes of any follow on action (such as formal investigation of an allegation). This direction and a summary of circumstances is then entered into the Register of SELT Confidentiality.
26. Colleges, Portfolios and/or an ANU staff member may request SELT responses be linked with other data held by the University (such as grade point average) to support quality assurance and/or quality improvement, subject to approval from the Director of PSP. Where SELT responses are linked with other data, PSP preserves the anonymity and confidentiality of SELT responses through aggregate reporting of quantitative feedback and/or de-identifying qualitative feedback.
27. Where SELT responses are made available for a research purpose, the information is anonymised by PSP for both students and teachers before the data is made available, including, but not limited to, removing class details and limiting other data made available to prevent re-identification.

Standard Surveys

28. Standard University surveys are routine surveys approved by the government or peak bodies, and internal surveys approved by the Vice-Chancellor, or Deputy Vice-Chancellor. A list of standard surveys are found on the [PSP website](#).
29. Standard surveys are administered in a manner that is consistent with any relevant codes of practice and survey methodologies.

30. Results from standard surveys are disseminated to the University via a range of methods, such as university committees and sub-committees, ANU Insight, ANU web-site or direct email to relevant staff.

Non-standard Student Surveys

31. Any student survey (including interview and focus group based data collections) that is not a SELT, standard or local survey is defined as a non-standard student survey. This includes surveys, interviews or focus groups that are being conducted for academic, educational and/or institutional research purposes.

32. All non-standard student surveys conducted at ANU should make every effort to be accessible to the diversity of people in the ANU student community.

33. Non-standard student surveys require approval from the Director, PSP where:

- a. The survey is of an ANU student population or sub-population which aims to capture their experience of ANU, or
- b. ANU students are being asked to contribute responses to the survey, and these students may be identifiable as ANU students in the collection outcomes, or
- c. The survey requires direct distribution to ANU students using ANU held contact information (e.g. ANU e-mail account, telephone number or mailing address), or
- d. Intends to supplement collected information with ANU held student data (including but not limited to demographic, enrolment and performance data).

34. It is not necessary to seek non-standard student survey approval where:

- a. ANU students form an incidental part of a broader survey population, and
- b. There is no use of ANU held data or mailing lists to contact students, and
- c. ANU students are being invited to participate using indirect methods, and
- d. There is no risk of ANU being identified in the survey outcomes.

35. Non-standard student surveys are approved by the Director, PSP at least one month before the survey start date. Non-standard student surveys which are intended to supplement collection with ANU held student data also need approval from the delegated data custodian, ANU Privacy Office and Chief Information Security Officer.

36. Parties wishing to conduct a non-standard student survey use the survey approval request form available on the [PSP website](#). Where a non-standard student survey may not be accessible to the diversity of people in the ANU student community, the application must include a justification for why this is the case.

37. Approved non-standard student surveys are subject to a survey exclusion period at the end of each semester, corresponding to the dates that SELT is being collected.

38. Approved non-standard student surveys are added to the Register of Approved Surveys maintained by PSP.

39. Reports or summaries of approved non-standard student surveys are shared with PSP, and where appropriate, made available to the survey participants. The reports or summaries may also be disseminated to the University via an appropriate method such as [university committees and sub-committees](#), [ANU Insight](#), [ANU web-sites](#) or direct email to [relevant staff](#).

Local Surveys

40. Local surveys are approved by the course convener for application in a course they are convening. The survey is for immediate feedback to the convener of the current iteration of the course.

41. Local surveys are primarily qualitative in focus.

42. PSP approval is not required for local surveys.

43. Local surveys are ideally conducted early to mid-semester or session, to allow sufficient time for reflection and action arising from the feedback. Local surveys are not conducted after teaching week 10 for a standard semester class.

44. Staff provide their students with a summary of the informal local feedback received and inform them of any actions arising.

Document information

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