Policy: Student surveys and evaluations

Purpose
To determine the process followed for surveys and evaluations required to be completed by students.

Overview
The policy covers the following aspects of student surveys and evaluations:

- Responsibilities
- Evaluation Principles
- Feedback Mechanisms
- Use of Student Feedback.

Scope
This policy applies to all students and staff.

Policy statement

Principles
1. Collecting and responding to student feedback is an important means of enhancing the quality of teaching, learning and the student experience.
2. The university will gather and report on student feedback using ethical, systematic and rigorous processes, consistent with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Threshold Standards.
3. Student feedback is used in conjunction with other sources of data to inform education-related decision making.

Responsibilities
4. The University has a responsibility to:
   a. Make the existence and timing of feedback mechanisms known to students in a timely fashion
   b. Actively promote core and summative surveys to engage students in the
feedback process

c. Ensure ethical procedures and confidentiality are upheld and regularly assessed

d. Maintain all survey data compliant with relevant legislation and survey methodology

e. Maintain a register of approved surveys in Planning & Performance Measurement (PPM)

f. Provide information, guidance and support to both staff and students when required

5. Students have a responsibility to:

a. Contribute constructive, honest and thoughtful feedback

b. Provide feedback which is not derogatory or vindictive

c. Recognise their important role in contributing to improvements in teaching, learning and the broader student experience

6. Teaching staff have a responsibility to:

a. Encourage students to participate in feedback processes

b. Engage with student feedback and actively respond, where possible, to improve the quality of teaching and learning

c. Maintain their own personal records of feedback, with due regard for the confidentiality of the data

d. Ensure confidentiality and ethical procedures are upheld

e. Reflect upon student feedback to provide information, guidance and support to students to enhance their learning

Evaluation principles

Ethics

7. Surveys used for quality assurance purposes do not currently require ethics approval. All other surveys will have ethics approval from the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee.

8. All mechanisms to gather student feedback will be conducted in an ethical manner, as per the guidelines on Student Survey Ethics.

9. Participation in student feedback will be voluntary.

10. Where respondents can be identified through the collection mechanism,
unique demographic characteristics or identifiable content in open-ended comments, University staff will treat the survey response as confidential and act in accordance with the Procedure: Prevention of Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying.

11. Students may lodge a complaint with the Dean of Students if they believe their survey responses have been used unethically.

Incentives / permits

12. Students must be made aware of any incentive offered for participating in student surveys and evaluations.

13. If a prize is offered in the form of a lottery, the survey administrator must obtain a trade promotion permit from the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission at least seven days prior to the start of the survey. This permit requirement does not apply to either of the incorporated ANU student associations.

Privacy legislation

14. The extraction and use of student data for survey populations and administration must be protected in accordance with the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988 and the University’s Statement to Students on Protection of Personal Information.

Feedback mechanisms

15. The University will gather student feedback via three distinct mechanisms, in accordance with the Procedure for Student Surveys and Evaluations:

a. Formative feedback, primarily qualitative in nature, including informal mid-semester and mid-trimester evaluations or feedback gathered through student representatives

b. Summative evaluations, namely the Student Experience of Learning and Teaching (or its successor)

c. Core University surveys; including routine sector-wide surveys approved by government or peak bodies, and internal surveys approved by the Vice-Chancellor, or Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Non-core surveys will be subject to an approval process.

Use of student feedback

16. University executives, Academic Quality Assurance Committee and its sub-committees, Colleges, teaching staff and service divisions will use student feedback as one of the sources of data to:
a. Improve the quality of courses and programs
b. Improve the quality of the student experience
c. Support the scholarship of teaching
d. Inform professional development programs
e. Improve the provision of learning resources and support services

17. Teaching staff may use student feedback as one of the sources of evidence of teaching quality for the purposes of appointment, promotion and teaching awards.
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