STUDENT ASSESSMENT OF INSTRUCTION AT WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
PROCEDURAL MANUAL

CoursEval™
Web-Based Course Assessment
Western Carolina University uses an online course evaluation system, CoursEval™, for gathering and disseminating the results of student assessment of instruction. The process and procedures for student evaluations are the same across the campus so that data collected can be as uniform as possible. These policies and procedures are outlined in this short handbook. It is recommended that all faculty review this document. Student assessments are often referred to by the acronym SAI (Student Assessment of Instruction). This term refers to the on-line evaluations done using the CoursEval system. SAI data are an integral part of the reappointment, tenure, and promotion process at WCU.
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History and Background

Student Assessment of Instruction is important to both faculty and administrators. The work involved with reviewing and implementing an online process was considerable.

Previous SAI used Scantron sheets as evaluation tools. The software system used for this function became increasingly unreliable and finally obsolete. Additionally, the University of North Carolina’s General Administration mandated that all UNC system universities create a uniform mechanism for measuring performance.

A WCU SAI task force formed and agreed with the GA mandate: compiling university-wide data on student assessment of instruction would be useful. Any new SAI would need to demonstrate uniform and universal bases for evaluation. The task force also recognized that WCU was offering a greater diversity of courses than in the past. SAI instruments would need to be able to work for many different types of courses and to offer enough flexibility to address the distinctive aspects of WCU’s many departments and programs.

The Faculty Senate investigated the SAI issue and generated a list of standardized questions to be used in course evaluation. As a result, 12 different form types of SAI questions were created. These form types applied to different types of courses. This system satisfied the two goals outlined by the task force. A resolution adopting these 12 “master” question sets was passed by the Faculty Senate in 2005.

A task force was then created to review online course evaluation systems available through current software used on campus. Online evaluation systems provide a uniform approach for gathering course evaluation information (thus meeting the GA mandate). The task force determined the logistics of online course evaluation and investigated three potential solutions: WebCT/WebCat, Banner, and Ultimate Survey. For logistical reasons (privacy, customization, product support, etc.), these solutions were deemed as not feasible options.

A new task force was created to investigate outside vendors that could provide online SAI systems. This task force selected Academic Management System’s product CoursEval3. A pilot program was conducted in Spring 2007 and included five volunteer departments: Psychology, Political Science, Applied Criminology, Marketing and Business Law, and Chemistry & Physics. The results were evaluated to determine the utility and efficacy of the online system. Upon review, the pilot project was successful and implementation was recommended for campus-wide use.

CoursEval became open to all faculty and all departments as of the Fall 2007 academic year. Response rates have steadily increased and the University conducted a full validation study to ensure that the results of these evaluations provide faculty, administration, and departments with the necessary
Oversight of the CoursEval process is now shared among The Office of the Provost, the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, and the Faculty Senate.

Evaluation Forms

Sections

The form is divided into five major sections reflecting the “seven dimensions of teaching” as described in the Faculty Handbook:

- Organization and Clarity
- Enthusiasm and Intellectual Stimulation
- Rapport and Respect
- Feedback and Accessibility
- Student Perceptions of Learning

Each section contains four statements. These statements vary by course format. Response categories follow a Likert-type format with response options of:

Strongly Agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / N/A

A typical set of questions used for the “Standard Course” form is below:

Organization and Clarity

My instructor is well prepared for class meetings.
My instructor explains the subject matter clearly.
My instructor clearly communicates course goals and objectives.
My instructor answers questions appropriately.

Enthusiasm and Intellectual Stimulation

My instructor is enthusiastic about teaching this course.
My instructor presents the subject in an interesting manner.
My instructor stimulates my thinking.
My instructor motivates me to do my best work.

Rapport and Respect

My instructor helps students sufficiently with course-related issues.
My instructor is regularly available for consultation.
My instructor is impartial in dealing with students.
My instructor respects opinions different from his or her own.
Feedback and Accessibility

Assessment methods accurately assess what I have learned in this course.
Grades are assigned fairly.
The basis for assigning grades is clearly explained.
The instructor provides feedback on my progress in the course on a regular basis.

Student Perceptions of Learning

My instructor advances my knowledge of course content.
My instructor promotes my understanding of important conceptual themes.
My instructor enhances my capacity to communicate effectively about the course subject matter.
My instructor encourages me to value new viewpoints related to the course.

To see all the formats and the questions being used in each format please refer to the following website http://www.wcu.edu/8356.asp.

Form Types

The WCU Faculty Senate adapted the twenty statements from the Standard Course form to suit the variety of courses being taught across campus. If a faculty member is dissatisfied with the Standard Course form, there are eleven other possible formats including:

- Activities Course
- Hybrid Course
- Independent Research Course
- Internship, Practica, and Clinical Course
- ITV-Delivered Course
- Laboratory Course
- Lecture/ Lab (Project) Course
- Lecture/ Lab (Traditional) Course
- Online Course
- Seminar Course
- Standard Course
- Studio-Performance Course

Click on the links to see the statements available for each format.

The default instrument used for each course is based on the combination of the course’s instructional method and the schedule/activity type, part of the course information in Banner. (See Appendix 1 for more details.) Each semester a list is compiled by the Office of Institutional
Planning and Effectiveness and distributed to each department head. This list indicates all of the courses for which evaluations are slated to be conducted, the instructor(s) associated with each course, and the default instrument that has been assigned to each course. Should a faculty member desire to implement a different assessment form for a course, he/she should consult with his/her department head prior to the beginning of the term.

**Evaluation of Cross-listed Courses:**
Many of the courses coded as cross-listed in Banner need to be combined to represent a single course section for faculty evaluations as well as have the appropriate default instrument selected. Since courses are cross-listed for various reasons it is difficult to determine which courses to combine as one and to select an appropriate default instrument. Therefore the following guidelines will be used.

Guidelines for Evaluating Cross-Listed Courses
Courses **which are coded as cross-listed in Banner** will be setup for Course Evaluations using the following procedures:

1) An instructor’s cross-listed courses which have the same level (UG/GR), instructional method and schedule/activity type, *and are under a single department* will automatically be combined into one course evaluation for a given evaluation period.

2) Graduate and undergraduate courses which are cross-listed will be evaluated separately.

3) For all other cross-listed courses which a department wishes to have evaluated as one course, the department head must inform the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (OIPE), and identify the courses as well as the evaluation form to be used. Examples are (a) cross-listed courses with different delivery methods which are essentially the same, such as cross-listed EDHE531 lecture sections with face-to-face and ITV delivery methods; (b) cross-listed multi-departmental courses which are identical except for the course name, such as BIOL 361 and CHEM 361.

The standard files sent by OIPE which request changes to course evaluation forms will contain additional fields which will identify cross-listed courses and will allow department heads to flag those courses falling under #3 above which they wish to have evaluated as one.
Timeline

For courses with a 15 week duration:
The SAI period shall begin on the Sunday three weeks before the beginning of finals week and close on the Sunday one week prior to the beginning of finals week, thus SAIs will be open for two weeks.

For courses with duration less than 15 weeks and greater than four weeks duration:
The SAI period shall begin on the Sunday two weeks from the end of classes and close on the Sunday of the final week of classes, thus SAIs will be open for one week.

For courses with duration less than four weeks and greater than or equal to two weeks:
The SAI period shall begin on the day five class periods from the last class period and close prior to two (including the last class) class periods from final class period, thus SAIs will be open for 60 hours.

For courses with duration less than two weeks:
The SAI period shall begin three (including the last class) class periods from the last class period and close prior to one class period from final class period, thus SAIs will be open for at least 48 hours.

The Office of the Provost issues the dates when CoursEval will be open before each semester begins. Faculty are strongly encouraged to put these dates on syllabi as it helps both students and instructors remember opening and closing dates of assessments.
CoursEval Specifics

What Students Receive and See

*CoursEval* will be open when approximately 80% of the course is completed. During this period, email notifications will be sent to students’ Catamount email accounts indicating that course evaluations are now open. These emails include instruction about when and how to log-on to the *CoursEval* system. The University will also have banners, flyers, and billboards displayed on campus that encourage student participation in the program. Figures 1 – 3 illustrate student views of *CoursEval*.

![Initial email to students.](image)

*Figure 1. Initial email to students.*
Figure 2. Student view of the CoursEval website.
Test survey for training (2009-2009)

Course Information:
- Course Name: TR101 01 - CourseEval Training
- Department: Training
- Instructor: Mr. Cat Mount

If you have questions or comments about this survey, click [here] to send a message to the survey administrator.

* Standard Course Form
Mount, Cat A

Organization and Clarify (Mount, Cat A)
To mark all questions in this section as Not Applicable, click here:

1) My instructor is well prepared for class meetings.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Not Applicable

2) My instructor explains the subject matter clearly.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Not Applicable

3) My instructor clearly communicates course goals and objectives.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Not Applicable

4) My instructor answers questions appropriately.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Not Applicable

Enthusiasm and Intellectual Stimulation (Mount, Cat A)
To mark all questions in this section as Not Applicable, click here:

6) My instructor is enthusiastic about teaching this course.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Not Applicable

7) My instructor presents the subject in an interesting manner.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Not Applicable

8) My instructor stimulates my thinking.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Not Applicable

9) My instructor motivates me to do my best work.

Figure 3. Student view of survey.
Open-Ended Questions

The SAI also contains a section with the following two open-ended questions:

1. Describe the best aspects of this course.
2. Describe changes that could be made to improve the course.

Students have a text box in which to respond to these questions.

All open-ended responses are viewable only by the specific faculty member and department head. Open-ended responses may be included in reappointment, tenure, promotion, and annual evaluation documents. The inclusion of open-ended responses is at the discretion of individual faculty.

The open-ended questions were selected to provide formative information, i.e. be constructive in helping faculty to continue to improve teaching. Faculty may choose to use them as part of the summative evaluation, however, that is not the primary purpose.

What Faculty Members Receive and See

Faculty members receive a message several days prior to their CoursEval opening. Then an additional email is sent to the faculty member alerting him/her that CoursEval is open (Figure 4). Approximately halfway through the CoursEval period, a second email is sent to the faculty member indicating the percentage of students that have responded at that time (Figure 5). At this point, it is appropriate to remind students of the importance of the CoursEval process and encourage them to participate.
Figure 4. First faculty notification that CoursEval is open.

![Course Evaluation Announcement]

This is a CoursEval update. If your response rates are lower than you would like, please remind your students about the evaluations and ask them to participate. Thank you!

Evaluations for these courses will be closing on: Xxxxxxxxxxx

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>section</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Expected</th>
<th>Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MATH 110</td>
<td>1284</td>
<td>Introduction to Algebra</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 223</td>
<td>0344</td>
<td>Linear Algebra</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course evaluations will be available for faculty review at the end of the term. If you have any questions or experience any difficulties, please contact woucourseval@email.wou.edu or call 828-227-3042.

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Support email: woucourseval@email.wou.edu
Link to Site: https://www.ams-host2.com/etw/courseval.asp?h=51

Figure 5. Email to the faculty indicating response rate.
Getting Results

After final grades have been recorded, a last *CoursEval* email will be sent to the faculty member indicating evaluation results are available. This email contains password and username information. Faculty will go to the *CoursEval* site and enter their personal user name and password. These are usually the same as the Outlook passwords (i.e. not 92 numbers). Once logged into the system go to reports, then evaluation reports. Be sure that “view” is set to “comparative”:

![Summary Screen on CoursEval for survey results.](image)

Please note that evaluation reports are available indefinitely as long as the faculty member is employed at WCU. The reports are not available once a faculty member leaves WCU.

To view course results, click on *VIEW REPORT* in the upper right-hand corner of the table on the screen. This opens a new window that lists the results for each course section that has been selected with a check mark on the right side. It should look similar to the following report (Figure 7):

![Table of Course Results](image)
Test survey for training

Western Carolina University

Course: TR101 G1 - CoursEval Training
Instructor: Mr. Cat Mount

Department: Training
Resp. Rate: Exceeded: 5/5

**Typical detailed CoursEval report.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>[A]</th>
<th>[A]</th>
<th>[A]</th>
<th>Med.</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My instructor is well prepared for class meetings.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My instructor explains the subject matter clearly.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My instructor clearly communicates course goals and objectives.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My instructor answers questions promptly.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Enthusiasm and Intellectual Stimulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>[A]</th>
<th>[A]</th>
<th>[A]</th>
<th>Med.</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My instructor is enthusiastic about teaching this course.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My instructor presents the subject in an interesting manner.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My instructor stimulates my thinking.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My instructor motivates me to do my best work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Feedback and Accessibility**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>[A]</th>
<th>[A]</th>
<th>[A]</th>
<th>Med.</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My instructor helps students sufficiently with course-related issues.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My instructor is regularly available for consultation.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My instructor is impartial in dealing with students.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My instructor respects opinions different from his or her own.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Perceptions of Learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>[A]</th>
<th>[A]</th>
<th>[A]</th>
<th>Med.</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My instructor advances my knowledge of course content.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My instructor promotes my understanding of important conceptual themes.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My instructor enhances my capacity to communicate effectively about the course subject matter.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My instructor encourages me to utilize new viewpoints related to the course.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Faculty:** Mr. Cat Mount
**Question:** Describe the best aspects of this course.

**Response Rate:** 100.00% (4 of 4)

1. The instructor explains concepts really clearly and always has time left at class.
2. I have learned so much from this class.
3. I believe that the writing assignments.
4. The work is not too advanced for me.

**Faculty:** Mr. Cat Mount
**Question:** Describe changes that could be made to improve the course.

Figure 7. Typical detailed CoursEval report.
Scaled Responses

Results are broken down into the five major categories of the Student Assessment of Instruction. To view the report by category, stay on Evaluation Report, but change the view to “individual”. Faculty will be able to see how many students Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD) or N/A with each of the five categories provided in the evaluation form. These qualitative responses are then converted into their numerical equivalents as follows:

- Strongly Agree 4
- Agree 3
- Disagree 2
- Strongly Disagree 1

To the right of the number of responses received in each category, a table provides the median, mode, standard deviation, the N, and the mean for each category and for the course as a whole (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Summary CoursEval report.
Each category -labeled S1, S2, etc. - represents four individual questions. To get result breakdowns by individual question stay on Evaluation Report, but change the view to “comparative”. (See instructions under Open-Ended Responses below)

To print results, look to the upper right-hand side of the Main Screen for the word “PRINT” (Figure 10). This will open a new window with a printable version of the report.

Faculty should include these reports in reappointment, tenure, and promotion documents as well as annual faculty evaluation dossiers. The exact format for including information in these documents may vary by department and college.

**Open-Ended Responses**
Open-Ended responses can be located in two places: a) the Evaluation Report where the view is set to comparative or b) the Detailed Report when the Overall Report is clicked (Figure 11). In the Detailed Report, a full report can be viewed (including scaled and open-ended responses) for each individual class. Color charts are also provided. The responses to the open-ended questions follow the scaled responses on this report. They appear in individual text boxes (Figure 12).

![Figure 11. Individual course report page.](image)

![Figure 12. Open-ended student responses.](image)
Frequently Asked Questions

From Students

- Why are student assessments of instruction important?
  Student evaluations are important for two reasons. First, individual instructors can and do use student assessments to improve their teaching. Second, student assessments are used as one of several factors in judging the teaching component in reappointment, tenure, and promotion, as well as salary determinations.

- What if I don't want to evaluate my courses?
  While students are strongly urged to complete course evaluations, the process is voluntary.

- Will my evaluations be confidential?
  All evaluations are kept strictly confidential.

- When are the evaluations shared with faculty?
  Faculty are only allowed access to the evaluation after all grades for all course sections for the semester have been posted.

- Can I see past evaluations of WCU faculty?
  Access to past evaluations is not available.

From Faculty

- How does the use of online course evaluation systems like CoursEval affect response rates?
  This answer depends a great deal on how the program is administered; the bibliography of this manual has suggested readings. Variation in response rates exist. Most research indicates that the initial phases of implementing an online course evaluation system will result in lower response rates than traditional paper systems (the average is approximately 30%; WCU had a pilot response in the mid-40's). It is expected that response rates will improve over time for online evaluation methods.

- What can I do to improve response rates?
  Faculty can help increase response rates by announcing to students the change in the evaluation system and leading a discussion in class on how their evaluations are used by the individual faculty members and the University. The University will be using a variety of methods to inform students about the new CoursEval system including banners, posters, and radio announcements on WWCU-FM. In some departments administrative staff or department heads may visit classes to make announcements to the classes.

  Computer labs are available on campus and faculty can reserve time to facilitate evaluations as a class. Again, reminding students and identifying ‘time lines’ on the syllabi are beneficial. It is not acceptable policy to provide extra credit or incentives to students for participation in the evaluation process.
• **How will the use of CoursEval affect the quality of student responses?**
  Available evidence indicates that no difference occurs in quantitative ratings (comparing online and in class written evaluation formats), and that written comments (both positive and negative) tend to be longer in online evaluations than on evaluations filled out by hand in class.

• **How will I know if my students have filled out an evaluation?**
  Faculty members receive a midpoint report by email during the evaluation period. The reports indicate the number of students who have yet to fill out the evaluations, but will not identify individual students. Similar reports will go to department heads.

• **How long do students have to complete the evaluations using CoursEval?**
  The evaluation period will last from 2 weeks to one day depending on the length of the course and takes place near the end of the course. For the more usual 15 week courses, for example, course evaluation occurs in the two weeks prior to the last week of classes.

• **What will be done with the evaluation results once they have been entered? Who gets to see them?**
  Currently, the information is stored by Academic Management Systems, the company that hosts CoursEval. The information will be accessible to the same people that get to see faculty paper-based evaluations, i.e. individual faculty and department head. It will also be made available to the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, but that data will be compiled and distributed without attribution to individual instructors. Faculty will be able to read student responses and view summary reports (sample reports) after the evaluation period ends and grades are posted.

• **How do I know to which type of Student Assessment of Instruction (SAI), i.e., lecture, lab, seminar, etc., my course is assigned?**
  The default instrument used for each course is based on the combination of the course’s instructional method and the schedule/activity type, part of the course information in Banner. Each semester a list is compiled by the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness and distributed to each department head. This list indicates all of the courses for which evaluations are slated be conducted, the instructor(s) associated with each course, and the default instrument that has been assigned to each course. Should a faculty member desire to implement a different assessment form for a course, he/she should consult with his/her department head prior to the beginning of the term.
Do I have to use CoursEval? Can I use supplementary evaluations?
Yes to both questions. The UNC PACE evaluation process has identified the paper-based course evaluation system as an expense that can be reduced dramatically through the use of technology. Thus, the paper system is no longer operational at WCU and there are no other options available. Also, with the growing number of courses being taught online, these evaluations are the only option.

Faculty are invited to supplement the data from the online evaluation forms with other instruments; however, the costs of such supplements will be borne by the department or the individual faculty member.
Questions or Problems

What do I do if I have a problem with or question about CoursEval?

If the problem is largely technical in nature (login problems or difficulty viewing certain screens,), contact WCUcourseval.email.wcu.edu.

Contact Information:
Alison Joseph
Research Specialist
Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (OIPE)
H.F.R. Administration Building 440
Western Carolina University
Cullowhee, NC 28723
(828) 227-3042
Email: ajoseph@email.wcu.edu

If the problem or question relates to using the data to improve teaching scores, faculty are urged to discuss the matter with the appropriate department head. The Coulter Center is also available to the faculty member for guidance and assistance.

Contact Information:
Dr. Anna McFadden
Director and Professor
Coulter Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
Office: Hunter 182
Phone: 2093
E-Mail: amcfadden@email.wcu.edu
Web page: http://paws.wcu.edu/amcfadden
Annotated Bibliography


The literature review revealed several studies that found no statistically significant differences between delivery modes. Two also noted that students provided more comments in the online forms. Response rates varied widely. The University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy, driven by the faculty’s desire for more timely return of results (3-4 months typically), launched a pilot study of online evaluations in 3 courses. The response rates for the 3 courses were 85%, 89%, and 75%. The 9 courses using the paper forms averaged an 80% response rate (consistent with the 2 previous years also about 80%). The comments on the online forms were more frequent and longer than the paper forms. Students liked the online form better than the paper form and thought they could provide more effective and constructive feedback online.


A survey of students at Murdoch University, in Western Australia, indicated that while they felt student surveys were extremely important, their main concern was what happened to them and whether staff made any use of the information.


Discusses issues, advantages, exclusive approach, and buy-in of online surveys.


Discusses anonymity, confidentiality, authentication, differences between online and paper-based rating surveys, costs, and future use of online course rating.


Discusses the Evaluation Online (EON) system and faculty opinions and suggestions for the online midterm feedback system at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.


Examined the responses of 58,288 college students to 8 scales involving 53 items from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to gauge whether individuals respond differently to surveys administered via the Web versus paper. Multivariate regression analyses indicated that mode effects were generally small. However, students who completed the Web-based survey responded more favorably than paper on all 8 scales. These patterns generally held for both women and men, and younger and older students.

This study compared responses to two versions (online and paper-based) of an end-of-course evaluation instrument completed by graduate students. No significant difference was found in favorableness of composite ratings between the two formats. Individual items were found to be highly correlated on the two instruments with almost identically high reliability.


The chapter outlines some of the most salient advantages and challenges of online student evaluations of teaching within the context of how they relate to the Personnel Evaluation Standards set forth by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. The authors also provide suggestions for successful implementation of online evaluation systems.


Reports on the pilot study of the online TEVAL (teaching evaluation) system used at the University of Queensland.


Murdoch University School of Engineering ran a pilot in 1999 of online course evaluations using the same form online as on paper. Students found the online form easier, faster, and felt it offered greater anonymity. The school has a 50% mandate for response rate in course evaluations. Typically paper evaluations had a 65% response rate. The online pilot averaged 31% with 4 of the 18 courses over the 50% mandate. The response rate range was a wide 3% to 100%. Because the pilot was inadequately promoted, some faculty didn’t know they were using online forms and didn’t adequately prepare students. Students noted that they felt no pressure to fill out the online evaluations. The investigators concluded that the quality of responses was the same because they received the same amount of comments online which is what is used most from the evaluation form.


The College of Business And Economics at California State University, Northridge did a study with 16 professors to see how the method of evaluation affects response rate and if online treatments (incentives) affect the response rate. Each professor taught 2 sections of the same undergraduate business course. The same form was used in both methods. Instructors were randomly assigned into 1 of 4 groups using different incentives: 0.25% grade incentive for completion of an online evaluation (4 courses), in-class demonstration on how to do the online evaluation (2 courses), if 2/3 of the class submitted online evaluations students would receive their final grades early (2 courses), or a control group (8 courses). The online evaluations averaged a 43% response rate and the paper evaluations averaged 75%. Looking at just the control group, their average response rate was 29%. In the individual cases the incentives had the effect of increasing response rate (grade incentive 87% response rate, demonstration 53%, and early final grade 51%).


Study of students' attitudes in 16 classes showed lower response rate for online evaluations and revealed students' frustrations with the system. Suggestions are offered for improving the on-line evaluation process.


Texas Tech University studied 3 modes of surveying a random group of Texas Agri-Science teachers. The 3 modes were e-mail, web, and paper. No significant difference in the reliability of the responses was found. However the response rates were 60%, 43% and 27% for paper, web and e-mail respectively.


The University of North Carolina at Greensboro did a study of using and online version of a feedback survey for determining why students selected or did not select Greensboro. They found the online version generated more comments though had a lower (26%) response rate than the paper version (33%). No significant difference was found in the response content between the two methods.


Ongoing research at Northwestern University that helps dispel some common misconceptions about online student ratings.


Lists disadvantages of paper-based systems, advantages of online systems. Promotes feedback-and-refinement process.


Results of a national survey indicating an increase in the use of the Internet for student ratings of instruction. Information on practices at other universities. (1998). Retrieved on October 12, 2001 from University of Calgary, Universal Student Ratings of Instruction Web site. <p class="bib_review">Lists information for 9 universities on the status of their student ratings in 1998.


Reports on a case study focusing on the response rates for Brigham Young University's online evaluation system. The author identifies factors that influence response rates and suggests strategies to increase student participation.

This issue of NDTL examines current practice and deals with various issues surrounding online student ratings of instruction including the increase in use of the Internet, common misconceptions, psychometric properties, response rates, online reporting of results, costs, online collection of midterm student feedback, and considerations for the future.


At a southeastern university 66 courses made up of 2453 students did a comparison of response effects between paper-and-pencil and online using the same form. Half did online and half did paper-and-pencil forms. The online response rate was 47% and the traditional group was 60%. Also, 76% of the online forms provided comments compared to 50% of the traditional forms. No significant difference was found in methods.


Georgia State University College of Business ran a voluntary pilot from 2002 to 2003 using an identical online version of their paper course evaluation form in the Department of Computer Information Systems. Faculty feared an online form would yield lower scores and lower response rates. In particular, the fear was that few students would submit online evaluations, poor students would “take revenge” on the faculty and good students wouldn’t bother. The paper form had a 67% response rate and the online form had an 82% response rate. This likely due to the fact that the CIS department had easy access to computer labs for students to take the evaluations online. Using a question on teacher effectiveness, the study found no significant difference between the methods. Good students participated in the same numbers and weaker students did fewer online evaluations.


In a survey of academic reference librarians in North Carolina, Matz found no significant difference in response contents between the methods used. The online form had a 33% response rate and the paper form had a 43% response rate.


Yale Law started online course evaluations in 2001 with a less than 20% response rate. The current 8-question form is run by student representatives and has a 90% response rate. Students cannot see their grades until they fill out the evaluation. Northwestern University School of Law started online course evaluations in 2004. So far they have a 68% response rate which compares to a 70-80% paper response rate. Northwestern is against using any penalties (withholding information from a student until they fill out an evaluation). The University of Denver Sturm College started online course evaluations in 2002 with a pilot of 10 courses. The pilot had an 83% response rate. Continuing into 2003 the pilot expanded to 80 courses (with an 81% response rate) and then expanded to all of their offerings (with a 64% response rate). Currently they maintain a response rate around 70%. Duke Law started online course evaluations in 2003 when their scantron machine broke and the expense of replacing was too great. They proposed a goal of 70% response rate and used the same form online. The first term averaged a 66% response rate (with 29% of the 82 courses reaching the 70% goal). In spring 2004 the average was 60% (with 30% of the 119 courses reaching the 70% goal). In fall 2004 the average was 52% (with 8% of the 93 courses reaching the 70% goal). In spring 2005, after dropping non-law students from the pool, the
average was 67% (with 41% of the 117 courses reaching the 70% goal). The school is considering several penalties for failure to fill out an evaluation – withholding registration, withholding grades, or withholding free printing.


This paper reports the findings of 2 studies done at Northern Arizona State University. The first study looked at historic data from 2000-2002 to examine student responses to online course evaluations in 1108 course sections. This group had an average response rate of 31%. A follow-up questionnaire was sent to 50 faculty in the group to explore what strategies improved response rate. These results informed the second study on 39 online course sections and 21 sections of a required freshman face-to-face course. The second study used some basic strategies (no penalty strategies) in the implementation of the online course evaluations: 2 weeks before the end of the course the URL to evaluation was posted in the course management system, an announcement containing a statement of course evaluation value and due date was sent in a method appropriate to the class (email, online syllabus or discussion board), and a reminder email was sent 1 week before the class ended containing the URL and due date. The 39 online course sections averaged a 74% response rate and the 21 face-to-face courses averaged a 67% response rate. In addition, 11 sections of the face-to-face course used paper evaluations and received a 83% response rate. These suggestions are very similar to the emerging findings from the TLT Group’s BeTA project.


The YFCY distributed its survey that assesses student development during the first year in college using 3 methods: online, online or paper, and paper. In a pool of 57 schools, 16 used the alternative methods of distribution. The study found no significant difference in responses between the methods. The response rate overall was 21%. The online only method response rate was 17% and the online or paper group had a 24% response rate.


The Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology piloted an online course evaluation in 2002 with a small group of faculty. Over the academic year the pilot had a 70% response rate. 77% of students preferred the online mode and faculty reacted positively to the pilot. In 2003 the entire campus adopted the online form. Over the 3 terms, the online evaluations had response rates of 86%, 78% and 67%. In 2004 the 3 terms had 75%, 71% and 67%. Historically paper evaluations had an 85-87% response rate. They are investigating various incentive possibilities.


Drexel University studied whether significant differences exist in student responses to course evaluations given on paper and online in 3 courses. Response rates in the 3 classes for paper and online (respectively) were 37% and 45%, 44% and 50%, 70% and 37%. In comparing students who responded to the evaluations across the 3 courses the study found that women were more likely than men to respond, students who earned higher grades were more likely to respond, and students with a higher overall GPA were more likely to respond. For two courses the online evaluations had a slightly higher average item rating. For the other course 2 significant differences were found: students doing the online evaluation were less likely to participate actively and contribute thoughtfully during class and to attend class when compared to the paper evaluation group. But the responses overall were not significantly different.
These annotations were compiled by Scott Krajewski, Augsburg College, krajewsk@augsburg.edu and by OnSet: Online Student Evaluation of Teaching in Higher Education portal.
## Appendix 1: Default Survey Instrument Selection Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Default Form</th>
<th>Instructional Method</th>
<th>Schedule/Activity Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Standard Lecture</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Lec, PEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lab Form</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Online Form</td>
<td>O, OA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lec/Lab Trad. Combo</td>
<td>departmental selection only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Seminar Form</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Lec, Sem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ITV-Delivered Form</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Activities Form</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>ICA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Studio-Performance</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Prf, Rec, Stud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Intern-Practica-Clin</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Clin, Cop, Int. Std</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Independent Research</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Ind, Res, The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Hybrid Form</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Lec-Lab Project Crs</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Lec</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### INSIM Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Face-to-Face and Online Combo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>ITV remote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Online: Specific Time to Login</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OA</td>
<td>Online: No Specific Mtg Times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Schedule Code

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLN</td>
<td>Clinical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Cooperative Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICA</td>
<td>Informal Credit Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IND</td>
<td>Independent Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT</td>
<td>Internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAB</td>
<td>Laboratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LES</td>
<td>Lesson/Individual Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLC</td>
<td>Lecture Lab (in same section)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONL</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEO</td>
<td>Phys Educ Outdoor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLA</td>
<td>Placeholder/Tracking Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRF</td>
<td>Performance/Recital/Ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCT</td>
<td>Recitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RES</td>
<td>Independent Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEM</td>
<td>Seminar</td>
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<td>Student Teaching</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Studio</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE</td>
<td>Thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEB</td>
<td>Web</td>
</tr>
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</table>