

UNDERSTANDING CEQ & LTPF @ USQ

What is CEQ?

The Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) is an annual Australian survey covering the attitudes of graduates towards their programs and the skills they perceive they have acquired while undertaking tertiary education.

The CEQ was originally designed by Ramsden (1991) for the Australian Higher Education Performance Indicators Research Project. Evidence from the national trial showed the CEQ to be an effective instrument that can be used by universities to enhance learning and teaching performance.

It is collected as part of the Graduate Destinations Survey (GDS) which is Australia's official annual review of university graduates' employment and further study activities at a particular point in time. Graduates are usually surveyed four months after completing their programs and asked about their employment status, type of work gained and any further study undertaken.

Why is the CEQ important to USQ?

Selected data collected from the CEQ, GDS and the Higher Education Student Collection (Unistats) are used by the Government to reward universities for excellence and improvement in learning and teaching under an initiative called the Learning and Teaching Performance Funds (LTPF) which was established in 2006.

Since 2006, the LTPF has provided around \$220 million to reward universities for excellence in learning and teaching for undergraduate students. From 2009, the LTPF will reward *improvement* as well as excellence in learning and teaching. As at 2008, USQ has not received any funding from LTPF for its teaching and learning outcomes.

Other reasons why CEQ is important include the following:

- **University ranking**
The Good Universities Guide (Good Guides, 2004) uses OSI, GTS and GSS to give each university "The Educational Experience: Graduate Rating". The data, therefore, affect the public image of each university and student choices about university enrolment.
- **Program ranking**
The Good Universities Guide also provides a breakdown for each of the GTS, GSS and OSI ratings for programs, which are described as better (top quartile), average or worse (bottom quartile).
- **USQ strategic planning and reporting**
The data are used by USQ as key performance indicators and targets in Faculty and University reviews and strategic portfolio planning and reporting purposes.

Which CEQ data are used in the LTPF?

- **graduate satisfaction with generic skills:** the level of satisfaction with generic skills acquired among Bachelor graduates. The generic skills questions in the CEQ are:
 - Question 6: The course helped me develop my ability as a team member
 - Question 14: The course sharpened my analytic skills
 - Question 23: The course developed my problem-solving skills
 - Question 32: The course improved my skills in written communications
 - Question 42: As a result of my course, I feel confident about tackling unfamiliar problems
 - Question 43: My course helped me to develop the ability to plan my own work

- **graduate satisfaction with good teaching:** the level of satisfaction with good teaching among Bachelor graduates. The good teaching questions in the CEQ are:
 - Question 1: The staff put a lot of time into commenting on my work
 - Question 3: The teaching staff normally gave me helpful feedback on how I was going
 - Question 10: The teaching staff of this course motivated me to do my best work
 - Question 15: My lecturers were extremely good at explaining things
 - Question 16: The teaching staff worked hard to make their subjects interesting
 - Question 27: The staff made a real effort to understand difficulties I might be having with my work
- **graduate overall satisfaction:** the proportion of Bachelor graduates who were satisfied with the overall quality of their programs. The overall satisfaction question in the CEQ is:
 - Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this course

Which GDS data are used in the LTPF?

- **full-time employment:** the number of Australian graduates in full-time employment expressed as a proportion of all domestic bachelor graduates available for full-time work, and
- **part-time or full-time study:** the proportion of domestic bachelor graduates proceeding to further full-time or part-time study.

Which Unistats data are used in the LTPF?

Each year, the Government collects comprehensive information about students attending Australian higher education institutions. These data are sourced from USQ. The following data are used in the LTPF:

- **student progress rates:** the average proportion of successfully completed subject load among Bachelor students; and
- **student retention rates:** the proportion of commencing Bachelor students who either completed their course or were retained at the institution in the following year.

How can USQ enhance its CEQ/ LTPF performance?

- One of the main drawbacks of the CEQ used in the LTPF is the time lag in obtaining the feedback. For example if a student was graduating in 2007, s/he will be surveyed for the CEQ in 2008. This data would become available in 2009. Therefore, to provide USQ with timely feedback, the University's evaluation surveys are being revised to incorporate items that are aligned with the CEQ items. This will provide as current and as timely data as possible on student perceptions of courses, programs and teaching to the academic community.
- Discuss Faculty/ Discipline CEQ, GDS and student progress and retention rates in your Department/School and Faculty meetings.
- Maintain student representatives on teaching and learning committees may enhance student awareness.

Further information

For more information on the development of the current version of the CEQ, see McInnis, C., Griffin, P., James, R., & Coates, H. (2001). Development of the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ). from http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/highered/eippubs/eip01_1/01_1.pdf

References

Ramsden, P. (1991). A performance indicator of teaching quality in higher education: The course experience questionnaire. *Studies in Higher Education*, 16(2), 129-150.

Learning & Teaching Support
 T: +61 7 4631 1685
 E: academicdev@usq.edu.au
 W: www.usq.edu.au/ltsu/develop/

USQ UNIVERSITY OF
 SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND
 fulfilling lives