

MID-SEMESTER STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Introduction

SPS encourages best practice in teaching and to that end the School has formalized a process of mid-semester student evaluations to be administered in all degree and diploma classes by all full-time and part-time faculty. You can use the feedback from these mid-semester evaluations to enhance the classroom experience for you and your students. Although the school requires these mid-semester evaluations, there is no requirement or expectation that evaluations be submitted to or reviewed by the department/academic director, SPS, or NYU. These evaluations are meant to be confidential. However, you can elect to include the evaluations as part of your activity reports or promotion portfolios. If you need additional guidance contact the Center for Academic Excellence and Support for insights on how to understand and implement the data collected. (caes.sps@nyu.edu)

Purposes

Mid-semester student evaluations make it possible for you to gather feedback that can be used to enhance the classroom experience during the second half of the semester. More specifically, mid-semester evaluations can:

- Contribute to faculty members' understanding of their own teaching effectiveness.
- Identify areas for immediate improvement.
- Gauge student interest in class readings and other learning materials.
- Provide information about students' perception of what they are learning.
- Afford students the opportunity to alert faculty to challenges, confusion, or concerns.
- Give students a feedback system to suggest change during the semester.

Content

You, as a faculty member, have complete discretion in creating the content, format, and delivery of your own mid-semester evaluation instruments. Some sample questions and a variety of formats for those questions are provided below along with tips for online assessment and the traditional paper and pencil method of delivery. If you would like help constructing your questions contact the Center for Academic Excellence and Support (caes.sps@nyu.edu).

The usefulness of any survey is highly dependent on the quality of the questions. When creating questions, you should ask yourself why each question is relevant and what you will do with the information you gather. You should also consider whether you are willing to make suggested changes. For example, if students typically complain about the amount of reading in a class, but the faculty member believes the reading is essential to meeting the learning outcomes, questions about the amount of reading may be counterproductive. Rather than ask, "Is the amount of

reading too much, too little, or just right," you might ask, "Is there any additional support you need in order to complete reading assignments."

You must be careful not to ask questions that are inappropriate or could be construed as demeaning to students. For example, asking students if they feel that their classroom experience is compromised or enriched by the presence of international students could easily be perceived as instructor bias.

Questions that ask students for personal information are strictly prohibited. These types of questions may compromise anonymity and/or may be a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). If you are unsure about a question, you should contact the Center for Academic Excellence and Support (caes.sps@nyu.edu)

Delivery Methods and Question Formats

There is no doubt that the most important part of this process is the way you introduce the purpose of mid-semester evaluations to your class. Being positive and enthusiastic about the process is essential and can serve to reduce any anxiety students may have about thoughtfully and truthfully completing the evaluations. Presenting the mid-semester evaluation as another tool you can use to gauge student learning and identify specific challenges students may be facing can help students understand the value of this exercise.

Online Delivery System

If you elect to use an online delivery system, we highly recommend an NYU survey service called Qualtrics. Qualtrics is a tool for creating and administering web-based surveys for research, teaching, and administrative needs. It is available to NYU faculty, staff, and students as part of a university-wide license that is managed and supported by NYU Data Services. Qualtrics is available to all faculty members under the NYU Home "Research" tab. The process for creating and administering the survey is relatively easy and intuitive. Qualtrics training and support are available at the following link: <http://guides.nyu.edu/survey>. If you need tech support, you should contact the Center for Academic Excellence and Support (caes.sps@nyu.edu). The benefit of using this system is that it ensures anonymity of student responses. If you decide to use another online tool, you must be absolutely certain that the tool protects students' anonymity.

Paper and Pencil Evaluation System

If you elect a paper and pencil option for completion of mid-semester evaluations, you must use a process that ensures the anonymity of student responses. Any submission of surveys through NYU classes is not anonymous.

Sample Questions

A mix of qualitative and quantitative questions is recommended for the following reasons:

- Quantitative questions are faster to answer and easier to grasp the opinion distribution across survey respondents. Additionally, quantitative questions can be enhanced by offering students a chance to explain their choices in a subsequent “Please comment” section. (*Tip: Use a narrower Likert scale (3 – 5 levels maximum) for any classes with fewer than 30 students.*)
- Qualitative questions are longer to answer but may provide more detailed, specific information

The following questions are meant as suggestions and are separated into four types. You may design questionnaires that will provide the information you need for your particular class.

A. Questions to Measure Students Perceptions of Their Own Learning

1. Is there anything that needs to be further clarified or revisited in the course?
2. Is the classroom environment conducive to good learning? Why or why not?
3. What is the most valuable thing you have taken away from this course so far?
4. How much time do you devote to this class each week?
5. If there is one thing you want the faculty member to know, what would it be?

B. Questions about the Course

1. How consistent is the course with the syllabus?
 Not consistent at all
 Somewhat consistent
 Very consistent

Comments:

2. What do you expect to learn in this class during the second half of the semester?
3. Is the pace of this course...?
 Too slow
 Just right
 Too fast

Comments:

4. How challenging is this course?
 Not challenging at all
 Somewhat challenging

- Challenging
- Very challenging

Comments:

5. How satisfied are you with the materials provided? (Ex: readings, handouts, PowerPoints, etc.)

- Not satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Very satisfied

Comments:

C. Questions about Teaching Effectiveness and Expectations

1. What methods of teaching are helping you best to learn the material? (Ex: lecture, PowerPoints, case studies, etc.)

Comments:

2. How clear are the faculty member's performance expectations?

- Not clear at all
- Somewhat clear
- Very clear

Comments:

3. How clear is the assessment process?

- Not clear at all
- Somewhat clear
- Very clear

Comments:

How often is the faculty member...?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always	Not applicable
Prepared						
Organized						

Inclusive of everyone in the class						
Available						
Responsive						
Providing effective feedback						

D. Final Wrap-Up Question:

1. How satisfied are you with the overall course?
 - Not satisfied at all
 - Somewhat satisfied
 - Very satisfied

2. Would you recommend this course to other students? Why or why not?

Final Thoughts about Using the Mid Semester Classroom Evaluation

The information you gather from this assessment is meant to improve the quality of classroom experience. You may find it helpful to use the results as a basis for conversation with the students in the class about the way the semester is progressing. You may want to make a mid-semester correction to accommodate the class as long as any changes are still aligned with the original syllabus. In other words, the instrument is a tool and you have many options for using that tool. Just remember that the process needs to be confidential for both your students and you.