

# Collecting Student Feedback at the End of Term

Options for Instructors Seeking Feedback in Extraordinary Times

## Why?

You may be interested in learning about your students' experience of the course and of your teaching. Collecting student feedback gives students an opportunity to share their perspectives about the learning experience with you, which can be utilized to inform your reflection and decision-making about future teaching and course delivery. This can include what to change and keep the same in future offerings of the course, as well as the strengths your students perceive in your teaching along with possible areas for growth. While student feedback provides some information about how students experienced the course, a robust reflection on one's teaching should consider it alongside other evidence such as the context of the course, your own reflections, the context of the program(s) in which the course is situated, and peer observations and feedback.

## A recommended process:

1. Decide on the tool you will use to collect feedback. Note: Two sample question sets are printed on the next page which you are welcome to consider adopting, modifying, or integrating into a tool of your own design.
2. When you collect feedback, preface the exercise with students.
  - a. First, explain to students why you have decided to collect feedback, how feedback will be collected (possibly making note of anonymity efforts), and how their feedback will be used.
  - b. Second, request that students explain the 'whys' underlying their feedback to the best of their ability, as that will help your reflections on their feedback. Give them an example of this, such as: "a comment such as 'the assignments didn't work well' is not as actionable as 'the assignments were made more challenging because their deadlines conflicted with the midterms in my other required courses'. With the latter example, I know immediately what I can consider changing about this course's design, whereas with the former example I cannot tell what the problem is and thus cannot address it effectively".
3. After you collect student feedback, give yourself a few days to read and digest student comments. Pick out what comments seem to be most frequent among your students and focus on those. Consider what changes you can and cannot make to the course or your instruction.
4. You are also welcomed to set up a consultation with staff from the MacPherson Institute to discuss the feedback and identify possible steps you might take in the future.
5. When you teach the course again in the future, let the new students know what changes you made to the course based on past student perspectives. This reflection encourages students to share their feedback with you, as they will see that you take student feedback seriously and value student input. It may also encourage them to appreciate elements of the course differently, knowing that these elements have been shaped by previous student perspectives.

# Example feedback collection tools

## The MacPherson Institute's standard Course Refinement survey:

*Please answer the questions below. Thank you for your comments.*

1. What worked well in this course?
2. What worked less well in this course?
3. What specific changes would improve the effectiveness of the course?
4. Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of your instructor? (Circle one)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7                      8                      9                      10  
Very Poor            Poor                      Acceptable                      Good                      Very Good            Excellent

## Likert-scale questions, easier processing for large classes:

*Please answer the questions below. Thank you for your feedback.*

1. Overall, how would you rate the pace of learning in this course?  
(Way too slow) 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (Way too fast)
2. Overall, how much do you think you learned in this course?  
(Nothing) 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (A lot)
3. How would you rate the usefulness of the textbook in helping you learn?  
(Not at all useful) 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (Very useful)
4. Were the course syllabus and reading assignments clear?  
(Not at all clear) 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (Very clear)
5. Did you find my teaching-style suitable for this class?  
(Not at all suitable) 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (Very suitable)
6. Did I encourage questions, involvement and debate?  
(Not at all encouraging) 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (Very encouraging)
7. Did I answer questions effectively?  
(Not at all effectively) 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (Very effectively)
8. Please suggest actions I could take to enhance future student learning in this course. Consider the above criteria that you rated a 3 or lower, or anything else that comes to mind.