

# Feedback Survey Policy

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Feedback Survey Policy (the policy) establishes the Student Feedback Survey as the official tool for collecting student feedback and monitoring coursework subject and teaching quality at UTS. It also provides guidance and advice on surveying short forms of learning participants. This policy is supported by the [Feedback Survey Procedures](#) (the procedures).

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to:

- staff and affiliates (hereafter staff) who are responsible for administering and delivering undergraduate and postgraduate coursework subjects and short forms of learning, both onshore and offshore, across all subject activities and all delivery modes
- the Student Feedback Survey (SFS) and Short Forms of Learning Feedback Survey (SFL-FS), and
- students and short forms of learning participants (hereafter collectively respondents).

- 2.2 This policy does not apply to:

- other forms of student or participant feedback or surveys (further information on additional and supplementary surveys is available at [Your feedback counts](#) and [Student feedback and surveys](#) (Staff Connect)), and
- student complaints (further information on how to identify, make and resolve a student complaint is available in the [Student Complaints Policy](#)).

## 3. Principles

- 3.1 The SFS and SFL-FS (collectively surveys) are online surveys that:

- offer students and short forms of learning participants an opportunity to provide academic staff, faculty and university management with constructive feedback, and
- support UTS's positive teaching and learning experience by recognising good teaching practice and identifying areas for further improvement.

- 3.2 All undergraduate and postgraduate coursework subjects (hereafter coursework subjects) must be surveyed via the SFS.

- 3.3 Short forms of learning must also be surveyed. The SFL-FS may be used for this purpose as outlined in this policy and the procedures.

- 3.4 For coursework students, both early and late-session feedback are requested to allow changes to subjects or teaching practice for the benefit of both current and future students.
- 3.5 Survey reports will be provided to four staff audiences:
- academic staff for each coursework subject
  - faculty management
  - appropriate professional staff, as approved by the associate dean (teaching and learning), and
  - the senior executive.
- 3.6 In addition to the four staff audiences, survey reports may be provided to the New Business Unit, the Enterprise Learning Unit and to other audiences in line with this policy and [the procedures](#).
- 3.7 UTS strongly encourages communicating survey outcomes (in line with this policy) to both staff and, where relevant, students and responding to these outcomes as appropriate to ensure the surveys lead to improvements in the learning experience (that is 'closing the loop').
- 3.8 Aggregated survey results form part of UTS's core data set for tracking implementation of the [UTS 2027 strategy](#). UTS will continue to review and reassess its feedback collection methods in response to developments under the strategic initiatives 'new ways of working', 'lifetime learning' and 'personal learning experience'.

## 4. Policy statements

- 4.1 All coursework students will be invited to participate in the SFS. Short forms of learning participants will be invited to participate in the SFL-FS. While participation is not mandatory, faculties should monitor response rates and encourage participation to help improve the robustness of the feedback. No student or participant should be discouraged from participating.
- 4.2 The SFS aims to:
- continually improve the student learning experience in line with the [UTS 2027 strategy](#)
  - support professional development, performance reviews, probation and/or promotion processes for individual academic staff in line with the requirements of the Academic Staff Agreement (available at [Enterprise agreements](#))
  - support course performance reporting by tracking student perceptions of UTS, its faculties, courses and subjects
  - inform internal benchmarking exercises and learning analytics research
  - meet national standards as set out in the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cwlt) (specifically, [section 5.3 Monitoring, review and improvement](#)), and
  - comply with UTS's regulatory requirements to manage academic risk by collecting, analysing and using student feedback to maintain quality.

4.3 The SFL-FS supports the educational quality, continuous improvement of participant learning experience, and market analysis. The SFL-FS may have additional aims to the SFS.

### **Survey requirements and timing**

4.4 Coursework students must be asked to complete the SFS at least annually and preferably in each major teaching session. The SFS is made up of both an early and a late session survey as follows.

- The early-session survey is undertaken in the first half of the session for students to provide formative feedback on a subject and to give academic staff enough time during the remainder of the session to address any issues of concern. This survey incorporates questions sponsored by the Senior Executive. Subjects delivered on a shorter teaching calendar, such as Online Program Management (OPM), do not use the early-session survey.
- The late-session survey is undertaken towards the end of the session for students to provide summative feedback on all aspects of a subject (its strengths and its weaknesses) and its teaching. This is reviewed and, where possible, feedback is applied to future offerings. The late-session survey incorporates additional questions from the learning modes or the SFS items as nominated by the subject coordinator and/or teaching staff.

4.5 The late-session survey includes feedback on teaching. This must take place as follows.

- Academic staff on probation must have all subjects in which they have major teaching duties in each session surveyed and provide copies of the results as part of the probation process.
- All other academic staff must have at least one of their subject activities surveyed for each subject for each session. Academic staff may undertake further surveying of their teaching as agreed with their academic supervisor.

4.6 The timing and duration of the early and late session surveys are uniformly set for all faculties by the Chief Data Officer (CDO). Performance Evaluation in the Data Analytics and Insights Unit (Performance Evaluation) under the CDO, in consultation with the faculties, coordinates, distributes, collects and analyses the SFS (refer [the procedures](#)).

4.7 For short forms of learning participants, the SFL-FS may be used in line with [the procedures](#) where more appropriate.

4.8 The SFL-FS is undertaken in a manner appropriate to the course content, type and duration in line with [the procedures](#). The timing of each SFL-FS is aligned with the course delivery dates. Participants take the SFL-FS with questions tailored to address short form of learning delivery.

4.9 Amendments and changes to core SFS or SFL-FS questions are approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students).

## Reporting and access

- 4.10 Academic staff must use survey results in good conscience with academic integrity front of mind. Where results are used to influence marking (either positively or negatively), or with any other negative intention, this is considered a breach of this policy and the [Code of Conduct](#).
- 4.11 Performance Evaluation will provide faculty reports on subject and teaching data to faculty deans, deputy deans (where applicable) and associate deans (teaching and learning) at the end of each session.
- 4.12 Faculty deans and associate deans (teaching and learning) act as data stewards (refer [Data Governance Policy](#)) and must approve which specific staff members from the four audience groups (for example individual heads of school/discipline/program, SFL coordinators, subject coordinators and academic supervisors) will receive their faculty-level survey results in line with the procedures. It is the responsibility of the associate dean (teaching and learning) to distribute these reports to the appropriate identified staff members.
- 4.13 The deans or associate deans (teaching and learning), as data stewards (in consultation with the Enterprise Learning Unit as appropriate), approve the distribution of SFL-FS reports beyond the four staff audiences as part of an enterprise learning contract, however survey results and teaching data will not be shared with the enterprise partner.
- 4.14 Performance Evaluation will provide SFS reports, summaries and trend analysis of university-level data to the Provost, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students), the CDO and the chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee of Academic Board.
- 4.15 Summaries and analysis are normally reported to and discussed at the Teaching and Learning Committee with outcomes provided to Academic Board. SFL-FS data will also be provided by the New Business Unit to the Short Forms of Learning Committee (and the Enterprise Learning Committee as appropriate).
- 4.16 SFS results and reports will also be used:
- by Performance Evaluation to support UTS's quality management processes including, but not limited to, course and subject performance reporting, student pathway and cohort tracking and other authorised quality management purposes
  - by Performance Evaluation, or other UTS staff or contracted service providers authorised by the CDO to carry out further trend analysis (for example into variations in SFS results across student entry pathways and cohorts and/or to provide data for evaluation/quality assurance and teaching and learning and research approved in line with the [Research Policy](#)). No individual respondent will be identified in any reports related to or arising from these analyses.
- 4.17 Only aggregated survey reports from the late-session SFS will be reported to students. This will take place only after release to all staff. Teaching staff may withhold reporting of aggregated survey reports from students only in exceptional circumstances as approved by the CDO.

- 4.18 Survey results and reports at the university, faculty or field of education level, but not subject level, may be given to other Australian higher education institutions for the purpose of joint benchmarking projects.
- 4.19 Survey results and reports may have additional uses or be reported publicly (for example UTS subsidiaries, external organisations, partner institutions, regulatory bodies for accreditation, improvement, development or compliance purposes) (refer [Recordkeeping, privacy and confidentiality](#)).
- 4.20 The CDO may authorise transfer of data from the SFS system to other UTS systems and between student administration systems generally. Any other exceptional access to survey data must be approved by the dean and/or associate dean (teaching and learning) (as the data steward) in line with the [Data Governance Policy](#).

### **Recordkeeping, privacy and confidentiality**

- 4.21 The collection of staff, student and participant personal information, other information and analysis of data under this policy or the procedures is subject to the provisions of the [Privacy Policy](#). A privacy notice must be included as part of the invitations to undertake a SFS (in line with the Privacy Management Plan, available at [Privacy regulations](#)).
- 4.22 UTS (or any contracted service provider operating with or on behalf of UTS) must preserve student and participant confidentiality in order to comply with privacy legislation, university policy and to encourage honest and constructive feedback. Exceptions to these confidentiality requirements may apply in cases where it is identified that a student has:
- breached the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#) or the [Student Rules](#) by making malicious comments about staff or other students in their open-ended comments, or
  - made statements that reveal that they, or another person, may be at risk either physically or mentally.
- 4.23 The associate dean (teaching and learning) or Director, New Business must be informed of these exceptions so as to decide whether to identify the individual. UTS has the authority to identify the individual in question and pursue appropriate action as an authorised exemption for the use of personal information under the [Privacy Policy](#) and Privacy Management Plan (available at [Privacy regulations](#)). Where identification is required, the associate dean (teaching and learning) must notify Performance Evaluation to authorise appropriate action.
- 4.24 With the permission of the associate dean (teaching and learning), staff members may disclose results for the subjects they have taught to other parties, or use summary data in analytical and scholarly studies that may be published, provided that the anonymity of individuals is maintained. Disclosure should be managed in line with this policy (refer [Reporting and access](#)), the [Privacy Policy](#), [Data Governance Policy](#) and [Research Policy](#).

- 4.25 All personal information entered into the SFS system must be stored securely, not kept longer than necessary, and protected from loss, unauthorised access, use or disclosure in accordance with the [Records Management Policy](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).
- 4.26 Any data resulting from the survey process (including responses, summaries and reports) must be managed in line with the [Records Management Policy](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).
- 4.27 To protect the anonymity of respondents and encourage constructive feedback of each subject/short form of learning survey, results with fewer than five responses will not be published. These individual reports will:
- not be made available to teaching staff (or respondents) through their survey account or via other means
  - not form part of Performance Evaluation's faculty reports, and
  - be used in the aggregated subject and faculty summaries.

### **Policy exemptions**

- 4.28 In exceptional circumstances, coursework subjects may be granted exemption for one session in accordance with the Student feedback and surveys: SFS Exemption Protocol (available at [Student feedback and surveys](#) (Staff Connect)) as approved by the associate dean (teaching and learning). This exemption will be granted only where the associate dean (teaching and learning) considers that an alternative evaluation is preferable to the SFS, such as in the case of a new innovative pilot subject.
- 4.29 Alternative evaluations must:
- be agreed to by the subject coordinator
  - include at least one mechanism for collecting feedback from students, and
  - the early-session SFS must be used in all subsequent offerings of the subject.
- 4.30 Coursework subjects that do not follow the typical coursework session format (for example distance mode and block subjects and OPM subjects) may deviate from the normal survey periods and will be administered based on the duration and/or end date of the session. This must be approved by the CDO.
- 4.31 In exceptional circumstances, the CDO may grant a request for a paper-based SFS. A poor response rate in a prior online survey is not a valid reason for paper-based distribution. The provisions outlined in this policy and the procedures apply for paper-based surveys where approved. Paper-based SFL-FS are not permitted.
- 4.32 The CDO may approve a request for translation of the SFS. The Director, New Business may approve this request for SFL-FS. Offshore teaching and learning activities delivered in a language other than English should build survey translation costs into their budget as part of the approval process.

### **Policy breaches and complaints**

- 4.33 It is a breach of the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#), [Student Rules](#) and [UTS Open terms and conditions](#) to make offensive or malicious comments about UTS staff members, course facilitators or other students.

- 4.34 UTS staff receiving survey results or reports are required to treat the reports in strict confidence. Any unauthorised attempt to identify a respondent for any purpose may constitute a breach of this policy and the [Privacy Policy](#).
- 4.35 Breaches of this policy by staff, including misuse of survey results or reports, are managed in line with the [Code of Conduct](#), [Privacy Policy](#) and/or [Enterprise agreement](#) as appropriate.
- 4.36 Complaints related to the SFS or SFL-FS should be managed in line with the [Student Complaints Policy](#) or [Staff Complaints Policy](#) as appropriate.

## 5. Policy ownership and support

- 5.1 **Policy owners:** This policy is jointly owned by the Chief Data Officer (CDO) and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students).

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) and CDO are responsible for policy enforcement and compliance, ensuring its principles and statements are observed and for the approval of any university level procedures to implement this policy.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) is responsible for approving changes to core survey items.

The CDO is responsible for approving survey systems, policy exceptions and Performance Evaluation protocols to support implementation of this policy.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise) is responsible for approving any additions to the core survey questions for enterprise learning within the constraints of the system, and/or the use of alternative survey methods to incorporate market research requirements.

- 5.2 **Policy contacts:** The Head of Performance Evaluation in the Data Analytics and Insights Unit is responsible for the implementation of this policy. The survey coordinator acts as a primary point of contact for advice on fulfilling its provisions.

Deans and associate deans (teaching and learning) act as data stewards and are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy at the faculty or academic unit level and coordinating the survey, analysis and results and communicating with students.

Director, New Business is responsible for approvals in line with this policy in relation to short forms of learning and short forms of learning participants.

- 5.3 **Others:**

The Performance Evaluation in the Data Analytics and Insights Unit under the CDO is responsible for coordinating the distribution and collection of the SFS for coursework subjects and providing the analysis and results and/or reports as specified in this policy. Performance Evaluation also provides guidance, training and advice to the faculty SFS administrators.

The Institute for Interactive Media and Learning is responsible for providing support to and resources for teaching staff to assist them in interpreting survey results and to improving teaching practice.

Faculty SFS administrators are responsible for the faculty level administration and coordination of the SFS and for the distribution and collection of the SFS for short forms of learning. Faculties must identify SFS administrators to Performance Evaluation.

Academic staff are responsible for implementing this policy for their specific subject activities.

## 6. Definitions

The following definitions apply for this policy and all associated procedures. These are in addition to the definitions outlined in [Schedule 1, Student Rules](#).

**Affiliate** is defined in the [Code of Conduct](#).

**Academic staff** means all academic staff including subject coordinators, teaching staff and casual academic staff.

**Academic supervisor** means relevant supervisors of academic staff (for example for workplanning, work support and performance management). This can include subject coordinators, course coordinators, heads of academic units, professors or associate professors, associate deans (teaching and learning), deputy deans and deans.

**Administration data** means the data collected from multiple university systems (for example CASS, MSA+ and NEO) to form the SFS order sheet.

**Closing the loop** means reporting to staff and respondents (as appropriate) the survey results and/or reports and/or any subsequent actions as part of the UTS quality management cycle.

**Core survey questions** means the standard questions used in all instances of the SFS that allow for comparability across surveys.

**Data steward** is defined in the [Data Governance Policy](#).

**De-identified** means the process used to prevent someone's identity from being revealed. Respondents may choose to self-identify separately from the university's de-identification process.

**Enterprise learning** is defined in the [Short Forms of Learning Policy](#).

**Enterprise partner** is defined in the [Short Forms of Learning Policy](#).

**SFS faculty administrator** means UTS staff members in faculties and other academic units assigned responsibility for supporting local administration of the SFS.

**Malicious comment** means comments made by students in their SFS responses that are abusive, offensive, vilifying, harassing, discriminatory or inappropriate. This is defined as



misconduct in [section 16.2.1\(12\) and \(20\), Student Rules](#) and the [Equity, Inclusion and Respect Policy](#).

**Major teaching session** means the UTS Autumn, Spring and Summer sessions (see also [Academic year dates](#)).

**Participant** is defined in the [Short Forms of Learning Policy](#).

**Personal information** is defined in the [Privacy Policy](#).

**Short forms of learning** are defined in the [Short Forms of Learning Policy](#).

**Student Feedback Survey (SFS)** means the standardised online survey used by UTS to obtain student feedback and comments on subjects and teaching. The SFS incorporates two questionnaires, an early-session survey and late-session survey.

- The early-session survey focuses on addressing issues of immediate concern and improving the learning experience of the current cohort.
- The late-session survey looks at student engagement and learning across the whole of the session, including teaching, and comprises core survey questions, learning mode items and other optional items. Refer [Student Feedback Survey](#).

**Subject activities** are the physical forms of the class within a subject in which students are enrolled, for example tutorials, lectures, practicums, professional placements, internships and laboratories.

**Survey reports** mean the aggregated data pulled from the survey results to provide specific reports on trends, summaries and other relevant data groupings. These summaries may include de-identified comments and/or thematic analysis of responses.

**Survey results** (also **survey data**) means the responses provided by individual respondents in direct response to a survey instance prior to analysis.

**Teaching data** means the results that SFS provides about students' perception of individual teaching staff. Because of its sensitivity, access to this data must be restricted in line with this policy.

**University-level data** means aggregated data pulled from all reports to provide university-level trends and summaries.

## 7. Approval information

<a href="#">Policy contact</a>	Head of Performance Evaluation, Data Analytics and Insights Unit
<a href="#">Approval authority</a>	Vice-Chancellor
<a href="#">Review date</a>	2024
<a href="#">File number</a>	UR21/1060
<a href="#">Superseded documents</a>	Student Feedback Survey Vice-Chancellor's Directive 2009 (UR 06/479)

## Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
1.0	Vice-Chancellor	25/08/2021	14/10/2021	New policy.
1.1	Deputy Director, Corporate Governance (Delegation 3.14.2)	22/02/2022	22/02/2022	Minor change to reflect portfolio realignment under Fit for 2027 project.
1.2	Director, Governance Support Unit (Delegation 3.14.1)	25/07/2022	25/07/2022	Office and role title changes to reflect the Office of Quality Assurance move and new title of Performance Evaluation in the Data Analytics Unit.

## References

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Data Governance Policy](#)

[Enterprise agreements](#)

[Feedback Survey Procedures](#)

[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021 \(Cwlth\)](#)

Privacy Management Plan, available at [Privacy regulations](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Research Policy](#)

[Short Forms of Learning Policy](#)

[Student Feedback Survey](#)

[Student feedback and surveys](#) (Staff Connect)

[Student Rules: section 16.2.1\(12\) and \(20\)](#)

[Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#)

[UTS Open terms and conditions](#)