

11. EVALUATING TEACHING AND LEARNING AT CURTIN

eVALUate is Curtin's online system for gathering and reporting students' perceptions of their learning experiences and for gathering feedback from employers and graduates for the purpose of Comprehensive Course Review. Students can give feedback about units and teaching through:

- **eVALUate** unit survey which asks students their perceptions of what helps and hinders their achievement of unit learning outcomes, their motivation and engagement, and their overall satisfaction with the unit.
- **eVALUate** teaching survey which asks students to give feedback to individual teachers on their teaching effectiveness.

Staff can access all relevant functions in **eVALUate** using a single sign-on via Staff OASIS or via the **eVALUate** website at www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/. This personalised summary page includes:

- A **teaching evaluation section** where staff can register for a teaching survey, view all their teaching evaluation reports and view the number of student respondents to their teaching survey at any time during an active **eVALUate** event.
- A **unit evaluation section** where staff can withdraw publication of their Unit Summary Report prior to an event or at any stage thereafter, view a record of whether their past Unit Summary Reports are published, publish and add a response to Unit Summary Reports, view Full Unit Reports and view unit response rates at any time during an active **eVALUate** event.
- The **other reports section** is where staff can directly access the Aggregated University Reports. In this section, Heads of Schools can access their Course Summary Reports and Owing Organisation Reports.

Events in 2010

The **eVALUate** unit survey is automatically available for all undergraduate and postgraduate coursework units at all of Curtin's Australian and at many offshore campuses and partnerships such as Malaysia, Mauritius, Singapore and Hong Kong. In 2010, there will be six **eVALUate** events that include units in Curtin's 'major' study periods (e.g. Semesters 1 and 2, Trimesters 1, 2 and 3) and many 'minor' study periods (e.g. Special Study Periods, OLA Study Periods, Trimester 1A). These events are: Summer School, Semester 1, Semester 2, Trimester 1, Trimester 2 and Trimester 3 (special event in 2010). For more information, see www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/info/dates.cfm.

The eVALUate unit survey has eleven quantitative and two qualitative items (as shown in Figure 14). Eleven quantitative items ask students to report their level agreement with statements about what helps their achievement of unit learning outcomes (items 1 to 7), their motivation and engagement in learning (items 8 to 10) and their overall satisfaction (item 11). Each quantitative item is accompanied by a 'help text'. Students may indicate Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or Unable to Judge for each item.

Figure 14 eVALUate Unit Survey Items

<p>Quantitative items seek students' level of agreement with 11 items:</p>	
1.	<p>The learning outcomes in this unit are clearly identified. <i>The learning outcomes are what you are expected to know, understand or be able to do in order to be successful in this unit.</i></p>
2.	<p>The learning experiences in this unit help me to achieve the learning outcomes. <i>The learning experiences could include: face-to-face lectures, tutorials, laboratories, clinical practicums, fieldwork, directed learning tasks, and online and distance education experiences.</i></p>
3.	<p>The learning resources in this unit help me to achieve the learning outcomes. <i>Learning resources could include print, multimedia and online study materials, and equipment available in lectures, laboratories, clinics or studios.</i></p>
4.	<p>The assessment tasks in this unit evaluate my achievement of the learning outcomes. <i>Assessment tasks are those which are rewarded by marks, grades or feedback. Assessment tasks directly assess your achievement of the learning outcomes.</i></p>
5.	<p>Feedback on my work in this unit helps me to achieve the learning outcomes. <i>Feedback includes written or verbal comments on your work.</i></p>
6.	<p>The workload in this unit is appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes. <i>Workload includes class attendance, reading, researching, group activities and assessment tasks.</i></p>
7.	<p>The quality of teaching in this unit helps me to achieve the learning outcomes. <i>Quality teaching occurs when knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching staff interact positively with students in well-organised teaching and learning experiences.</i></p>
8.	<p>I am motivated to achieve the learning outcomes in this unit. <i>Being motivated means having the desire or drive to learn, to complete tasks and to willingly strive for goals.</i></p>
9.	<p>I make best use of the learning experiences in this unit. <i>I prepare for and follow up on the learning experiences offered in this unit.</i></p>
10.	<p>I think about how I can learn more effectively in this unit. <i>I take time to think about how I can learn more effectively.</i></p>
11.	<p>Overall, I am satisfied with this unit. <i>Overall, this unit provides a quality learning experience.</i></p>
<p>Qualitative items invite students to make constructive comments (limit of 600 characters):</p>	
12.	<p>What are the most helpful aspects of this unit?</p>
13.	<p>How do you think this unit might be improved?</p>

eVALUate unit survey results are reported online at www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/reports/ immediately after Boards of Examiners. Refer to Figure 15 for a list of unit survey reports. See www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/info/dates.cfm for report release dates.

Figure 15 eVALUate Unit Survey Reports

Report	What's in that report?
eVALUate Full Unit Report (FUR) For Unit Coordinator and Head of School	Percentage agreement (or otherwise) with the quantitative items; all student responses to the qualitative items.
eVALUate Unit Summary Report (USR) For all staff and students (unless unpublished by Unit Coordinator)	Percentage agreement, disagreement and unable to judge with the quantitative items; and the Unit Coordinator's (optional) response.
eVALUate Course Summary Report (CSR) For Head of School, and Dean of Teaching and Learning	Percentage agreement with the quantitative items for each unit in which students in that course are enrolled.
eVALUate Owning Organisation Unit Summary Report (OOUR) For Head of School	Percentage agreement with the quantitative items for each unit owned and offered by the school. Trend data is also available online

Viewing Full Unit Reports: Full Unit Reports are viewable in several formats (see Figure 16) by location, attendance mode and by response type (quantitative results can be downloaded separately so that Unit Coordinators can easily share the report with other staff in the unit). To access reports, see www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/reports/. For Guidelines for interpreting the Full Unit Report see: www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/reports/unit_guidelines.cfm

Figure 16 eVALUate Full Unit Reports can be viewed in various formats



The screenshot shows the eVALUate web interface. At the top left is the Curtin University of Technology logo. The main header includes 'eVALUate' and navigation links for 'About eVALUate', 'Reports', 'Improving results', 'Teaching Evaluation', and 'Administration'. A sidebar on the left lists categories: 'For the general public', 'For staff and students' (with sub-links for Unit, Course, Owing Organisation, and Teaching Reports), and 'For unit coordinators' (with sub-links for Guidelines, Help, and Contact Us). The main content area displays 'eVALUate Full Unit Report for Agribusiness Risk and Resource Management 202 (303252) 2006 Semester 2'. Below this, it states 'As the designated unit coordinator, you can manage / publish the: **Unit Summary Report (USR)**'. Under the heading 'Options', there are two main sections: 'Aggregation' with radio buttons for 'Aggregated results (all results combined in one report)', 'Reports for each location consecutively', and 'Reports by attendance mode (internal/external)'; and 'Response Types' with radio buttons for 'Quantitative and Qualitative', 'Quantitative only', and 'Qualitative only'. A 'View Full Unit Report' button is located at the bottom of the options section. A 'Log out' button with the user ID '178216K' is visible in the sidebar.

Improving units

Unit Coordinators play a key role in using the feedback to improve units by reviewing reports and gleaning what students see as the strengths and weaknesses in the unit. Look for trends rather than focusing on isolated comments. Reflect on what can be done to maintain the strengths and address weaknesses. Unit coordinators should share the results with other staff teaching in the unit and have the team suggest how strengths can be maintained and weaknesses addressed. For resources to improve practice see, www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/improving/



Unit Coordinators are expected to share quantitative unit results with their unit teaching staff. Sharing students' comments is subject to strict constraints as follows: comments which are general in nature (that is, in which staff are not identifiable) may be shared with all staff teaching in the unit. However, comments which could identify staff can be shared only with the identifiable staff member. **Comments in which staff are identifiable are confidential to that staff member (and to those charged with the coordination and management of the unit, namely the Unit Coordinator and the Head of Owing Organisational Unit).** Student feedback which is considered offensive or defamatory (e.g. racist, sexist, personal or abusive, or allegations of criminal activity) may NOT be passed on to any staff member, or any student, by any staff member. Curtin staff must share eVALUate results in the spirit of Curtin's Guiding Ethical Principles and show due care for colleagues. Misuse of data from eVALUate reports will be dealt with according to Clause 36 of the Certified Agreement on Disciplinary and Unsatisfactory Performance Procedures: Misconduct. (If you suspect that data from eVALUate reports have been shared inappropriately, report the matter directly to your supervisor in the first instance, or if this is not appropriate, your Pro-Vice Chancellor.)

Course Summary Reports: Heads of School can access Course Summary Reports and share them with their Dean of Teaching and Learning, Course Coordinator, and those involved in course review. The Course Summary Report is a spreadsheet showing percentage agreement for the 11 quantitative items for all the units in which students in a given course are currently enrolled. The Course Summary Report (similar to Figure 17) indicates areas of strength and areas needing development: in general, where response rates and unit sizes are robust, percentage agreement of 80% or above is very good, 60-79% may require consideration, and anything below 60% is cause for further investigation.

Figure 17 Sample eVALUate Course Summary Report

eVALUate Course Summary Report Course Bachelor of XYZ Evaluation period: Semester 1, 2010														
	1. Learning outcomes	2. Experiences	3. Resources	4. Assessment	5. Feedback	6. Workload	7. Teaching	8. Motivated	9. Use of experiences	10. Effective learning	11. Overall satisfaction	Enrolment	Responses	Response rate
Unit 1	88	94	94	94	88	100	94	76	76	71	88	34	17	50

Owning Organisational Unit Summary Reports: Heads of School can access Owning Organisational Unit Summary Reports which are spreadsheets showing percentage agreement for the 11 quantitative items for all of the units offered by an owning area (a school or department) (see Figure 18). The Owning Organisation Summary Report indicates areas of strength and areas needing development: in general, where response rates and unit sizes are robust, percentage agreement of 80% or above is very good, 60-79% may require consideration, and anything below 60% is cause for further investigation.

Figure 18 Sample eVALUate Owning Organisation Summary Report

eVALUate Owning Organisational Unit Summary Reports Owning Organisation: School of XYZ Evaluation period: Semester 1, 2010														
	1. Learning outcomes	2. Experiences	3. Resources	4. Assessment	5. Feedback	6. Workload	7. Teaching	8. Motivated	9. Use of experiences	10. Effective learning	11. Overall satisfaction	Enrolment	Responses	Response rate
Unit 1	88	94	94	94	88	100	94	76	76	71	88	34	17	50

University-wide results are published in the **eVALUate** University Aggregated Report; see www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/reports/.

Closing the feedback loop: acknowledging student feedback

The literature in the field of student evaluation of teaching and learning states repeatedly that the biggest disincentive for student participation in evaluation systems is that they never see any changes in response to their feedback. Closing the feedback loop by being responsive to student feedback and communicating that to students is universally considered to be excellent practice in teaching and learning, and therefore strongly encouraged at Curtin.

Feedback using the Unit Summary Report: Unit coordinators can share the unit results with students using the Unit Summary Report online (see www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/reports/). This report shows only the percentage agreement, percentage disagreement and percentage unable to judge with the quantitative items: no student comments are visible. Unit coordinators can add a response to students in this report. Figure 19 illustrates the steps for adding a unit coordinator's response to an **eVALUate** Unit Summary Report (also known as managing Unit Summary Report). This is an excellent way to acknowledge student feedback and let students know how their feedback will be used to improve the unit.

Figure 19 How to add unit coordinator's response to eVALUate Unit Summary Report

Curtin Home > eVALUate > Staff reports > My eVALUate Summary

Manage Unit Summary Report for

Preview of Unit Summary Report

eVALUate Unit Summary Report
Evaluation period: 2008 Semester 1

Unit Name: <input type="text" value="Unit name"/>	Responses(n): <input type="text" value="0"/>
Unit Number: <input type="text" value="Unit number"/>	Enrolment(N): <input type="text" value="0"/>
	Response Rate: <input type="text" value="0"/>

eVALUate quantitative items	Percentage Agreement	Percentage Disagreement	Percentage Unable to Judge
1. The learning outcomes in this unit are clearly identified.	100	0	0
2. The learning experiences in this unit help me to achieve the learning outcomes.	100	0	0
3. The learning resources in this unit help me to achieve the learning outcomes.	100	0	0
4. The assessment tasks in this unit evaluate my achievement of the learning outcomes.	100	0	0
5. Feedback on my work in this unit helps me to achieve the learning outcomes.	100	0	0
6. The workload in this unit is appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes.	100	0	0
7. The quality of teaching in this unit helps me to achieve the learning outcomes.	100	0	0
8. I am motivated to achieve the learning outcomes in this unit.	100	0	0
9. I make best use of the learning experiences in this unit.	100	0	0
10. I think about how I can learn more effectively in this unit.	100	0	0
11. Overall, I am satisfied with this unit.	100	0	0

Unit Coordinator's Response:

Comments will be shown here

In the following sample **eVALUate** Unit Summary Report (Figure 20) the unit coordinator has included a response to acknowledge student feedback and outline planned improvements to the unit.

Figure 20 Sample eVALUate Unit Summary Report

eVALUate Unit Summary Report Evaluation period: 2008 Semester 2			
Unit Name: Animal Science 100 Unit Number: 00001		Responses(n): 385 Enrolment(N): 1060 Response Rate: 36 %	
eVALUate quantitative items	Percentage Agreement	Percentage Disagreement	Percentage Unable to Judge
1. The learning outcomes in this unit are clearly identified.	90	10	0
2. The learning experiences in this unit help me to achieve the learning outcomes.	83	15	2
3. The learning resources in this unit help me to achieve the learning outcomes.	83	14	3
4. The assessment tasks in this unit evaluate my achievement of the learning outcomes.	80	18	2
5. Feedback on my work in this unit helps me to achieve the learning outcomes.	76	20	4
6. The workload in this unit is appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes.	80	18	2
7. The quality of teaching in this unit helps me to achieve the learning outcomes.	83	15	2
8. I am motivated to achieve the learning outcomes in this unit.	76	21	3
9. I make best use of the learning experiences in this unit.	77	20	3
10. I think about how I can learn more effectively in this unit.	80	18	2
11. Overall, I am satisfied with this unit.	78	20	2
Unit coordinator's response: (maximum of 2000 characters)			
Dear students, many thanks for your encouraging feedback. I really appreciate that so many of you (from different locations) took the time out to provide valuable feedback on the unit. Overall students were very positive in their feedback. Issues with learning resources have been identified and will be addressed through the purchase of new library resources for next semester which will be available online to all locations via blackboard and the library. Students were dissatisfied with the time of the class at the Bentley campus. Timetabling is not controlled by Schools however this feedback has been given to the Head of School. The suggested improvements in terms of standardising the tutorial activities across all locations and amending the marking guidelines and assessment response sheets to provide more clarity on what is expected from students have been built into the unit for the coming semesters. Best wishes for the future.			

Feedback through the Unit Outline: Include a section in your unit outline which acknowledges and reports a summary of previous student feedback through **eVALUate**, and inform students as to how the unit has been changed as a result of that feedback (see Figure 21) this text is available from the Unit Outline template at www.otl.curtin.edu.au/downloads/index.html.

Figure 21 Feedback on feedback: responding to eVALUate in the unit outline

We welcome your feedback as one way to keep improving this unit. Later this semester, you will be encouraged to give unit feedback through **eVALUate**, Curtin's online student feedback system (see www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au). Recent changes to this unit in response to student feedback through **eVALUate** include:(*Insert change here as applicable*)

The eVALUate teaching survey

The eVALUate teaching survey asks students to report on aspects of teaching performance. It has seven quantitative and two qualitative items (see Figure 22). Each quantitative item is accompanied by a 'help text' (shown in italics below). Students may indicate Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or Unable to Judge for each item.

Figure 22 eVALUate Teaching Survey items

Quantitative items seek students' level of agreement with 9 items:

[The teacher's name appears here]:

1. Appears knowledgeable in this subject area

The teacher seems to have a good understanding of the subject.

2. Is enthusiastic in teaching this unit

The teacher makes the subject interesting and conveys his or her enthusiasm for the subject.

3. Is well organised

The teacher has material prepared on time, is punctual and structures activities in ways that help learning.

4. Communicates clearly

The teacher is easy to understand in face-to-face, online, written and other formats and explains concepts clearly.

5. Is approachable

The teacher encourages students to ask questions and seek help.

6. Provides useful feedback

The teacher provides timely and helpful feedback so you can learn.

7. Is an effective teacher.

Overall, this teacher helps you to learn.

Qualitative items invite students to make constructive comments (limit of 600 characters):

8. Please comment on [this teacher]'s teaching strengths.

9. Please comment on how you think [this teacher] might improve the teaching and learning in this unit.



The eVALUate teaching survey is not automatic: it must be requested online by a staff member. Anyone who teaches in a full-time or sessional capacity at any of Curtin's Australian or Sarawak campuses may request a teaching evaluation within a particular unit. Teaching staff are notified by email when teaching evaluation requests open (usually mid-semester). During that period, teachers can add or withdraw requests for teaching surveys within any coursework unit. See www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/teaching/ for further information.

How eVALUate teaching survey results are reported: The eVALUate Teaching Evaluation Report is only available online to the teacher who requested the evaluation. Results from teaching evaluations are not aggregated at any level.

Responding to student feedback: Acknowledge and enjoy the positive feedback you receive from students. Consider the content and value of feedback you see as negative or challenging. If there are critical comments, consider whether a change in practice could lead to a better learning experience for your future students and a better teaching experience for you. Consider inviting a colleague to be a peer mentor, and discuss with that person your feedback, and how you might develop teaching practice. For resources on improving teaching, see www.evaluate.curtin.edu.au/improving/.