



University Teaching Development Centre  
*Te Kōtuinga Mātauranga*

# SEAVUW

*Handbook*

2000

Student Evaluations at VUW

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON  
*Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui*



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## Introduction

One of the functions of the CITL is to provide the student evaluation service to faculties and schools at Victoria University. The aim is to provide teaching staff with feedback to help improve the quality of papers and teaching offered at the University.

The CITL is also responsible for numerous workshops and seminars offered throughout the year. All staff are encouraged to take part in these programmes, which cover a wide range of teaching and higher education issues. CITL flyers advertising workshops and seminars are sent to departments as well as being published in the staff circular (URL: <http://www.citl.usp.edu.aq/evaluations/>).

Initiatives in 1999 included:

- **Student Evaluation System Review:** In April, Dr Deb Shepherd from Waikawa University conducted an external review of the student evaluation system. The primary purpose of this review was to determine whether the current system met the needs of the University and to identify improvements that could be made.

All USP staff were invited to write a submission and/or make oral submissions. Thirty-four written submissions were received and a further 18 individuals were interviewed.

While Dr Shepherd concluded that “the personal teaching and end-of-paper evaluations forms have high validity and reliability as summative measure of teaching and course quality”, further improvements were recommended in the way the data was interpreted and used by the University community. In response to this need, the CITL will actively assist staff to make appropriate use of evaluation data. The full evaluation report is available for consultation at the CITL.

- **Research Supervision:** Following discussion between the Associate Deans Research and the CITL, it was decided to change the process used for the administration of the evaluation of research supervision. The Exit questionnaire is now being administered by the Faculties. Please refer to page 13.

## Developments for 2000

- **Graduate Experience Questionnaire:** During the year the CITL will develop and trial a questionnaire that will allow USP to survey students’ educational experience.
- **Student Enrolment Numbers:** From the beginning of 2000, academic staff requesting an evaluation will be asked to provide the USP with the number of students enrolled in their paper. This data allows a comparison to be made with the number of completed evaluations and is provided only for the interest of the staff member concerned.
- **Seavuw** An Interpretation Guide is now available on the Web (URL: [www.citl.usp.edu.aq/evaluations/](http://www.citl.usp.edu.aq/evaluations/)). The guide covers the major research findings on evaluation; statistical information for the University; guidelines to assist staff with the interpretation of their evaluation results; and suggestions to help improve teaching.

This booklet has been produced as a primary source of reference for all student evaluations. Please contact Ross Walters, Evaluations Administrator, for any matters relating to the student evaluation process at:

Ross.Walters@usp.edu.aq

463 5306

Room 105, Shackleton House

URL: <http://www.citl.usp.edu.aq/evaluations/>

## USP evaluation system

### *University of the South Pole requirements*

- Staff who are in their probationary period or seeking promotion are required to have a **representative** sample of their teaching evaluated. In addition, the performance review procedures for academic staff require that staff should initiate evaluations of their teaching in line with their professional development plans as agreed with their Heads of Schools/Departments. In practice, this means that most staff would be expected to have a representative selection of their teaching formally evaluated on a two-year cycle.
- Departments are required to have all taught papers/modules evaluated at least once over a three-year period. Heads of Schools/Departments are responsible for ensuring that all papers are evaluated within this period, and for following up on problems that have been identified by the results.

### *Who evaluates?*

A comprehensive full evaluation normally requires several sources of information. Students, colleagues, the Heads of Schools/Departments and the teacher all play a role in providing valuable information about teaching and other contributions to a paper. Each perspective has its particular value. This booklet focuses on the students' contribution to this process.

### *The role of the CITL*

The CITL performs four main roles in the evaluation system:

- administers the evaluation of teaching and papers by students
- provides an advisory service to staff on evaluation matters
- monitors the evaluation system
- assists staff in implementing change following an evaluation

## Options available for student evaluations

There are six kinds of evaluations using student feedback as a source of information. They all involve canvassing students' opinions using a variety of questionnaires. Some questionnaires contain a number of items that students rate on a scale from one (positive) to five (negative); some questionnaires provide scope for students to give written feedback.

All evaluations provide information to improve papers and/or teaching. In addition, results from summative evaluations provide information to serve administrative functions; for example, probation and promotion, Departmental Reports, University-wide reporting, etc.

- **Personal evaluation of teaching (summative)** focuses specifically on a staff member's teaching skills. The questionnaire uses eight items. Five are standard and three can be selected by teachers from a given pool (pages 7 and 8). The CITL recommends that teachers evaluate no more than two or three classes per year and use fast feedback as an alternative means of gathering information.
- **Fast feedback (formative) questionnaires** are informal, self-generated questionnaires that can be applied any time during a paper. The method is a simple, rapid means of acquiring feedback from students about their learning experience, your teaching and the paper (page 12).
- **Research supervision EXIT questionnaire (formative)** involves canvassing students for written comments about the supervision of their thesis upon completion. This evaluation has been developed as a formative process, appropriate for the one-to-one nature of the relationship that exists between student and supervisor (page 13).
- **Supervision of research projects (formative)** focuses on aspects of project supervision. The questionnaire has ten standard questions: seven contain items on a scale and three are open-ended questions providing scope for written comments (page 14).
- **End-of-paper evaluation (summative)** focuses on the paper as a whole rather than the individual teaching performance of contributing lecturers. The end-of-paper questionnaire has ten standard questions, and additional questions may be submitted. This questionnaire allows scope for written comments from students (page 15).
- **Fully tailored evaluation (formative)** allows you to focus on any aspect of a paper or your teaching. This involves a questionnaire of up to 25 questions selected from a large pool, or especially tailored to your needs. Scope exists for students to give written comments.
- **Programme evaluations** involve comprehensive questionnaires developed by the department/school in conjunction with the CITL. In addition, the CITL may facilitate discussions with final year students about their experiences throughout the programme and the value of that programme to them.

Contact [Jack.Harker@usp.edu.au](mailto:Jack.Harker@usp.edu.au), ext 5791, if you wish to carry out this type of evaluation.

Other options available to enhance the teaching and learning process include small and large group facilitated evaluations and lecturer observations. Please contact the CITL for more information.

## Initiating an evaluation

This table shows who can initiate evaluations

	Casual Staff	Tutor*	Lecturer	Paper Organiser* (or equivalent)	HOS/ HOD.**	Dean**
Own teaching	•	•	•	•	•	•
Paper as a whole				•	•	•
Other person's teaching within paper				•	•	•

\* If a paper organiser requests teaching evaluations for teachers in a paper s/he must discuss this with the individual(s) and gain their approval before contacting the CITL.

\*\* Heads of Schools/Departments and Deans should consult individuals and gain their approval before asking for their teaching or paper to be evaluated.

Note lecturers or tutors whose teaching is being evaluated should have taught the paper:

- within **four weeks** prior to the date of the evaluation being carried out
- for at least **four** hours of lectures/tutorials

**Please note** that tutor evaluations for first and second year papers are to be requested through the paper coordinators, who in turn will provide the CITL with the names of the tutors, dates of evaluations, number of sessions (no more than three per tutor per paper) and the three additional questions (these must be the same for all tutors).

## Organising a personal teaching evaluation

Step	Action	When	Information required	Example
1	You, course organiser or Head of School/Department informs CITL that your teaching should be evaluated	Beginning of the year or during the year, provided that reasonable notice is given	Name, department, trimester, and paper code	Bobby Good, CITL 1/3, CITL123
2	CITL contacts individual via email	At least three weeks before an evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paper code</li> <li>• type of teaching</li> <li>• date of evaluation</li> <li>• three optional questions</li> <li>• number of students enrolled</li> </ul>	Bobby Good, CITL123 Lecturing 25/06/00 Questions T1, T7 & T21
3	CITL sends questionnaire and evaluation instructions	7-10 days before an evaluation		Page10
4	Evaluation is carried out			
6	CITL receives and processes completed evaluation forms	24 hours after evaluation		
7	CITL sends report	2-3 days after evaluation		Page 11

## Personal teaching evaluation question pool

Prior to selecting questions you must first indicate the type of teaching to be evaluated: lecturing, tutoring, demonstrating, seminar facilitations, etc.

The questionnaire given to students contains eight items. Of these, five standard questions appear on every evaluation. Teachers then select three questions from the optional question pool shown below. All questions require the students to indicate their reaction to statements on a scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' unless the question is marked with a \*. In this case, a more appropriate scale is used.

The following standard questions appear on all teaching evaluations:

1. This teacher was able to communicate ideas and information clearly.
2. I found this teacher to be well organised.
3. This teacher stimulated my interest in the subject.
4. This teacher's attitude and behaviour towards students has encouraged my learning and study.
- 8.\* How would you rate the overall effectiveness of this teacher?

You may then select three questions from the following pool. Consider carefully that the questions you select are appropriate for your students to answer. The questions are divided into categories. Select three items from one or more categories.

### Personal attributes, knowledge and preparation

- T1. I found this teacher to be enthusiastic about his/her teaching.
- T2.\* How would you rate this teacher's overall knowledge of the material and tasks?
- T3. This teacher was supportive in helping me to prepare my presentation.
- T4.\* How would you rate this teacher's preparation for sessions?

### Teaching skills

- T5. This teacher's presentations have enabled me to take good notes.
- T6. Comments and feedback provided by this teacher on my work have been helpful.
- T7. This teacher has encouraged students to think critically about the subject.
- T8. How would you rate the effectiveness of this teacher in terms of the cultural aspects of the subject?
- T9. This teacher has varied the pace of delivery to suit the complexity of content.
- T10. This teacher has been able to present material in a way that holds my attention.
- T11. This teacher's delivery has been pitched at a level appropriate to the class.
- T12. This teacher was able to give constructive individual help when I needed it.
- T13. This teacher gave clear instructions for proceeding with tasks.
- T14. This teacher demonstrated laboratory techniques/experiments competently.
- T15. This teacher has encouraged students to think creatively about the subject.

### Content of teaching

- T16. The material covered by this teacher clearly relates to the objectives of the paper.
- T17. Work set by this teacher has encouraged my study and interest in the subject.
- T18. For this level of paper, I have found this teacher's material intellectually challenging.
- T19. I believe the majority of the material presented by this teacher is of use to me.
- T20. The readings set by this teacher have helped my understanding of the subject.



### **Student-teacher interaction**

- T21. This teacher has achieved and maintained good rapport with students in class.
- T22. This teacher has encouraged student participation in class discussions.
- T23. This teacher has encouraged students to raise questions in class.
- T24. This teacher has encouraged expression of differences of opinion amongst students.
- T25.\* How would you rate the balance between teacher and student contribution in sessions?

### **Teaching aids**

- T26. The teacher's handouts have been valuable aids to my learning.
- T27. This teacher has used audio-visual aids to good effect to convey ideas and information.

### **Teacher developed questions**

If you wish to include a question of your own instead of one from the above pool, please send a draft of the question to the Evaluations Administrator. If there are any problems with the question, the CITL will contact you with suggested changes.

**Student Summative Evaluation of Lecturing**

Lecturer: Good, Bobby

Course: CITL123

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This form gives you an opportunity to indicate your reactions to the teaching performance of the above person. Please consider each question separately, trying not to let your overall reaction to the paper blind you to particular areas of this person's strengths or weaknesses.

For each rating item, circle the number which best indicates your reaction.

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1. I found this teacher was able to communicate ideas and information clearly.  
strongly agree      agree      neutral      disagree      strongly disagree  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
2. I found this teacher to be well organized.  
strongly agree      agree      neutral      disagree      strongly disagree  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
3. This teacher stimulated my interest in the subject.  
strongly agree      agree      neutral      disagree      strongly disagree  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
4. This teacher's attitude and behaviour towards students has encouraged my learning and study.  
strongly agree      agree      neutral      disagree      strongly disagree  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
5. I found this teacher to be enthusiastic about his/her teaching.  
strongly agree      agree      neutral      disagree      strongly disagree  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
6. This teacher has encouraged students to think critically about the subject.  
strongly agree      agree      neutral      disagree      strongly disagree  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
7. This teacher has achieved and maintained good rapport with students in class.  
strongly agree      agree      neutral      disagree      strongly disagree  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
8. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of this teacher?  
outstanding                                      satisfactory                                      very poor  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Results of Student Summative Evaluation of Lecturing — 2000

Course: UTDC123		students responding:	28
Lecturer: Good, Bobby		students enrolled:	
			frequency
1. I found this teacher was able to communicate ideas and information clearly.  Median = 1.9	(1) str agree		10 36%
	(2) agree		9 32%
	(3) neutral		8 29%
	(4) disagree		1 4%
	(5) str disagree		0 0%
2. I found this teacher to be well organized.  Median = 2.0	(1) str agree		7 25%
	(2) agree		13 46%
	(3) neutral		8 29%
	(4) disagree		0 0%
	(5) str disagree		0 0%
3. This teacher stimulated my interest in the subject.  Median = 2.1	(1) str agree		10 36%
	(2) agree		7 25%
	(3) neutral		8 29%
	(4) disagree		2 7%
	(5) str disagree		1 4%
4. This teacher's attitude and behaviour towards students has encouraged my learning and study.  Median = 1.8	(1) str agree		11 39%
	(2) agree		9 32%
	(3) neutral		7 25%
	(4) disagree		0 0%
	(5) str disagree		1 4%
5. I found this teacher to be enthusiastic about his/her teaching.  Median = 1.8	(1) str agree		11 39%
	(2) agree		9 32%
	(3) neutral		6 21%
	(4) disagree		1 4%
	(5) str disagree		1 4%
6. This teacher has encouraged students to think critically about the subject.  Median = 1.7	(1) str agree		12 43%
	(2) agree		9 32%
	(3) neutral		6 21%
	(4) disagree		0 0%
	(5) str disagree		1 4%
7. This teacher has achieved and maintained good rapport with students in class.  Median = 1.9	(1) str agree		10 36%
	(2) agree		10 36%
	(3) neutral		7 25%
	(4) disagree		0 0%
	(5) str disagree		1 4%
8. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of this teacher?  Median = 2.1	(1) outstanding		5 18%
	(2) ...		14 50%
	(3) satisfactory		7 25%
	(4) ...		0 0%
	(5) very poor		2 7%

**An example of a teaching evaluation report**

## Teaching Performance Profile (TPP)

If you are in your probationary period, or you are applying for promotion, you are required to submit to your Head of School/Department a Teaching Performance Profile (TPP). The TPP will include all the teaching evaluations that have been carried out for a teacher during the last three years, ie 1997-1999 and any new ones from 2000.

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#### Teaching Performance Profile for Good, Bobby (2049)

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COURSE	YEAR	ACTIVITY	Medians for each Question					Number of respondents
			1 Clarity of communication	2 Organisation of teaching	3 Stimulation of interest	4 Attitude towards students	8 Overall effectiveness	
CITL123	2000	Lecturing	1.9	2.0	2.1	1.8	2.1	28
CITL321	2000	Lecturing	1.3	2.1	1.4	1.6	1.8	89
CITL221	2000	Lecturing	2.4	1.8	2.4	2.3	2.3	165
CITL221	2000	Tutoring	1.4	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.6	14

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## **Fast feedback**

As the number of evaluations increase each year there is a growing concern that we may be over-evaluating students. As a consequence, the CITL is encouraging staff to seek informal feedback from students. The evaluation involves staff creating questionnaires tailored to their own particular requirements which allow for instant feedback from students. Receiving feedback during a paper rather than at the end, not only gives staff a chance to improve their teaching, but also suggests a partnership in enhancing the teaching and learning process. Students are more likely to cooperate if they feel their suggestions will enable improvements for their benefit.

When planning to use this type of feedback, it is important for you to think about the aspect of teaching you wish to receive feedback on, for example, a teaching innovation, assessment methods or workloads, the textbooks or handbooks, personal lecturing styles, the clarity of a particular lecture, difficulties students are encountering, organisational or administrative aspects of the paper, etc.

To gather the information you could:

- prepare a form for students to complete (two or three open-ended questions would be sufficient)
- write questions on an overhead transparency and have students write on their own paper
- get approximate responses using a show of hands

Once the feedback has been received you may want to think about some of these issues; what insights have you gained? Do you have sufficient information to act upon or do you need further clarification? What are the implications for your teaching and for your students?

As part of the process, it is important that students also receive a fast response from you (preferably within the next few lectures), which will assure them they have been listened to. Advise students of any changes you intend to make, what you feel you are unable to change and why. Try not to be too ambitious; plan incremental improvements which can be achieved. In some cases you may need further information from the students.

## **Fast feedback questions**

Make sure the questions asked are clear and unambiguous. To assist you some examples are given below. Please contact the CITL if you would like help in operating fast feedback or for further information regarding background research into the fast feedback method of student evaluation.

Please comment on any aspects of this paper which you particularly enjoy or which has helped your learning of the subject.

Please comment on any aspects of this paper that you dislike or which inhibit your learning of the subject, and please make specific suggestions for improvement.

Using your notes, describe the key concepts/ideas covered in this lecture.

What improvements would you suggest for the assessment in this paper?

How useful was the textbook? Please comment.

## Research supervision Exit Questionnaire

Research supervision is now being administered by the Faculties. All research students will be asked to complete an exit questionnaire when they hand in their thesis to their student administrator. The administrator will hold the completed form until the thesis has been marked. **It is important to note that the exit questionnaire cannot be administered after a student has received the mark.**

The completed questionnaire will be returned to the supervisor once the student has been advised of their mark with a copy sent to the relevant Head of School/Department and an anonymous version (student and supervisor name removed) to the Associate Dean Research. The Associate Dean Research will then contact the CITL with numbers completing the questionnaires and any professional development requirements that may be apparent from the student responses.

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### Thesis Supervision: 'Exit' Questionnaire

Name:

Supervisor's Name:

Degree:

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The purpose of the questionnaire is to gather information about supervision (both positive and negative aspects) which may be of assistance in developing better supervisory practices.

Please fill out this questionnaire upon submission of your thesis for marking and return it to your student advisor. After you have been advised of your result, the questionnaire will be sent to your supervisor and a copy to the Head of Department/School.

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Please comment on the following aspects (be as specific as you can) of the supervision given by your research supervisor:

1. What aspects contributed most to the successful completion of your thesis?
2. What aspects were the greatest obstacle/s to the successful completion of your thesis?
3. What did you like best about working with your supervisor?
4. In what ways could your supervision have been improved?
5. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of your supervisor?
6. Please add any other comments.

**NB:** More space is provided in the actual form for responding to each question.









## Procedures for carrying out an evaluation

When you have received the questionnaire for your evaluation from the UTDC you are responsible for:

- photocopying sufficient copies of the questionnaire
- distributing the questionnaire to students at the **start** of the class
- asking a colleague or student to administer and collect the completed questionnaires from the class, seal them in the security envelope provided and sign the back. The evaluations can then be posted to the UTDC via the internal mail system.

## Confidentiality of results

**Fast feedback (formative):** the questionnaire is entirely confidential to the staff member concerned. There is no obligation to share the outcome with anyone other than students. However, teachers may like to include details about processes that have been used and changes that have made as a result of fast feedback in their Academic Staff Performance Review and promotions applications.

**Personal teaching evaluations (summative):** UTDC treat all evaluation reports of a staff member's teaching as confidential to that person, except:

- Copies of evaluation reports of probationary staff will be sent to their Heads of Schools/Departments, if requested. In practice, the Heads of Schools/Departments usually obtain copies of the UTDC reports from the staff member concerned.
- If an evaluation of a temporary teacher (for example, visiting/guest lecturer or tutor) is requested by a paper organiser, Head of School/Department or Dean, copies of the report will be sent to the staff member concerned and the person initiating the evaluation. The person initiating the evaluation is required to assure the UTDC that approval for the evaluation has been given by the teacher concerned.

**Teaching Performance Profiles (TPPs):** are treated by the UTDC as strictly confidential to the staff member concerned (except in the above circumstances).

**End-of-paper evaluations (summative):** the results for items 1-8 will be sent to the Heads of Schools/Departments within the Annual Departmental Report. Otherwise, the information obtained from an evaluation will be treated as confidential to the paper organiser. The organiser is expected to share the results with other staff who taught the paper.

**Fully tailored evaluations:** reports are treated by UTDC as strictly confidential to the teachers being evaluated. If an evaluation involves two or more staff members, reports are made available to each person involved.

**Supervision of research project (formative):** reports are treated by the UTDC as strictly confidential to the staff member concerned.

**Facilitated programme evaluations:** the UTDC prepares a written report that is distributed to students and staff teaching in the programme for validation. A final report is then sent to the person who initiated the evaluation.

## **Important tips for effective management of evaluation**

- Give sufficient notice for all evaluations

Priority is given to evaluations arranged well in advance. During peak times (May-June and September-October) at least three weeks notice is required. Please note we cannot fax or send evaluation forms out via email. The UTDC cannot guarantee that evaluations organised within 48 hours will take place.

- Organise evaluations through the UTDC

Only forms produced by the UTDC for a requested evaluation will be processed; this ensures the process runs smoothly and that results are valid. This prohibits staff from asking students to complete old forms from previous evaluations and sending them to the UTDC. In these circumstances the UTDC has no guarantee that valid procedures were followed, therefore, evaluations may not be processed.

- Carry out evaluations out at an optimum time, that is:

- when most students are present (e.g., usually not on the last day of the trimester)
- when assessment work is not being collected/returned to students
- when tests are not being carried out, nor test results distributed
- towards the end of a paper (for a paper evaluation) or at the end of a person's contribution to the paper (for personal teaching)

- Follow appropriate procedures:

- preserve respondents' anonymity
- ensure that the person carrying out the evaluation does not handle the completed evaluations
- return all forms to the UTDC in a security envelope, sealed and signed by a colleague or student.

NB: The last point means that 'late' or 'additional' evaluation forms will not be processed by the UTDC unless special circumstances exist or prior arrangements have been made.