



## MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CONDUCTING STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS

RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATOR: VICE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS  
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 8/17/11  
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### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish minimum standards for course evaluations by students and maintain the reliability, validity, legitimacy and anonymity of the evaluation instruments. In many departments, schools, and units, student evaluations may be the sole measure of teaching effectiveness that is utilized. In those units, it is critical that the evaluations be reliable indicators of teaching ability.

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### ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

Deans, chairs, directors, faculty and staff are affected by this policy.

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### WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

All deans, chairs, directors, faculty, staff, and all others (such as a graduate student) involved in the administration or compilation of course evaluations should read this policy.

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### POLICY

Minimum standards for student course evaluations:

- **Timing**

Course evaluations must be administered at or near the end of the instructional period, i.e., semester, term, etc. Course evaluations must not be administered during final exams.

- **Format**

Course evaluations may be paper-based or electronic.

- **Anonymity**

1. A student should be able to complete a course evaluation with the assurance that he or she will not be identifiable. This means, at a minimum, that names, student identification numbers, or other identifiers should not be included in or associated with the evaluation instrument.
2. Students should be advised to avoid self-identification in their comments.

- **Objectivity**

In order for students to objectively evaluate teaching, regardless of instructional mode:

1. The instructor should not be present at the time of the evaluation.
2. The evaluation instrument should be distributed and collected by a third party, such as a graduate assistant, administrative assistant, student employee, or colleague.
3. The instructor should refrain from providing any points, food or other compensation, at the same session in which the evaluation is conducted.
4. Course evaluations should be administered at the beginning of a class session, in order to avoid comments by the instructor that might have an effect on the evaluations.
5. Students should be notified by the third party administering the evaluations that the instructor will not see the evaluation results until after final grades have been posted. The department/school/unit must abide by this restriction.

- **Post-Evaluation**

1. After the third party administering the evaluations has collected them, the evaluation responses should be maintained/archived in a secure electronic file or sealed envelope and transmitted to the department/school/unit's administrative assistant for safekeeping, not to be opened until after final grades have been submitted.
2. Statistical summaries of the results for each question for each course should be performed by the administrative assistant or a third party (e.g., the Cannon Center, graduate assistant, etc.) and not by the instructor being evaluated.
3. Ideally, the written comments made by students should be compiled and presented to the instructor with his or her statistics; this is especially important in the case of small classes. The purpose of this procedure is that the instructor will never see the original responses and will therefore be unable to identify those making critical comments. Also, the instructor will have a record of the statistical summaries and compiled comments that he or she can use for teaching awards, merit, tenure, and promotion without having to keep or submit large packages of original evaluation forms.

4. Student course evaluations must be retained by the department for any period necessary for them to be used for teaching award, merit pay, tenure or promotion applications, and any related grievances, appeals and/or litigation.
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**CONTACTS**

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Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost

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