
STUDENT FEEDBACK – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose of Student Feedback?

Student feedback (SFB) can have different purposes for different users, e.g. do you need the data to include in a teaching portfolio, do you experience some kind of a challenge in your teaching, do you plan to change the curriculum, were there significant changes in the module/programme or perhaps in the cohort of students, etc?

Some of the main purposes of student feedback are:

- To empower lecturers to improve their teaching
- Contributing to the professional learning of lecturers
- As part of the teaching and learning process
- Enhancing the students' experience of learning and teaching
- Ensuring the effectiveness of course design and delivery
- Helping students to reflect upon their experiences and provide constructive inputs to the teaching and learning process
- Identifying good practice
- Contributing to monitoring and review of quality and standards

At Stellenbosch University, we encourage that student feedback should firstly aim to empower lecturers to improve their own teaching. Only thereafter should student feedback be used for any other purpose, and then with great circumspection.

Furthermore, it is up to the staff member involved to decide whether to discuss the feedback with colleagues and what action to take. The [advisor from the Centre for Teaching and Learning \(CTL\)](#) who is allocated to your faculty, is available to discuss the feedback and collaborate in the development of improved teaching strategies if requested.

Student feedback is only one source of feedback on the teaching and learning process. Should you wish to discuss alternative ways of obtaining feedback on your teaching or modules, from sources other than students, please do not hesitate to contact the CTL advisor in your faculty.

2. Is the Paper system still available?

No, the paper system is no longer available from 2020 onwards.

Only the following forms are available on paper in 2020:

- Tutorial Feedback
- Programme Feedback
- Multiple Choice Answer Sheet
- Lecturer feedback

Please order these forms from the Student Feedback office by completing an [order form](#).

3. How can Student Feedback (SFB) be collected?

SFB can be collected electronically on standardized questionnaires for feedback on undergraduate and taught postgraduate modules. The electronic student feedback questionnaires are made available via the Electronic Student Feedback system.

Faculties will also have the option of adding an extra 5 questions to the standardized

questionnaire in order to obtain information on aspects that pertain to the particular contexts of their faculties. These additional 5 questions have to be approved by the appropriate faculty board.

Students can complete the forms electronically over a set period of time. Benefits of the electronic system are that it is more cost and time effective, less labour intensive and reports can be produced quicker. However, response rates might be lower in the electronic system. Lecturers are therefore urged to continuously remind students to complete the electronic questionnaires.

4. How long in advance must the e-registration form be completed?

Please complete the e-registration form one week before the opening date of the questionnaire. This will give the Student Feedback office enough time to make sure that the activation of the questionnaire is in order.

5. How will the students have access to the questionnaire?

Please visit the [Student Feedback webpage](#) for detailed information.

6. Whom do I contact if I want to collect feedback electronically?

Please complete the [e-registration form](#) and submit. The Student Feedback Office will create and activate the questionnaire in your academic module on the Electronic Student Feedback system. Lecturers will not be able to access the student feedback system as the anonymity of the students who provide their feedback, must be protected.

7. When will I receive my student feedback report?

Reports on feedback collected electronically will be available within 7 days after closing of the survey. The Student Feedback Office will send you a link to access your report in Sharepoint. Your line management (HOD and Dean) will also have access to your reports on the Sharepoint platform.

8. Are there any guidelines that can help me to interpret my student feedback report?

The following guidelines may assist you in interpreting the results.

(i) You should consider the representativeness of the responses. If the number of students completing the questionnaire as a percentage of the number of students enrolled in the unit is less than about 30% the responses may not be representative of the perceptions of those students who have experienced your teaching. This percentage mark is however not cast in stone. Your particular context as well as your specific purpose for collecting feedback, can also guide you in terms the usefulness of your student feedback data.

(ii) The statistical report gives the response analyses for all individual questions from your questionnaire. For each question the analysis shows:

- the number of students who gave each of the possible responses
- the percentage of students who gave each possible response (calculated over the number answering the question, which may be less than the number completing the questionnaire)
- a graphical representation of those percentages
- the mean and standard deviation

(iii) The students' responses to the open ended questions have been returned with the statistical report. The open-ended comments usually provide additional information worth considering when interpreting the statistical report. As the responses to the open ended questions typically include the most critical positive and negative aspects of the students' experience of the teaching and learning process, they are often the form of student feedback

most useful for indicating potential improvements in teaching.

With your knowledge of the unit and its material you will be in a position to interpret the results of your particular survey, however you should bear in mind that student perceptions are shaped by various aspects of the teaching and curriculum context. For instance, a unit with a small number of students taught predominantly in small groups and using continuous assessment may be rated more highly than a unit with large student numbers in which lectures are the predominant mode of delivery and where students are assessed solely on the results of a final examination. Optional units tend to be rated more highly than compulsory sections of a program.

It should also be noted that students assign "ratings" individually in the absence of any agreed upon criteria for what constitutes "satisfactory". For example, a rating of "4" may be assigned by different students for different reasons and reflect different standards.

If you would like to discuss the interpretation of the feedback, your faculty's CTL adviser would be happy to meet with you once you have considered the comments and report. CTL advisers are also available to discuss any aspect of your teaching or of the unit curriculum which you would care to develop further as a result of the students' feedback.

Collecting student feedback by way of questionnaires is only one source and method of collecting information. Other sources such as peers and other methods such as group discussions can also provide valuable information and should be considered in course or teaching evaluation.

9. Can lecturers also have a say in the student feedback process?

YES! We encourage lecturers to complete and submit the Lecturer Feedback form. This form gives lecturers the opportunity to report on their own experiences in presenting a particular module and can help to place the student feedback in context. The Lecturer Feedback form is available on the [Student Feedback webpage](#).

10. How much does the SFB office charge for its services?

This electronic student feedback service is provided free of charge to all staff of Stellenbosch University in terms of processing normal student feedback.

11. Whom can I talk to if I have a question about the administration of my survey forms, or the processing of my report?

Ms. Veronica Kleinsmith, vfbeukes@sun.ac.za, 021-808 9192

Ms. Ilke Arnolds, igideons5@sun.ac.za, 021-8083081

Ms. Roshnique Pharo, rdaniels@sun.ac.za, 021-808 3081

12. I would like to design my own questionnaire. Is there anyone who can assist me?

The CTL advisor in your faculty can assist with this.

13. Who can I talk with about curriculum review and institutional level teaching evaluation?

The CTL advisor in your faculty can assist with this.

14. Can you recommend some good texts on improving the quality of my teaching?

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