

# Teaching Performance Report – November 2003

## Teaching Performance Indicators Used in this Report

This report tracks the various Teaching Performance Indicators used to allocate funds from the Teaching Improvement Fund, as well as several associated variables indicative of the University's standing in the Higher Education sector. Results for faculties are grouped by College to facilitate comparisons within fields of study.

### Student Demand

Student Demand figures for undergraduate courses are provided by the University Admissions Centre. The number of applicants for degrees from the previous year, broken down by faculties, is given for:

- First preference for school leavers
- First preference for other applicants
- All preferences for school leavers
- All preferences for other applicants.

### First to Second Year Retention Results

First to second year retention results are given by faculty. For a given year, they measure the proportion of students from the previous year who are still enrolled within the University (not necessarily the same degree).

### Student Progress Rates with Group of 8 Comparisons

Student progress rates (SPRs) for local and international undergraduates are provided by DEST, giving University of Sydney faculty results and those for comparable Go8 academic organisational units. SPRs are derived from records of student load provided to DEST for every student in each unit of study, along with a completion status. The options for reporting completion status are:

- Withdrew without penalty (after census date)
- Failed
- Successfully completed all requirements
- Not yet determined

SPRs are calculated from this data as follows:

$$\text{SPR} = [(\text{Load calculated as 3}) / \text{Sum of load calculated as 1, 2 or 3}] \times 100.$$

In the DETYA publication "Benchmarking: A Manual for Australian Universities", McKinnon, Walker and Davis argue that "...good practice is for a university to seek a 95% success ratio", with equivalent SPRs for local, international and equity group students.

### Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ) Scale Results

The purpose of the SCEQ is to provide the University community with a basis for strategic, faculty level academic development and curriculum review to further enhance the quality of teaching and student learning. The yearly survey gathers data on students' perceptions of the quality of teaching and student learning in their degree courses as well as their perceptions of the administration and student support services. This report provides faculty results for

undergraduate students from 1999 to 2001, using the same "Agreement" metric used for USE results described above, on the following scales and item:

*The Good Teaching Scale.*

e.g. "My lecturers are extremely good at explaining things".

The scale is characterised by teaching practices which include the following: providing useful and timely feedback, clear explanations, motivating students, making the course interesting, and understanding students' problems. Lower scores on this scale are associated with the perception by students that such practices occur less frequently.

*The Clear Goals and Standards Scale.*

e.g. "It is always easy to know the standard of work expected."

Practices characteristic of this scale relate to the establishing of clear aims and objectives for a course and clear expectations of the standard of work expected from students. It is possible to employ the good teaching practices described under the Good Teaching Scale, without implementing practices characteristic of the Clear Goals and Standards Scale.

*The Appropriate Assessment Scale.*

e.g. "To do well in this degree all you really need is a good memory."

This scale deals with the extent to which assessment measures higher order thinking and understanding rather than simple factual recall. This scale does not probe other important aspects of assessment practices such as the congruence of the assessment with the material actually taught, the level of difficulty and the consistency of the quality of the assessment.

*The Appropriate Workload Scale.*

e.g. "I am generally given enough time to understand the things I have to learn."

Higher scores on this scale indicate a perception of reasonable workloads. Heavy workloads do not necessarily equate to high standards and expectations so the wording of the items probes the extent to which heavy workloads interfere with student learning. Heavy workloads tend to preclude students from engaging with and understanding the material they are learning. Instead, many students adopt surface approaches to learning as a strategy for dealing with high workloads.

*The Generic Skills Scale.*

e.g. "The degree course has sharpened my analytic skills."

This scale reflects the extent to which students perceive their studies to have fostered the development of the generic skills recognised by the university as being a valuable outcome of university education, in addition to discipline specific skills and knowledge. These skills are detailed in the Academic Board document 'Generic Attributes of Graduates of the University of Sydney'.

*Learning Community Scale. (2001-2002 only).*

e.g. "I feel part of a group of students and staff committed to learning."

This scale concerns student perceptions of the social experience of learning at university. It indicates the students' sense of belonging to a community where learning with other people is a priority.

*Overall Satisfaction Item*

“Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of this degree course.”

This item provides an outcome measure of overall satisfaction.

<http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/SCEQ/>

## **SCEQ Benchmarks**

### **a) Imputed SCEQ Go8 scores from CEQ Scores**

One component of the Performance-Based Funding of Teaching Model is the imputation of “virtual” SCEQ scores for each faculty’s aggregated G08 competitors, based on those competitors’ CEQ scores. This is done as follows:

1. The Go8 average CEQ scores for comparable faculties are regressed on USyd faculties’ CEQ scores. This produces an equation for the relation between Go8 and USyd CEQ scores.
2. USyd faculty SCEQ scores can be substituted into this equation, yielding implied Go8 SCEQ scores.
3. The difference between the faculty’s SCEQ score and the implied Go8 score is the indicator of performance.

Example:

Let G = the Go8 average CEQ score for Good Teaching

Let S = the USyd CEQ score for Good Teaching

Let SCEQG = the implied Go8 SCEQ score for Good Teaching

Let SCEQS = the USyd faculty SCEQ score for Good Teaching

Let P = the USyd faculty performance indicator value for Good Teaching

$$\text{If } G = (0.62 \times S) + 4.83 \quad (1)$$

then we can substitute to get

$$\text{SCEQG} = (0.62 \times \text{SCEQS}) + 4.83 \quad (2)$$

and then

$$\text{SCEQG} - \text{SCEQS} = P \quad (3)$$

### **b) SCEQ Benchmarking with University of Queensland and Oxford University**

The University of Sydney recently established benchmarking relationships with Oxford University and the University of Queensland, giving access to these institutions’ student survey results. Oxford University has piloted the Student Course Experience Questionnaire with undergraduate students in 2001 and 2002, and intends to survey all departments from 2003 onwards. The University of Queensland uses the “UQ Student Experience Survey” (UQSES) which has some, but not all, of its items and scales in common with the SCEQ. Results on equivalent scales and items, using the Agreement” metric, are given where equivalent academic organisational units exist across institutions. Readers of this report should note the discrepancies in sample sizes between some benchmarked units, and exercise caution in interpreting results where sample sizes are small and/or large sample size differences exist between units.

Scales available for benchmarking across the universities are as follows:

Usyd – UQ first year: Learning Community Scale, Generic Skills Scale.

Usyd – UQ – Oxford third year: Good Teaching Scale, Generic Skills Scale, Learning Community Scale, Overall Satisfaction Item.

The following table shows the academic units in the three universities used for benchmarking.

<b>University of Sydney</b>	<b>University of Queensland</b>	<b>Oxford University</b>
Faculty of Arts	amalgamated results for Schools of English, Media Studies and Art History; History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics; Language and Comparative Cultural Studies, Music; Social Work and Social Policy; Journalism and Communication.	amalgamated results for Departments of Modern History and Ancient History
Faculty of Science	amalgamated results for Schools of psychology, physical science, molecular & microbial sciences, Centre for Marine Science	amalgamated results for Departments of Biological science, Geography, Mathematics & Statistics, Psychology
Faculty of Economics and Business	amalgamated results for Schools of Economics, Commerce, Management	amalgamated results for Departments of Management, Economics
Faculty of Law	School of Law	Department of Jurisprudence
Faculty of Engineering	amalgamated results for Schools of Engineering, IT & Electrical Engineering	Department of Engineering
Faculty of Medicine	School of Medicine	
Faculty of Health Sciences	Amalgamated results for Schools of Health & Rehabilitation Science, Human Movement, & Population Health	
Faculty of Rural Management	School of Natural and Rural Systems Management	
Faculty of Veterinary Science	School of Veterinary Science	
Faculty of Pharmacy	School of Pharmacy	
Faculty of Architecture	School of Geography, Planning and Architecture	
Faculty of Agriculture	School of Agriculture and Horticulture	
Faculty of Education	School of Education	

## **Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ) Open-Ended Question Results**

In addition to responding to the items loading on the scales described above, respondents to the SCEQ are also invited to give written feedback concerning their degree on two questions: "What are the best aspects of your degree course?", and "What aspects of your degree course could be improved?" Responses by undergraduates to these questions for the 2001 SCEQ were analysed to identify the most salient themes for each faculty, which are presented with example responses.

## **Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) Scale Results**

The Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) collects information about the activities of graduates after the completion of their degrees. As part of this survey, the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) gathers data about graduates' perceptions of their higher education experience. (The SCEQ was derived from the CEQ, using identical scales but with item wordings changed to reflect perceptions about a degree currently being completed.)

Different faculties use different strategies to support the interpretation of the results. Comparison of CEQ and GDS data across several years, for the same field of study within the University is often helpful. The approach of comparing results with agreed internal benchmarks or standards is also used, for example; "at least 90% of graduates should agree that their lecturers gave them helpful feedback". For these purposes, the percentage of students who (dis)agree or strongly (dis)agree with a statement is often the most useful form of data. Results for faculties using the Agreement metric are given for the Good Teaching Scale, the Clear Goals and Standards Scale, the Appropriate Workload Scale, the Appropriate Assessment Scale, the Generic Skills Scale, and the Overall Satisfaction Item.

<http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/CEQ/>

## **Graduates in Full-time Work**

This indicator is derived from responses to the Graduate Destination Survey. Results for faculties are calculated as follows:

Percentage in FT work = (frequency selecting "in full-time work" + "in full-time work, seeking other") / (frequency selecting "in full-time work" + "in full-time work, seeking other" + "working part-time, seeking full-time" + "not working, seeking full-time work" + "not working, seeking any work") x 100.

This indicator thus identifies only those respondents who are working full-time out of the set of respondents who wish to work full-time; it therefore excludes those who are not seeking full-time work or are otherwise unavailable for full-time work (for example, because of study commitments).

## **Graduates in Full-time Study**

This indicator is derived from responses to the Graduate Destination Survey, and gives the percentage of graduate respondents within faculties who described themselves as being in full-time study as of 30<sup>th</sup> April in a given survey year.