

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Why are course/teaching evaluations important?**

Student feedback helps the university improve the teaching and learning experience. Evaluations allow faculty to understand their strengths and weaknesses and enhance their teaching and courses accordingly. Evaluations are essential in helping the university understand its planning context and measure progress towards goals.

2. **What is SEEQ?**

Student Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ) is a standardized course evaluation instrument used to obtain student feedback on teaching quality and effectiveness. Developed by world renowned educational psychologist Herbert Marsh, it has become one of the most widely used and empirically supported evaluative instruments in post secondary institutions.¹

3. **What does the U of S SEEQ instrument look like?**

SEEQ is currently administered in either an online or a paper-based format. In addition to the 32 standardized questions initially developed by Herbert Marsh, the University of Saskatchewan SEEQ instrument also includes a question regarding whether the instructor should be nominated for an outstanding teaching award, (#33), as well as an open-ended question for student feedback.

[To view a sample of the standardized SEEQ instrument at the U of S, click here.](#)

For the online version, individual departments and colleges can also add one extra section of 7 -12 questions to their instrument by choosing from a list of six sections that are tailored to different teaching instructional types (student and course characteristics, tutorial/seminar, group/project work, practical skills/lab, clinical sessions, and online learning).

[To view the specific questions included in each of these six extra sections, click here.](#)

4. Is it approved by the U of S?

Yes. On June 14, 2007, University Council approved the SEEQ instrument based on recommendations from the then Instructional Development Committee (now Teaching and Learning Committee). The three recommendations include:

- I. That the Student Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ) instrument be designated an approved, validated instructor/course evaluation instrument for use by any or all academic units at the University of Saskatchewan
- II. That academic units be encouraged to adopt SEEQ as their instructor/course evaluation instrument; and,
- III. That in light of associated administrative efficiencies; academic units endeavor to conduct SEEQ in online form.

5. What does it evaluate?

SEEQ evaluates nine dimensions of teaching. These are: learning, enthusiasm, organization, group interaction, individual rapport, breadth, examinations, assignments, and overall rating.

6. How is SEEQ administered at the U of S?

SEEQ can currently be administered in both an online and a paper-based format. The instrument may eventually be administered exclusively online as University Council recommends that academic units endeavor to conduct SEEQ in an online format.

7. Will it affect my final grade?

Course evaluations do not affect student grades in any way. Complete results are not released to anyone (instructors, department heads, or deans) until after final grades are posted.

8. Are my responses confidential and anonymous? Does my NSID show up?

Your answers to SEEQ are confidential, but not anonymous. NSIDs are used as a signature to ensure that only registered students complete the course evaluation and that no one completes the same evaluation more than once. Personally identifying information is not released so no instructor can identify which student made a particular response.

9. Who sees the results?

Department heads and college deans can see the results for all courses in their department. Individual instructors can see results only for the courses they teach.

10. How are the results used?

Data collected from online SEEQ is used by faculty to foster teaching improvement and by departments for administrative decision making. Student evaluations provide a useful summary in order to improve teaching, course offerings, curriculum, and instructional support, and they can be used for tenure and promotion considerations.

11. Are online course evaluation results valid and reliable?

In general, online course evaluations typically have lower response rates than in-class, paper-based evaluations. However, studies have consistently found no significant differences between results from online or paper evaluations, and online respondents are much more likely to provide open-ended comments, with the length of their comments typically greater than paper-based respondents.

Response rate does affect the level of confidence in the accuracy of data, especially for classes that have very few students. The more students participate in the evaluation, the more accurate the results will be. Experiences at the U of S and other institutions show that response rates can vary significantly depending on the level of involvement from department/college leaders, instructors, and students.

[For more information regarding online course evaluations and response rates, please click here.](#)

12. Who can I contact if I need help or if I want to use SEEQ in my course/department?

If you have additional questions about SEEQ, you can contact Institutional Planning and Assessment at seeqhelp@usask.ca.

¹ Gibbs, G., & Coffey, M. (2001). The Evaluation of the Student Evaluation of Educational Quality Questionnaire (SEEQ) in UK Higher Education. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 26, 89-93.

² Kulik, J. (2009). Response Rates in Online Teaching Evaluation Systems. Office of Evaluations and Examinations. The University of Michigan.

³ Brown, G. (2008). Online Course Evaluations and Response Rate Considerations. Centre for Teaching, Learning & Technology, Washington State University.