

Accessing the La Trobe Student Voice

In 2005 the report ‘*Accessing the Student Voice*’ authored by Geoff Scott (ASV) was released. It reported on the analysis, using the software CEQuery, of qualitative responses to the ‘Best aspects’ (BA) and ‘Needs improvement’ (NI) questions on the CEQ surveys between 2001-2004, for a representative sample of fourteen Australian universities (La Trobe was not in this sample). The results of the analysis provide richer information than quantitative feedback alone about students’ perceptions of the quality of their learning experience and their degree of engagement. It can be found at http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/publications_resources/profiles/access_student_voice.htm

The table below, taken from the ASV report lists the domains and sub domains used in CEQuery to categorise student responses. More detailed definitions of each sub domain, also drawn from the ASV report, are included as Attachment 1.

Table 1 - CEQuery domains and sub domains

Outcomes	Staff	Course design	Assessment	Support
* Intellectual	* Accessibility	* Practical-theory	* Relevance	* Library
* Work application	and respons-	links	* Marking	* Learning
/career	iveness	* Relevance (to work/	* Expectations	resources
* Further learning	* Teaching skills	life/discipline)	* Feedback/return	* Infrastructure
* Personal	* Practical	* Flexibility/	* Standards	/environment
* Interpersonal	experience	responsiveness		* Student
* Knowledge/skills	(current)	* Methods of learning		administration
	* Quality and	and teaching		* Student services
	attitude	* Structure and		* Social affinity/
		expectations		support

The following provides an analysis of elements of the responses to BA and NI questions for La Trobe University in 2007 (2006 graduating class) and makes some comparisons to the results of the ASV study. The report only contains data for 2007, as this is the first time that the qualitative responses have been cleaned and prepared for analysis at LTU. This imposes some limitations on the results compared to ASV, but there are still some interesting indications from this current analysis. In future years, greater use should continue to be made of this information including analysis of changes over time and benchmarking of results against selected other institutions at faculty and institutional level.

What matters most to students?

Table 2 below shows the CEQuery sub domains that attracted the most responses (both best aspects and needs improvement), indicating areas that students consider important enough to make a written response. In the top twelve sub domains shown in the table below there is some variation in the order of importance assigned by students but only one differed between LTU and the collective results for the fourteen universities reported in ASV. In the ASV report, ‘Course Design: practical theory links’ featured, while in the LTU results ‘Outcomes: work application’ featured.

Table 2 – Highest numbers of responses

Accessing the Student Voice	%	LTU 2007	%
Course design: learning methods	14.2	Staff: quality & attitude	14.8
Staff: quality and attitude	10.8	Course design: learning methods	11.1
Staff : Accessibility	8.2	Staff : Accessibility	10.4
Course design: flexibility & responsiveness	8.2	Course design: flexibility & responsiveness	8.7
Course design: structure & expectations	6.7	Staff: Teaching skills	7.0
Course design: practical theory links	5.9	Course design: structure & expectations	6.2
Course design: relevance	5.6	Outcomes: knowledge/skills	4.6
Staff: Teaching skills	5.4	Support: social affinity	4.4
Support: social affinity	3.8	Course design: relevance	4.1
Outcomes: knowledge/skills	3.8	Outcomes: work application	3.7
Support: learning resources	3.5	Support: learning resources	3.3
Support: Infrastructure & learning environment	3.4	Support: Infrastructure & learning environment	3.2

Within the list above the comparative percentage of total hits was:

	LTU	ASV
Staff	39.0%	24.4%
Course Design	27.8%	40.6%
Outcomes	10.3%	3.8%
Support	7.0%	10.7%

As the ASV report notes, these weightings gives some indication of how students form judgements about quality and about what motivates their engagement. For this group of students, the staff of La Trobe are particularly important in shaping their perception of the quality of their experience, more so than course design. This is a variation from the ASV report and could be interpreted as a distinguishing feature of La Trobe.

Odds of a Best aspect = Quality

In Table 3 below, the higher the value of the BA/NI ratio the greater the proportion of positive remarks made by students. A ratio below 1 indicates that there were more 'needs improvement' responses than there were 'best aspects'. Of these matters that were of high importance to students, the highest rated were Outcomes: knowledge and skills and Staff: quality and attitude, and accessibility. The lowest rated were Course design: structure and expectations and Support: Infrastructure and learning environment.

Table 3 – High response numbers, positive vs negative

LTU 2007	%	BA	NI	BA/NI
Staff: quality & attitude	14.8	668	341	2.0
Course design: learning methods	11.1	501	297	1.7
Staff : Accessibility	10.4	499	249	2.0
Course design: flexibility & responsiveness	8.7	289	332	0.9
Staff: Teaching skills	7.0	251	249	1.0
Course design: structure & expectations	6.2	113	328	0.3
Outcomes: knowledge/skills	4.6	222	108	2.1
Support: social affinity	4.4	203	112	1.8
Course design: relevance	4.1	138	153	0.9
Outcomes: work application	3.7	130	138	0.9
Support: learning resources	3.3	102	136	0.8
Support: Infrastructure & learning environment	3.2	71	160	0.4

Other Potential Hotspots

Turning from the analysis of those twelve elements that were most important to students to an examination of results for all sub domains Table 4 shows the ranking of BA/NI for all sub domains at the University Level. At this level areas that have low odds of a ‘best aspect’ comment and high odds of a ‘needs improvement’ comment (BA/NI odds of less than 0.5) include:

Assessment – Standards, Feedback, Expectations, Marking

Course design – Structure

Support - Infrastructure, Student services, Student administration

These compare to the ASV responses of:

Assessment – Standards, Marking, Expectations, Management and Feedback

Course Design – Structure

Support – Student administration, Student services

In colour coding the ratios, 0.5 or below is signalled as red, 0.5 to 1.5 is coded as orange and above 1.5 is coloured green. The twelve sub domains that were most important to students are highlighted in aqua.

Table 4 – Pattern of hits and BA/NI odds analysis - University

La Trobe University 2006								
Rank of BA/NI	Domain	Sub-domain	Rank of total hits	BA/NI Odds	Count Best Aspects	Count Needs to Improve	Total Hits	% Total hits
1	Outcomes	Personal	22	13.5	54	4	58	0.81
2	Outcomes	Intellectual	13	10.9	175	16	191	2.66
3	Support	Unspecified	29	7	14	2	16	0.22
4	Assessment	Unspecified	30	8	8	1	9	0.13
5	Outcomes	Unspecified	27	5	25	5	30	0.42
6	Outcomes	Interpersonal	25	2.6	31	12	43	0.60
7	Staff	Unspecified	28	2.3	18	8	26	0.36
8	Outcomes	Knowledge skills	7	2.1	222	108	330	4.60
9	Staff	Accessibility	3	2	499	249	748	10.44
10	Staff	Quality	1	2	668	341	1009	14.08
11	Support	Social affinity	8	1.8	203	112	315	4.39
12	Course design	Unspecified	16	1.8	84	47	131	1.83
13	Course design	Methods	2	1.7	501	297	798	11.13
14	Staff	Practical experience	26	1.1	17	16	33	0.46
15	Staff	Teaching skills	5	1	251	249	500	6.98
16	Assessment	Relevance	18	1	47	47	94	1.31
17	Course design	Practical/theory links	15	1	71	73	144	2.01
18	Outcomes	Work application	10	0.9	130	138	268	3.74
19	Course design	Relevance	9	0.9	138	153	291	4.06
20	Course design	Flexibility	4	0.9	289	332	621	8.66
21	Support	Learning resources	11	0.8	102	136	238	3.32
22	Support	Library	24	0.7	20	27	47	0.66
23	Support	Infrastructure	12	0.4	71	160	231	3.22
24	Course design	Structure	6	0.3	113	328	441	6.15
25	Support	Student services	21	0.3	13	49	62	0.86
26	Support	Student administration	17	0.3	23	91	114	1.59
27	Assessment	Standards	14	0.2	27	147	174	2.43
28	Assessment	Feedback	19	0.2	11	67	78	1.09
29	Assessment	Expectations	20	0.1	7	65	72	1.00
30	Assessment	Marking	23	0.1	3	48	51	0.71
--	Outcomes	Further learning	31	inf	5	0	5	0.07
Totals					3840	3328	7168	

The Faculties

An analysis of the BA/NI ratios was also conducted at Faculty level and reported over the following pages. Many of the sub domains had small response numbers when disaggregated to faculty level, so the column headed **Total Hits (BA + NI)** should be checked in evaluating the relative importance of these responses.

In all faculties, **Course Design: Structure** is amongst the top 7 items in degree of importance and also has a BA/NI ratio of 0.5 or below. This emphasises the importance of the review of curriculum to be led by the PVC(CAP) in Semester 2, 2008. Most comments broadly complained about 'structure' however, there were remarks about overlaps/repetition, first year subjects not being engaging, lack of connection of some subjects to course objectives or integration between subjects, lack of clear goals for subjects, high or uneven (throughout degree) workload, need for greater range of electives, greater links between theory and practice, poor support for on-line and block mode subjects.

In all faculties, aspects of **Assessment** also rate low BA/NI ratios, although these did not receive the high number of total responses of some other sub domains. Attention to the new assessment policy may make some difference here. The nature of remarks by students referred to assignments all being due at the same time, inconsistency between different markers of the same assignment, high proportion of marks based on examinations, problems with group assignments – free riders, timely return and appropriate feedback on assignments, unclear expectations about assignments – marking criteria and standards, exams that seemed to require rote learning,

With the exception of FSTE, **Support: Infrastructure** is rated below 0.5 in all faculties. This is a point of difference from the ASV study. Comments included overcrowding in classrooms and honours/grad student offices, need for more computers, poor standard of classroom equipment.

Support: Student Administration and **Services** are rated low by students in all faculties. Comments were shared between problems with timetables, graduations (usually venues), lost documents, and poor customer service.

Good News

Staff: Quality is rated particularly well in Education, Health Sciences and Humanities & Social Sciences and at 1.3 and 1.4 in Science, Technology & Engineering and Law & Management respectively. **Accessibility** is highly rated (above 1.5) in all faculties.

Support: Social Affinity also rates well in all faculties. This lends support to our aspirations to be student centred and may well also reflect the perception of staff being high quality.

Course Design: Learning methods is especially appreciated in FSTE (BA/NI = 2.5) and the Faculty of Education (2.7). The BA/NI rates above 1 in the other faculties Health Sciences (1.5), HUSS (1.1), FLM (1.3).

Table 5 - Pattern of hits and BA/NI odds analysis – Faculties

Table 5a – Faculty of Education

Faculty of Education							
Rank of BA/NI	Domain	Sub-domain	Rank of total hits	BA/NI Odds	Count Best Aspects	Count Needs to Improve	Total Hits (BA+NI)
1	Staff	Accessibility	3	2.8 to 1	67	24	91
2	Course design	Methods	2	2.7	77	29	106
3	Support	Social affinity	8	2.6	36	14	50
4	Staff	Quality	1	2.4	100	42	142
5	Outcomes	Interpersonal	20	3.0	3	1	4
6	Outcomes	Unspecified	21	2.0	2	1	3
7	Outcomes	Work application	11	1.5	17	11	28
8	Staff	Teaching skills	4	1.3	45	35	80
9	Outcomes	Knowledge skills	9	1.3	20	16	36
10	Support	Student services	22	1.0	1	1	2
11	Course design	Relevance	12	0.9	11	12	23
12	Course design	Unspecified	16	0.9	7	8	15
13	Course design	Flexibility	6	0.7	25	37	62
14	Course design	Practical theory links	12	0.5	8	15	23
15	Assessment	Relevance	17	0.4	3	7	10
16	Support	Library	20	0.3	1	3	4
17	Support	Learning resources	10	0.4	9	21	30
18	Support	Infrastructure	5	0.4	20	46	66
19	Assessment	Feedback	19	0.2	1	5	6
20	Course design	Structure	7	0.3	12	40	52
21	Assessment	Expectations	14	0.1	1	18	19
22	Support	Student administration	13	0.1	1	19	20
23	Assessment	Standards	12	0.0	1	22	23
--	Assessment	Marking	18	zero	0	7	7
--	Assessment	Unspecified	24	--	0	0	0
--	Outcomes	Further learning	24	--	0	0	0
--	Outcomes	Intellectual	15	inf	17	0	17
--	Outcomes	Personal	19	inf	6	0	6
--	Staff	Practical experience	23	inf	1	0	1
--	Staff	Unspecified	20	inf	4	0	4
--	Support	Unspecified	21	inf	3	0	3
Totals				1.15	499	434	933

Table 5b – Faculty of Health Sciences

Faculty of Health Sciences							
Rank of BA/NI	Domain	Sub-domain	Rank of total hits	BA/NI Odds	Count Best Aspects	Count Needs to Improve	Total Hits
1	Outcomes	Personal	21	17.0	17	1	18
2	Outcomes	Intellectual	13	4.9	39	8	47
3	Course design	Unspecified	10	3.2	55	17	72
4	Outcomes	Unspecified	27	5.0	5	1	6
5	Outcomes	Interpersonal	26	4.0	8	2	10
6	Staff	Quality	1	2.4	187	77	264
7	Staff	Accessibility	3	2.3	139	60	199
8	Outcomes	Knowledge skills	7	2.0	63	31	94
9	Staff	Practical experience	24	2.3	9	4	13
10	Staff	Unspecified	25	1.8	7	4	11
11	Course design	Methods	2	1.5	149	98	247
12	Course design	Practical theory links	11	1.5	37	25	62
13	Support	Social affinity	9	1.4	54	38	92
14	Staff	Teaching skills	6	1.1	57	53	110
15	Outcomes	Work application	8	1.1	48	45	93
16	Support	Library	23	1.0	7	7	14
17	Assessment	Relevance	22	0.9	8	9	17
18	Course design	Flexibility	4	0.7	66	89	155
19	Support	Learning resources	14	0.7	18	26	44
20	Course design	Relevance	9	0.6	34	58	92
21	Support	Infrastructure	15	0.4	11	28	39
22	Support	Student administration	18	0.3	6	18	24
23	Support	Student services	19	0.3	4	16	20
24	Course design	Structure	5	0.2	24	116	140
25	Assessment	Expectations	17	0.1	3	24	27
26	Assessment	Standards	12	0.1	5	46	51
27	Assessment	Feedback	16	0.1	2	27	29
28	Assessment	Marking	20	0.1	1	18	19
--	Assessment	Unspecified	29	zero	0	1	1
--	Outcomes	Further learning	29	inf	1	0	1
--	Support	Unspecified	28	inf	4	0	4
Totals				1.13	1068	947	2015

Table 5c – Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences							
Rank of BA/NI	Domain	Sub-domain	Rank of total hits	BA/NI Odds	Count Best Aspects	Count Needs to Improve	Total Hits (BA + NI)
1	Outcomes	Intellectual	9	22.5	45	2	47
2	Outcomes	Personal	16	6.0	12	2	14
3	Staff	Quality	1	2.9	152	53	205
4	Outcomes	Knowledge skills	6	2.5	55	22	77
5	Assessment	Relevance	17	2.3	9	4	13
6	Staff	Accessibility	3	2.0	95	47	142
7	Staff	Teaching skills	5	2.0	63	31	94
8	Support	Social affinity	8	1.7	31	18	49
9	Outcomes	Interpersonal	16	1.8	9	5	14
10	Staff	Unspecified	22	2.0	2	1	3
11	Course design	Relevance	10	1.1	24	22	46
12	Course design	Methods	4	1.1	61	57	118
13	Support	Learning resources	11	1.0	19	19	38
14	Support	Unspecified	23	1.0	1	1	2
15	Course design	Flexibility	2	0.9	70	76	146
16	Course design	Unspecified	18	0.6	4	7	11
17	Course design	Structure	7	0.5	24	50	74
18	Assessment	Standards	14	0.4	5	12	17
19	Support	Infrastructure	10	0.4	14	32	46
20	Assessment	Feedback	16	0.4	4	10	14
21	Course design	Practical theory links	13	0.4	5	13	18
22	Support	Library	20	0.3	2	6	8
23	Support	Student services	15	0.3	4	12	16
24	Outcomes	Work application	12	0.3	6	18	24
25	Support	Student administration	12	0.3	5	19	24
26	Assessment	Expectations	19	0.1	1	8	9
--	Assessment	Marking	21	zero	0	5	5
--	Assessment	Unspecified	23	inf	2	0	2
--	Outcomes	Further learning	23	inf	2	0	2
--	Outcomes	Unspecified	21	inf	5	0	5
--	Staff	Practical experience	22	zero	0	3	3
Totals				1.32	731	555	1286

Table 5d – Faculty of Law & Management

Faculty of Law and Management							
Rank of BA/NI	Domain	Sub-domain	Rank of total hits	BA/NI Odds	Count Best Aspects	Count Needs to Improve	Total Hits (BA + NI)
1	Outcomes	Personal	18	12.0	12	1	13
2	Outcomes	Intellectual	12	9.0	36	4	40
3	Outcomes	Knowledge skills	11	2.4	33	14	47
4	Outcomes	Unspecified	20	2.7	8	3	11
5	Support	Social affinity	7	2.0	48	24	72
6	Staff	Accessibility	2	1.8	100	56	156
7	Staff	Quality	1	1.4	141	102	243
8	Course design	Methods	5	1.3	67	51	118
9	Course design	Relevance	8	1.2	36	30	66
10	Course design	Practical theory links	16	1.1	10	9	19
11	Course design	Flexibility	3	1.1	66	62	128
12	Assessment	Relevance	17	1.0	8	8	16
13	Staff	Practical experience	23	1.0	4	4	8
14	Support	Library	20	0.8	5	6	11
15	Course design	Unspecified	19	0.7	5	7	12
16	Outcomes	Work application	10	0.7	25	34	59
17	Staff	Teaching skills	4	0.7	50	75	125
18	Support	Learning resources	9	0.5	21	40	61
19	Course design	Structure	6	0.4	22	54	76
20	Support	Infrastructure	14	0.3	8	23	31
21	Assessment	Standards	13	0.3	8	24	32
22	Assessment	Expectations	21	0.3	2	8	10
23	Support	Student administration	15	0.3	6	20	26
24	Assessment	Feedback	20	0.2	2	9	11
25	Assessment	Marking	22	0.1	1	8	9
26	Support	Student services	21	0.1	1	9	10
--	Assessment	Unspecified	26	inf	3	0	3
--	Outcomes	Further learning	27	--	0	0	0
--	Outcomes	Interpersonal	24	inf	5	0	5
--	Staff	Unspecified	26	inf	3	0	3
--	Support	Unspecified	25	inf	4	0	4
Totals				1.08	740	685	1425

Table 5e – Faculty of Science, Technology & Engineering

Faculty of Science, Technology & Engineering							
Rank of BA/NI	Domain	Sub-domain	Rank of total hits	BA/NI Odds	Count Best Aspects	Count Needs to Improve	Total Hits (BA + NI)
1	Course design	Methods	1	2.5	135	54	189
2	Support	Social affinity	9	2.1	33	16	49
3	Outcomes	Knowledge skills	6	2	43	22	65
4	Staff	Accessibility	2	1.8	94	53	147
5	Staff	Quality	2	1.3	84	63	147
6	Assessment	Relevance	14	1.3	17	13	30
7	Course design	Unspecified	16	1.3	9	7	16
8	Support	Library	19	1.3	5	4	9
9	Outcomes	Interpersonal	19	1.3	5	4	9
10	Course design	Relevance	8	1.1	28	26	54
11	Support	Unspecified	25	1	1	1	2
12	Outcomes	Work application	7	1	28	29	57
13	Course design	Practical theory links	15	0.9	10	11	21
14	Support	Learning resources	11	0.8	18	23	41
15	Staff	Unspecified	23	0.7	2	3	5
16	Course design	Flexibility	3	0.7	36	53	89
17	Staff	Teaching skills	5	0.7	33	49	82
18	Support	Infrastructure	10	0.7	17	26	43
19	Staff	Practical experience	20	0.6	3	5	8
20	Course design	Structure	4	0.4	25	60	85
21	Support	Student administration	16	0.3	4	12	16
22	Support	Student services	17	0.3	3	10	13
23	Assessment	Standards	12	0.1	5	34	39
24	Assessment	Feedback	18	0.1	1	11	12
	Assessment	Marking	21	zero	0	7	7
	Assessment	Expectations	23	zero	0	5	5
--	Assessment	Unspecified	24	inf	3	0	3
--	Outcomes	Further learning	26	inf	1	0	1
--	Outcomes	Intellectual	13	inf	34	0	34
--	Outcomes	Personal	22	inf	6	0	6
--	Outcomes	Unspecified	24	inf	3	0	3
Totals				1.14	686	601	1287

Attachment 1

CEQuery sub domains: Specific definitions

OUTCOMES

Intellectual

Development of analytical skills, critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, diagnostic abilities; ability to “see the key issue” in a welter of information, come to a justified decision in a tricky situation, trace out the consequences of various options for action, understand one’s key assumptions, see “the big picture” and “think on one’s feet”. Intellectual capabilities interact with Personal and Interpersonal ones.

Work application/career

Includes gaining promotion, improved employability, improved workplace performance, direct application of what was learnt at work.

Further learning

Going on to further and higher study as a result of the course; commitment to life-long learning. In the case of NI comments students may talk more about the blocks they experienced or the reasons why the course didn’t motivate them to go on to further study.

Personal

All aspects of *personal* Emotional Intelligence identified in recent studies of successful graduates and other research (see Vescio 2005) e.g. the ability to remain calm when things go wrong, self-confidence, sense of ‘efficacy’, willingness to take negative feedback, ability to tolerate ambiguity, persevere and maintain self-motivation, independence, self understanding etc). Also includes comments about the personal satisfaction that comes from completing a higher-education program.

Interpersonal

This covers not just written and verbal communication skills but key aspects of *social* Emotional Intelligence identified in the successful graduate studies (e.g. the ability to work with a wide diversity of people, a developed understanding of cultural differences, an ability to work productively as part of a team, development and use of peer/other networks). See Scott & Yates (2002), Vescio (2005) for more detail on these concepts. NI comments tend to talk about the blocks in communication during the course that prevented the development of the desired interpersonal outcomes—staff and students with poor communication skills in English are regularly cited in this context.

Knowledge/skills

Includes both generic skills/knowledge (e.g. the ability to chair a meeting, use computers; self-teaching skills, library search skills, information literacy and skills of observation) and profession/discipline-specific skills/knowledge (e.g. knowledge of a particular statute in Law, or specific skills for use in a laboratory, etc). Also includes research skills.

STAFF

Accessibility and responsiveness

Ability to contact staff (face-to-face, online, by telephone etc), staff availability, how and when they respond, their willingness to support students, as well as comments about the interface between staff:student ratios and staff accessibility and responsiveness.

Teaching skills

Staff ability to teach and convey knowledge; their effectiveness, creativity, organisation and enthusiasm as lecturers as distinct from comments on how knowledgeable they are, or how they behave outside the classroom.

Practical experience (current)

How up-to-date, 'in touch' and linked staff are with current professional or disciplinary practice through, for example, being a current practitioner. Extent to which there is use of guest lecturers; staff ability to use 'real world' anecdotes to make their teaching more relevant.

Quality and attitude

Staff members' ability to inspire; their enthusiasm, promptness in coming to class, reliability, levels of organisation, engagement; their professionalism, organisation, commitment to the area taught, interpersonal skills and clarity of communication including English-language skills.

COURSE DESIGN**Practical-theory links**

The consistency with which a course seeks to link and balance theory with practice, designs in a range of practice-oriented experiences directly connects to related theory. The extent to which it is professionally oriented and applied in its design.

Relevance (to work/life/discipline)

How interesting, engaging, current, and relevant course *content* is. Also includes comments about courses being personally relevant to the key interests and meeting students' other needs.

Flexibility/responsiveness

This includes comments on the extent to which the course design provides flexible/responsive learning paths (electives/majors/submajors); choice; negotiated learning; flexible attendance patterns; flexible delivery; ease of access to learning and assistance to determine which path is best. This subdomain has links to course design but here the focus is on the extent to which the course is able to respond to the particular backgrounds, abilities, needs and experiences of students as opposed to having a single 'one size fits all' model.

Methods of learning and teaching

Approximately 60 different learning and teaching methods have been identified including: lectures, group work, seminars, tutorials, specific practical, real-life learning methods (practicum, internships, coop ed., moots, simulations, work placements, field trips, clinical placements, industry and practical legal training, etc); use of prior learning of students; camps; lab-work to learning contracts, site visits, experiments, various forms of IT-enabled learning, simulations, teleconferences, guest speakers, specific peer/team learning methods and case-study analysis. Appropriate use of interactive learning methods is a recurring theme in students' BA comments.

Structure and expectations

Structure: subject balance and distinctiveness from each other, subject quality, overall load and amount of content to be learnt, appropriate sequence of learning, overlap between subjects, prerequisites, admission levels, timetable, overview of field, recognition of prior learning (RPL), the appropriateness of the modes of learning used (pt/ft, mixed mode, multi-site, intensive, work-based, distance, online etc.). Also includes comments about the appropriateness, timing, length and variety of mix of learning methods used, the extent to which the course has depth, a clear direction, is integrated, and has an overall integrity.

Expectations: management and clarity of information provided, course rules, access to staff, resources, university processes. Also includes comments about alignment between course prospectus and delivery and actual availability of advertised electives.

ASSESSMENT**Relevance**

Extent to which assessment tasks are perceived to be real-world, applied, up-to-date, integrated, relevant to current and future professional or disciplinary practice and focused on 'real world' problems. Also covers comments where students discuss the extent to which assessment is interesting, challenging, engaging, appropriate and how well it matches what was taught and the stated subject/course objectives.

Marking

Consistency and reliability of marking; fair assessment of group work projects and NESB student work. Covers reliability across different assessment methods: short answer; online; practice-based; group-based etc. Also includes extent to which plagiarism and cheating are detected, comments about 'soft-marking' and the confusion between norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment in determining grades.

Expectations

Provision of clear assessment tasks and expectations on how to tackle and present them; clear submission deadlines, guidelines rules and grading criteria. Provision of examples of work, to give an operational picture of different grades and quality of work in each subject.

Feedback/return

Promptness with which assignments are returned, use of staged deadlines, quality of the feedback received including the extent to which markers comment on what was done well, explicitly identify key areas for improvement and say how improvements could have been achieved—with specific attention to the grading criteria distributed at the start of the subject.

Standards

Assessment which is at a university standard—which requires higher-order thinking more than rote memorisation from text books; is interesting, and negotiated; assessment that is valid (i.e. demonstrably focuses on the key capabilities that graduates will need to succeed in the first years of work in a specific profession or discipline). Includes comments about rote learning, industry recognition, over-assessment, range and appropriateness of assessment methods used, assessment load, plagiarism management, appeals, extensions, alignment between what is taught and tested, prerequisites, norm versus criterion-referenced assessment, submission and security, timing, weighting, and consistency of assessment quality and demands between subjects and courses at the same level.

SUPPORT

Library

Library collections, services, ease of access, facilities, equipment, efficiency, online services as well as face-to-face services, borrowing services and rules, fines.

Learning resources

Quality and availability of textbooks, print & digital support materials, course outlines, study guides, lecture notes, course readings, online learning resources, self-teaching materials, CD-Roms, video, TV, photographic and sound resources.

Infrastructure/environment

Classroom and lab quality, class sizes and levels of crowding, quality of computers and technical infrastructure, equipment levels and quality, ease of access to physical facilities and their quality, campus environment, equipment levels, social spaces. Also comments about funding levels for facilities and financial support at universities.

Student administration

Enrolment systems (online and offline), exam scheduling, fees processes, administrative advice, exemptions, graduation processes, delivery of transcripts, accuracy of fees' invoices, grievance processes, results, scholarships, admission, admin staff responsiveness, timetabling. Includes ease of access to student administration services and the extent to which queries and problems are followed up promptly and resolved. Also includes comments about efficiency, levels of bureaucracy.

Student services

Learning support services (English for academic purposes, study assistance, information literacy, transition to university programs, orientation etc), careers. Services to DEST-defined equity groups including ATSI and NESB students, along with counselling services. Comments about the

helpfulness of support service staff including IT-enabled learning support. Both IT-enabled and face-to-face.

Social affinity/support

Comments that relate to the sense of 'belonging' that comes from a welcoming, friendly, approachable environment and culture and set of relationships among both staff and students. Comments which indicate that the student feels s/he is seen not as a number but an individual. Comments about levels of engagement or isolation felt by students. Also covers comments on the wide range of formal and informal types of social support, in particular peer support but also a general culture of support and service, ability to network, interaction with others, the development and use of reciprocal relationships. For interactions with staff it includes the presence of a 'service-oriented' culture.