

Course Evaluation Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we using a standardized course evaluation?

A standardized survey will allow the college to get a snapshot of the student's experience in the classroom in a way that we haven't before. The development of the standardized evaluation began when Local 212 agreed that a joint committee of faculty and administration would develop the evaluation.

Why does the "course" evaluation so heavily address the instructor?

The instructor plays a critical role in students' experiences in the classroom. The college already collects data about students' experiences on campus in general, and the course evaluation is an opportunity to learn more about their experiences in the classroom specifically. A course evaluation will by necessity focus a lot on the instructor, but it should also include evaluation of the facilities, textbooks and materials, and equipment, those factors sometimes outside of an instructor's jurisdiction. Thus, the course evaluation to be piloted in December will include evaluation of all of those factors.

Why doesn't the survey ask students to assess their performance in the course?

Many faculty suggested including questions about students' engagement and effort in the class to paint a more complete picture of the student's experience in a course. The evaluation now has a section at top asking the student about their commitment to the course and the likelihood of their eventual success.

Why are instructors being held accountable for facilities, textbooks and equipment when those things aren't always in our control?

Instructors are not held accountable for those factors. The results of those survey questions will be used by faculty and administrators to inform decision making about facilities, textbooks, and equipment.

Who gets my course evaluation results?

You will receive a copy of the results of the evaluations of each of your courses. Your Associate Dean will also see evaluation results by instructor name. Associate Deans will be instructed how to effectively and appropriately use evaluation results. Deans and other academic leaders will not see individual results; rather, they will see aggregated data. General results will also be communicated with students to demonstrate that we take their feedback seriously.

How will the results be used?

The standardized course evaluation was developed to be a tool for the instructor and Associate Dean in the Peer Coaching process. Results will also provide the college a snapshot of instructor performance in relationship to the Standards of Teaching Excellence.

Also, the data from course evaluations will be one type of data of many that the college uses to learn about students' experiences in our classrooms.

When the college requires the standardized course evaluation, do we have to stop using our own evaluation instruments?

No! The standardized evaluation instrument needs to be general enough to apply to the varied instructional environments at MATC. Departments, programs, and individuals are encouraged to continue to seek student feedback through surveys or informal classroom assessment techniques on issues specific to a course or program. In fact, we hope you gather feedback throughout the term from your students.

Is the course evaluation customizable?

Not at this time. While we know some courses, labs and clinicals are harder to assess we are initially launching a single instrument whose appropriateness will have to be weighed when results are gathered and analyzed.

How will we get students to take the survey?

The college will develop a marketing campaign to students promoting the value of completing their course evaluations. This will happen this semester. The survey will be available to students in their course Blackboard shells. Students will be notified of available surveys through MATC Gmail and through Blackboard course notification. Faculty will be encouraged to promote completion of the survey as well, and when technologically possible, to provide class time to complete the survey. Student computer labs will be prepared to assist students to complete their evaluations, as well.

Will students be able to complete the surveys through the Bb app on their mobile device?

Yes, students will need to enter the course site and then they will gain access to the survey using the Bb app and via the Safari browser on an iPad.

Will students receive an email confirming that their survey was submitted?

Yes, students will receive an automated response saying, "Thank you! Your response to the survey MATC Course Survey has been submitted."

Will instructors be able to see who has and who has not completed the survey in the Bb gradebook?

No, survey completion is entirely anonymous. For course evaluations we are not using the course survey tool that many faculty use in their classes. The survey tool being used for course evaluations is for surveys on an institutional level.

Can students partially complete a survey and then return to it later?

No, the student needs to complete the brief survey once he begins.

Have students had input into developing the course evaluation?

Members of the course evaluation committee are meeting with student government in September and will work with them to form focus groups of students to provide input into the survey questions.

Will administrators also be evaluated?

The college is committed to horizontal and vertical performance appraisal across the college. The handbook committee is working to codify that process.