How to Provide Useful Feedback

Student Experience Survey (SES) asks about your experiences of a specific module on your course. Your feedback is a necessary part of the process for lecturers to improve their teaching, including when things are going well.

It is important when you feedback on your module evaluations this is done in a constructive and meaningful way. This page contains guidelines for providing constructive and meaningful feedback through your module evaluations.

1. Be respectful. Derogatory comments or criticisms based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc. are not appropriate in module evaluations.
2. Your comments should be constructive, professional, courteous, and provided for improvement. ​

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1. Comments are unacceptable if they are aggressive, abusive, threatening, unnecessarily personal or emotionally damaging.  ​

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1. All comments submitted through the SESs should be done in accordance with the Student Rules and Regulations. ​

**Before Completing SESs...**

**Anonymity**: Your SESs are completely anonymous, both the numerical results and written comments. Your responses are not linked to your student ID number. Please make sure that free-text comments you provide do not reveal any of your personal details – unless you want to be identifiable in your feedback.

The results will be shared with the Module Coordinator, Head of Department, and other Senior Staff.

**Unconscious Bias**: Happens by our brains making incredibly quick judgments and assessments of people and situations without us realising. Our biases are influenced by our background, cultural environment, and personal experiences. We may not even be aware of these views and opinions or be aware of their full impact and implications. By increasing our awareness of biases and how to overlook them we create a fairer environment.

**Considerations when Answering SESs**

Questions are asked on a 6-point Likert scale.

1. Definitely Agree,
2. Mostly Agree,
3. Neither Agree or Disagree,
4. Mostly Disagree,
5. Definitely Disagree,
6. Not Applicable

You should choose 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree only when you feel that your response is between the two endpoints. Neither agree nor disagree is not counted as a neutral response. This is because we calculate the results based on a % agree score. We encourage you to consider each question and to decide whether you Agree or Disagree, rather than given the neutral option, as then we will have a stronger idea of where action should be targeted.

Choose “Not applicable” when the question is not relevant to your module or teaching staff. Not applicable answers are not counted in the stats.

**Considerations when Writing Comments**

Constructive feedback from students is a valuable resource for improving teaching. The feedback should be specific, focused, and respectful. It should also address aspects of the module and teaching that are positive as well as those which need improvement.

Keep the following in mind when writing your comments on SESs:

1. Be **respectful**; derogatory comments or criticisms based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc. are not appropriate.
2. Be **specific** and provide examples when commenting on the module or the lecturer. Speak based on your own experiences, not on behalf of your classmates.
3. Focus on observable behaviours of the lecturer or on specific aspects of the module. **Describe the situation** you are commenting on. For example:

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| **Instead of...** |  | This is more helpful: |
| "We were really able to listen in class." | This leaves the reader wondering what the instructor did to allow this. | “It was great that the PowerPoint presentations were put online, that way you can follow in class and not have to worry about frantically take down notes and worry about not getting everything." |

1. **Avoid personal** or emotional **comments** instead, describe actual incidents. For example:

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| **Instead of...** |  | **This is more helpful:** |
| "The instructor is patronising." | Describe how the lecturer’s behaviour or elements of the module affect you. Describing how a situation makes you feel offers the reader a different perspective and allows the lecturer to gain a better understanding of the situation. | "The professor is patronising when we respond to their questions during lectures, which makes learning difficult and confusing, and their comments make me less likely to interact with the content in lectures." |

1. Where comments do not meet these standards, they will be discounted!
2. Describe how the lecturer’s behaviour or elements of the module affect you. Describing how a situation makes you feel offers the reader a different perspective and allows the lecturer to gain a better understanding of the situation.

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| **Instead of...** |  | **This is more helpful:** |
| "The exam was unfair." | Offer alternative solutions or suggestions to address your critiques of the instructor or the course, which helps the instructor when planning the module for the following year. | “I found the questions on the final exam fair, but I found the length of the exam unfair. I knew all the material but really struggled to finish the exam in time. I felt very stressed by the time pressure and may not have performed my best.” |

1. Be **solution-focused**, offer alternative solutions or suggestions to address your critiques of the lecture or the module, which helps the module coordinator when planning the module for the following year.

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| Example: |
| “The module could be recorded which would help with studying, I could easily just go back and listen to that part of the class." |

1. **Positive and Negative comments**, to help lecturers improve the module and their teaching, please provide both positive and negative comments in a constructive manner. Comments should offer specific reasons for judgment. These are very helpful as they inform the lecturer of what you suggest being kept or changed. While comments regarding what needs to change may come more readily, it is just as helpful to remind the lecturer about what went well.
2. If your module had Teaching Assistants, you will be given the opportunity to provide feedback to them in the free text area. Please take the time to provide constructive comments about strengths and areas for improvement. Feedback early in their teaching careers will be instrumental in helping them become great teachers.
3. There is a comment box at the end of the SES, thinking of the following categories when completing the SESs may help you organize your thoughts:

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| **Teaching on my module** | **Learning opportunities** | **Assignments** |
| **Academic support** | **Organisation and management** | **Learning resources/Physical Environment** |
| **Learning community** | **Student voice** | **Employability** |
| **Overall (Module or teacher)** | **Clarity and Difficulty** | **Interest or motivation** |

1. Consider area of responsibility. While the module coordinator clearly has influence and control over many of the factors that influence the quality of a module and the teaching, in many instances that influence is shared with the students and/or the administrators. By thinking about who can change problem areas—or maintain successful practices—it can help you frame your comments usefully. When possible, make suggestions from the student perspective as to actions that the Module Coordinator or administrators could take to help improve the situation.
2. Comments about the personal traits (for example, accent or apparent unfriendliness) of the instructor often elicit strong emotions and should be made with sensitivity. Focus your comments on behaviours that can be improved. Also, describe the impact on your learning—this will help the Module Coordinator improve the learning experience. For example:

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| Instead of... |  | This is more helpful: |
| "The sessions were monotone” | This does not tell the instructor what the impact was.  This makes it clear to the instructor that there is a real impact on the students' learning experience. | “The lecturer's voice was monotone which came across as they were not interested in the topic. It made me not want to ask questions or participate in discussions.” |