

UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING

POLICY ON STUDENT MODULE EVALUATION SURVEYS

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# **POLICY ON STUDENT MODULE EVALUATION SURVEYS**

## **Purpose**

1. Student feedback on modules forms a core strand of the University’s ongoing enhancement of the student learning experience. This policy sets out the University’s approach to collecting and responding to module feedback through the module evaluation surveys.
2. The policy, and within this, module survey arrangements, including survey questions and processes, are reviewed on a continuous basis to ensure effectiveness and to appropriately take account of relevant internal and external developments.

## **Definitions**

1. **Early Module Check-in**. Short online surveys that take place at around week 3 or 4 of a module delivery and offer students the opportunity to provide feedback on their early experience in the module which enables module coordinators as appropriate, to adjust the current iteration of the module.
2. **EvaSys.** The software system that is currently used by the University to facilitate and support the operation of module evaluation is called EvaSys.
3. **EvaSys dashboard.** The dashboard provided by the Evasys software system offers live aggregated survey data to senior management and response rates. It can be accessed via the [EvaSys admin portal](https://stirling.evasysplus.co.uk/#/admin-portal).
4. **Evasys instructor portal**. Module coordinators can access their module specific response rates and survey data via this [portal](https://stirling.evasysplus.co.uk/).
5. **Module Evaluation.** A formal opportunity for students to provide feedback on their experience of a module through a survey and to receive staff reflections on that feedback. Feedback is gathered at a point near the end of the module, via an online survey, as specified by the University within the provisions of this policy.

## **Scope**

1. This policy applies to all taught modules, both undergraduate and postgraduate.
2. It is relevant to Early Module Check-in and Module Evaluation, that are used within the University to gather student feedback at the module level.

## **Points of Policy**

1. Feedback from students on their experience of a module forms a core strand of the University’s ongoing enhancement of the student learning experience. Feedback on modules is gathered by the University through several methods including both: Early Module Check-in and Module Evaluation.

### ***Early Module Check-in***

1. Early Module Check-in operates through a short survey which is opened to students at around week 3 or 4 of a module delivery.
2. The survey offers students the opportunity to provide feedback on their early experience in the module which in turn enables module coordinators as appropriate and practical, to make rapid adjustments to the delivery of the module.
3. Early Module Check-in is therefore focussed on the current iteration/delivery of the module and facilitates swift response to student feedback.
4. The Early Module Check-in may be deployed as appropriate from time to time.

### ***Module Evaluation***

1. Module evaluation has three main functions. The first function of Module Evaluation is to facilitate student voice within University delivery, providing an opportunity for the University to receive student feedback at the module level, and to respond to that feedback. This further seeks to build trust and agency with students.
2. The second is as part of Module Review, along with performance data, external examiner comments; comments provided as feedback in the National Student Survey (NSS) or Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) (directed to the subject rather than the module) and the module coordinator’s own reflections. Module Review in turn informs Programme Monitoring in respect of the programme to which it contributes. Module Review and Programme Monitoring form part of the University’s arrangements for Institution-led Review, in line with statutory quality assurance requirements.
3. Finally, Module Evaluation supports the enhancement of modules, both through prompting reflection by those teaching on the module and through informing faculty interventions in response to student feedback.

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### ***Survey Question Sets***

1. To support ongoing enhancement, each module is evaluated every time it is delivered, at the end of the delivery period, using the specified University module evaluation system (currently EvaSys).
2. Question sets are reviewed regularly and focus on the students’ experience of the module. Students are given the opportunity to provide both quantitative and qualitative responses. The current question sets can be found on the [Staff Module Evaluation Resources SharePoint site](https://stir.sharepoint.com/sites/Moduleevaluationresourcessite).

### ***Communication and Promotion of Module Evaluation***

1. Information for students on the University’s approach to and arrangements for module evaluation is maintained on [the website](https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/professional-services/student-academic-and-corporate-services/academic-registry/student-information/module-evaluation/), and a range of guidance for staff is provided via the ‘[Staff Module Evaluation Resources SharePoint site](https://stir.sharepoint.com/sites/Moduleevaluationresourcessite)’. In addition, a ‘Module Evaluation’ mailbox is managed and administered by Academic Registry, for staff and student queries.
2. Module information, including the identity of the module coordinator, is driven by data available within the Akari, curriculum lifecycle management system. This dictates, for example, who has access to the survey results. It is the responsibility of the module coordinator to ensure that those details are correct at all times. Provides step by step guidance.
3. Surveys and reminders are issued directly and automatically to student and staff, via the Evasys system. Module co-ordinators are advised when surveys are to be issued and are reminded during the survey period to encourage engagement. Details of the process may be found on the [Staff Module Evaluation Resources SharePoint site](https://stir.sharepoint.com/sites/Moduleevaluationresourcessite).
4. Training sessions and drop-in sessions are regularly held to ensure staff are familiar with the system and the [Staff Module Evaluation Resources SharePoint site](https://stir.sharepoint.com/sites/Moduleevaluationresourcessite) provides key dates, sources of support and step by step guidance.

### ***Survey periods***

1. Standard survey periods are determined by the Dean for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience following consultation with faculties. Where the standard survey period does not suit a particular module, faculties are given the opportunity to adjust the period, within the constraints of the system.

### ***Student Responses***

1. Faculties should endeavour to achieve as high a response rate as possible for each survey, with at least the target performance levels set out in Appendix 2 being achieved. However, regardless of response rate, feedback obtained from every module evaluation, should be used, considered and the feedback loop should be closed.
2. All module evaluation questionnaires are completed by students on an anonymous basis.
3. Students are requested to ensure that their responses are constructive and respectful in nature. The system administration function (provided by Academic Registry) has authority to de-anonymise a response where a disciplinary or welfare matter arises from it, and to share the response with relevant colleagues to facilitate appropriate follow-up to take place.
4. Questions do not relate specifically nor explicitly to named members of staff and students are encouraged to avoid referring to staff, themselves, and others by name. The EvaSys software redacts names and profanities in the survey results before they are circulated to staff, though this process is not foolproof.
5. Staff members who receive inappropriate or distressing comments are encouraged to seek support from their line manager. Disciplinary action may be taken against students responsible for such comments. The University has a robust policy against [bullying and harassment](https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/support-wellbeing/student-support-services/bullying-and-harassment/).
6. Due to the nature of the system, students are unable to withdraw survey responses once submitted.

### ***Data and Access***

1. Anonymised individual module survey results and comments are sent to the relevant Module Coordinator upon closure of the module survey. During the survey period, Module Coordinators have access to live response rate information.
2. Faculty and University senior staff have access to survey reports, response rates, survey data and staff responses via the EvaSys dashboard.
3. Academic Registry manages the data, access rights and feedback gathered from module evaluations, and arranges for results to be made accessible to faculties.
4. Faculties and services are responsible for liaising with Academic Registry to ensure appropriate access rights to the EvaSys dashboard are maintained for their staff. Appendix 1 outlines the arrangements for access to various elements of module evaluation data. The general principle used in determining access to results is that those responsible for a module, programme or for the faculty, and those who contribute to the teaching, management or oversight of a module should have access to all data.
5. It is essential that effective and appropriate arrangements are in place for the management of data collected for module evaluation purposes. Data should be handled in a secure and confidential manner, and in line with GDPR legislation. Those gathering, processing, receiving or accessing module evaluation data are required to handle and use it in line with the [University’s Data Protection Policy](https://www.stir.ac.uk/media/stirling/services/policy-and-planning/gdpr/documents/GDPRPolicy.pdf).

### ***Closing the Feedback Loop***

1. It is important to explicitly acknowledge and, where appropriate, respond to student feedback to ensure students understand that their feedback is valued and how it is to be used.
2. Module coordinators who have received module feedback through the Early Module Check-in or the Module Evaluation survey should respond to that feedback, on the Evasys platform, within 7 or 14 days respectively wherever possible. This can be followed up with additional opportunities for further informal discussion as necessary.
3. Early Module Check-in data can inform discussions at subsequent Student Staff Consultative Committee.
4. A summary of results from Module Evaluation data and staff reflections can be shared with subsequent cohorts undertaking the module, illustrating how student feedback has been used and valued.
5. Module feedback is used at module, programme, faculty and institutional levels to support continuous enhancement and quality assurance.
6. Details of responsibilities in respect of the operation of module feedback and using and responding to the feedback are provided in Appendix 3.

### ***Management and Oversight of Module Evaluation Surveys***

1. Academic Registry provides the management and operation of module evaluation system infrastructure. This includes administration of questionnaires and surveys, data management and reporting, operation of the ‘Module Evaluation’ mailbox and therefore staff and student queries.
2. The University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (ULTQC), on behalf of the Education and Student Experience Committee, oversees the University’s arrangements for programme and module monitoring and review and learning and teaching review, and receive and reflect on the outcomes of such reviews. As such, ULTQC oversees approaches to module feedback.
3. The Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee receives and reflects on survey data for the faculty and the rate of closure of the feedback loop for student feedback surveys and monitor actions taken in response to the feedback received. They will report periodically to ULTQC on faculty performance.
4. The Faculty Executive including the Dean, the Heads of Division and the ADLT will monitor the survey data and response rates to inform management decisions.
5. The University is aware of the potential for discriminatory bias in student responses and will view the data with this in mind.

## **Appendix 1 – Access to Module Evaluation Data**

**Data Access**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Module data and response rate** | **EvaSys full dashboard** |
| Module Co-ordinator | x |  |
| Programme Director |  | On request |
| Head of Division |  | x |
| Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching |  | x |
| Faculty Dean |  | x |
| Head of Faculty Operations |  | x |
| Faculty Operations Manager |  | x |
| Dean for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience |  | x |
| Policy and Planning staff |  | x |
| Academic Registry (Student Systems and Data) staff |  | x |

## **Appendix 2 – Target Response Rate Performance for Module Evaluation**

**Target Performance**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Target** | **Level** |
| Response rate | 2023/24 >30%;  2024-25 >35% |
| Level of overall satisfaction (average of all questions) | 2023/24 80% |
| Level of response by module co-ordinators | 2023/24 60%  2024/25 80% |
| Timescale for turnaround on module co-ordinator feedback | 14 days from close of module evaluation survey and within 7 days of early module check-in survey |

## **Appendix 3 – Roles and Responsibilities for Module Evaluation Surveys**

**Module Co-ordinator**:

* Encourages student engagement with the survey both before and during the survey period. They monitor response rates during the survey period on the Evasys Instructor portal. On the survey closing they review the feedback and respond to the students with their reflections in the EvaSys instructor portal, within the time limit set out in the policy. Thereafter they use the data to inform their teaching practice and enhancements to the module and to complete their module review.
* Module Coordinators see response rates and anonymised individual responses and aggregated responses for the module cohort via the instructor portal.
* Module coordinators are responsible for ensuring their details are correct in the Akari system to ensure the EvaSys system reports to them. In addition, where the standard survey dates are unsuitable for their module they should liaise with their faculty administration team to have the dates adjusted.

**Programme Director**:

* May be granted access to the EvaSys dashboard at the request of their faculty Dean, which offers module level information and individual anonymised responses for all modules and programmes. They also have access to the Evasys dashboard which provides an aggregated view.
* Uses the data on modules contributing to their programme to inform planning, managing their programme and Annual Programme Monitoring. They should liaise with module co-ordinators to monitor and support enhancement of the student experience on the programme and contributing modules.

**Academic line manager (e.g. Head of Division):**

* Receives access to the Evasys dashboard. They use the data provided by the EvaSys dashboard to help inform management decisions on the quality of teaching provision. In doing so they may celebrate success and consider interventions where necessary.
* Should support and encourage staff to engage with the system, encourage high student response rates and ensure staff “close the feedback loop” at the end of surveys.
* Provides support and guidance to staff in responding to feedback where necessary, such as when abusive or inappropriate feedback is received.

**Faculty Dean (supported by ADLT, Faculty Operation Managers, or the equivalent)**:

* Uses the data provided by the EvaSys dashboard at a high level, to help inform their role in monitoring the quality of teaching and student experience in the faculty. In doing so they may celebrate success and consider interventions where necessary. With the support of Policy and Planning, they may use this data, aggregated with other data held by the University, to monitor and investigate factors influencing student success.
* Deans, Faculty Operations managers and Associate Deans for Learning and Teaching (ADLTs) will have access to the EvaSys dashboard.

**Strategic lead: Dean for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience, reporting to the Vice Principal (Education and Students)**

* Provides strategic direction for the design of the survey and aims of the system, liaising with professional services and the supplier to achieve these aims; reports to governance committees on the system and impact in line with committee remits.
* This role has access to the data provided by the full EvaSys dashboard to monitor the quality of teaching and student experience across the University. With support from Policy and Planning, the Dean will use this data, aggregated with other student data through the University business information systems, to provide insights into student performance and external metrics such as NSS and PTES.

**Academic Registry**

* **System management and administration**: (system administrator) provides system management including managing the system licence, user permissions and access, data governance and system security, working in collaboration with Information Services as appropriate; sets up the system to effectively run each semester; keeps up to date with developments in the software and advises stakeholders accordingly to ensure the system operates at the optimal level; de-anonymises student responses where a disciplinary or welfare matter arises, and shares/escalates the response as appropriate to enable follow up to take place.
* **Quality assurance and enhancement policy**: manages the implementation and development of the University’s policies and arrangements relevant to quality assurance and enhancement, including the arrangements for annual programme monitoring; uses the data generated from module feedback within monitoring of the quality of teaching and student experience through the annual programme monitoring process, and to inform discrete projects and to report to governance committees as required.

**Policy & Planning**

* Provides policy and data overview of the system and results, to align to the University’s wider data landscape, used to support enhancement of the student experience; uses the data, in conjunction with data available from other University systems, to support faculty and senior management in decision making and strategy.

**Faculty Professional Services staff**:

* Ensures that the correct module co-ordinator details are included within the University’s Curriculum Management System (Akari) from which information is drawn; notifies the system administrator of any modules which cannot use the standard survey dates before the deadline set; ensures the details of Super Users are kept up to date in the system to provide appropriate access for management reporting.
* Operations managers and other senior faculty professional staff may have access to the EvaSys dashboard to support academic colleagues.