

# Developing a Program Evaluation Plan

Evaluation of learning and teaching in the Faculty of Health Sciences is a core element of ensuring the ongoing excellence of the range of programs, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, which the Faculty delivers.

## Rationale

Evaluation helps us to learn about the quality of the programs that the University offers, whether they met the needs of the students and more broadly, the needs of the community, to find out what our students think of our teaching and to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the courses that we teach and how we might be able to improve them. It can also help us to systematically review the progress of students, their assessment results and their career outcomes<sup>1</sup>.

The Centre for the Enhancement of Learning at the University of Canberra states that:<sup>2</sup>

*Evaluation is about learning. It involves learning from our students about their learning, and learning about our teaching from our students, our colleagues and our selves, in order to make improvements that focus our practice on teaching for learning.*

*Evaluation occupies a central role in teaching and forms and shapes the professional practice of individual teachers. Effective teaching is not simply a matter of following a set of rules or applying a particular technique. Each teaching situation is unique and can be thought of as a form of problem solving requiring teachers to make judgements about how to best engage their students in the process of learning*

Evaluation and quality assurance are imperatives of both the University and the Faculty of Health Sciences. The University of Adelaide places excellence in learning and teaching at the heart of their Strategic Plan 2008-2012<sup>3</sup>. This notes that the University will:

*..pursue excellence in all that we do. The achievement of the vision will require that the whole University community remains committed to the highest intellectual and ethical standards in teaching and learning, in research and research training, and in the conduct of all our professional activities.*

The Strategic Plan then goes on to highlight as part of their strategic direction that

*We will provide a distinctive learning experience of high quality for our students, and produce graduates whose knowledge and attributes enable them to have significant impact within their communities.*

In order to ensure *Teaching Quality and the Student Experience*, the Strategic Plan proposes the following strategy<sup>4</sup> (p18):

*Maintain, monitor and enhance regular and effective processes of evaluation, review and program development to ensure: that the highest standards of excellence are integrated within curricula and course materials; that all programs have scholarly integrity and are informed by the latest research methodologies; that programs are accessible and relevant to their students; that programs are compliant with national codes of practice and the demands of professional accreditation; and that they meet the expectations of both academic and professional employers.*

The Faculty of Health Sciences developed a Learning and Teaching Plan in 2006<sup>5</sup>, and a key element of this plan is to “*Establish processes to ensure programs are of high academic quality*”. Strategies suggested to ensure this quality, include:

- 2.1 *Ensure program and course documents and student learning activities articulate graduate attributes that are aligned with those of the University of Adelaide.*
- 2.2 *Develop a system for the monitoring, analysis and reporting on aggregated SELT, CEQ and GDS survey data to inform learning and teaching improvements across the Faculty*
- 2.4 *Establish mechanisms to report SELT outcomes and actions to students.*

## **Levels of Evaluation**

The University of Adelaide has in place a number of processes to help to assure the quality of their programs. The [Program Review](#) process is a very broad review undertaken every five years and providing information at a strategic level. [Course reviews](#) are undertaken more frequently and focus on course development. In terms of specific data about programs and whether they are meeting their learning objectives, meeting external accreditation requirements (if necessary), exploring teacher and student satisfaction and implementing systematic improvement processes, a locally developed [Program Evaluation Plan](#) is suggested. The following table summarises the differing purposes of these ongoing QA processes:

<b>UNIVERSITY PROGRAM REVIEWS</b>	<b>UNIVERSITY COURSE REVIEWS</b>	<b>PROGRAM EVALUATION PLANS</b>
<b>Five yearly</b> , on a rotating cycle	<b>Three yearly</b> on a rotating cycle	<b>Regular</b> systematic evaluation developed for the specific program
<b>Mandatory</b>	<b>Mandatory</b>	<b>Strongly Recommended</b>
<b>Reports to the DVC</b> (Academic)	<b>Reports to the Executive Dean/ Faculty Board</b>	<b>Reports to Program Committee/ Faculty Board</b>
<b>Proforma</b> developed by the University	<b>Proforma</b> developed by the Faculty of Health Sciences	<b>Proforma</b> developed by the Faculty of Health Sciences
<b>Considers</b> all aspects of the program	<b>Considers</b> enrolments, completions, demographics as well as student satisfaction	<b>Considers</b> only learning and teaching aspects
<b>Scope:</b> very broad encompassing data from application to graduation.	<b>Scope:</b> encompasses student satisfaction, equity and access, learning quality	<b>Scope:</b> developed for a specific program so can consider special requirements and has unique and specific aims and objectives. Can specifically consider CEQ and GDS results
<b>Feedback:</b> recommendations from the Review Panel to the Faculty	<b>Feedback:</b> recommendations from the Course co-coordinator to the Program Committee and Faculty Board	<b>Feedback:</b> a specific feedback and action loop is specified in the Program Evaluation Plan

## The Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS)

*Note: The following information comes from the University Strategy and Planning Website at: <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/sp/surveys/ceq/>. More detailed information about these surveys can be found at this website.*

The Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) are part of the Australian Graduate Survey (AGS), an annual survey of university graduates developed by Graduate Careers Australia (GCA)<sup>6</sup>.

- The aim of the CEQ is to determine what graduates thought of the coursework program that they had recently completed, including their attitudes towards the skills they acquired, and the quality of teaching provided, during their program.
- Three indicators from the CEQ are used in the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund. These indicators are the percentage of graduates who either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements in each of the three core scales (i.e. Generic Skills, Good Teaching, Overall Satisfaction), out of all graduates who responded to the statements in each scale.
- The Learning and Teaching Performance Fund provides extra funding to Universities who perform well in the CEQ. Thus, it is a Faculty priority to ensure that each program in the faculty performs well in the CEQ.
- The aim of the GDS is to determine the activities of graduates approximately four months after they completed a program at an Australian university. In particular, the survey asks whether graduates were in employment at the time of the survey, or whether they had proceeded to further study.
- Results and benchmarking data on both the CEQ and GDS can be found in the [Data Warehouse](#). The University of Adelaide's results (including program level data) are available for the 2004 survey onwards, and national benchmarking results (for all universities) are available for the 2002 survey onwards. Commonly used CEQ data from the Data Warehouse, such as the percent agreement indicators for the three core scales, are also available in the [Regular Data Warehouse Performance Reports](#) on the Strategy and Planning website.
- The CEQ and GDS can provide useful data for the overall Program Evaluation Plan and results should be incorporated into overall Evaluation Plan results.

## Evaluation of Learning and Teaching in the Faculty of Health Sciences

Evaluation is an integral part of learning and teaching for two key reasons:

- As a learning and teaching professional, seeking to identify and improve the quality of your teaching and reflecting on your activities is a key element of your professional practice
- The university is accountable to its various stakeholders – particularly its students – for the quality of learning outcomes and evaluation of programs is one key method of identifying these.

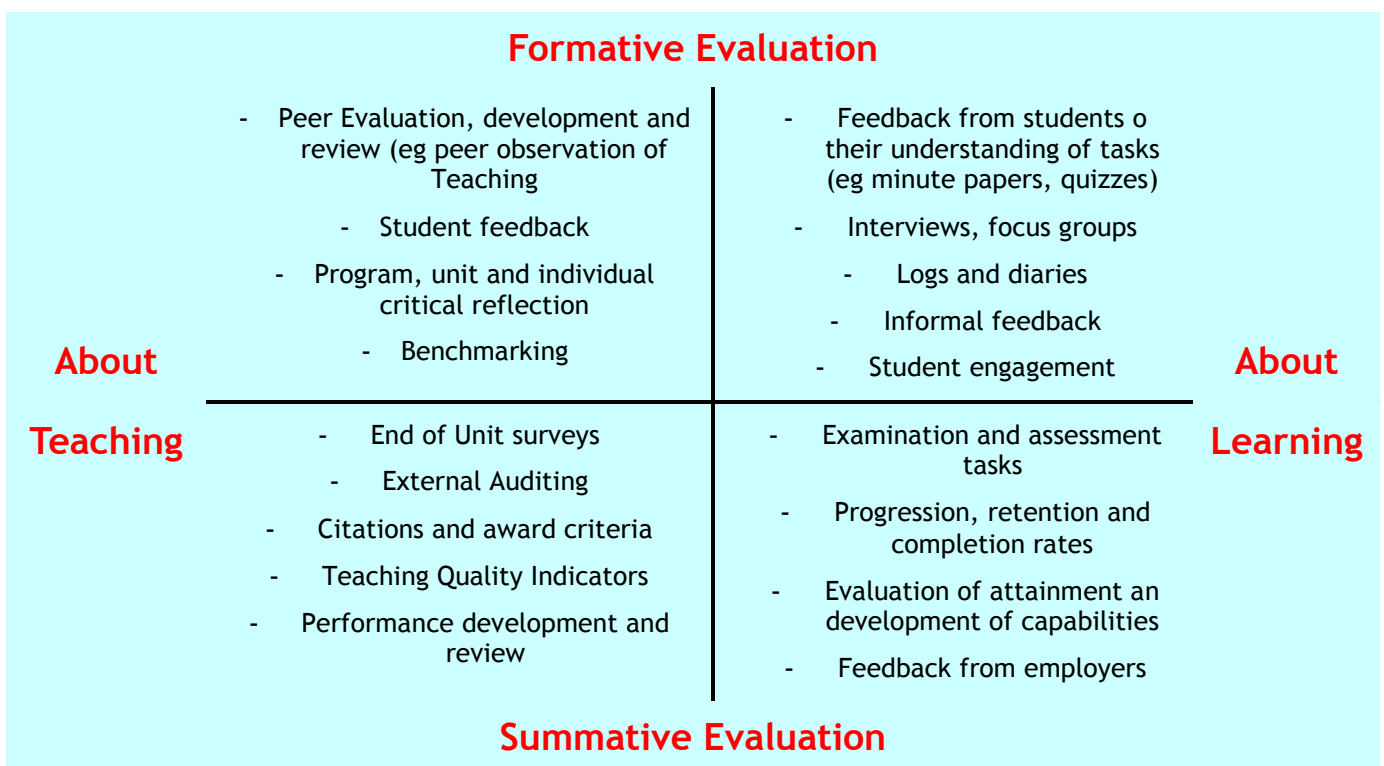
A number of evaluation activities are regularly undertaken by the each of the programs in the Faculty, particularly Student Evaluation of Learning and Teaching (SELTs) at both a course and program level.

Some programs in the Faculty must also meet the requirements of external accrediting agencies and must provide regular reports on their programs.

Every program is externally reviewed every five years, and any new programs or courses must be approved by both the Faculty and the University of Adelaide Program Approval Committee (PAC).

Whilst all of these activities contribute to ensuring the quality of programs, they do not provide a complete picture of how a program is meeting its aims and objectives, how well it is meeting the needs of the students, whether it continues to address changing environments within the discipline and/or profession and they do not generally provide a systematic assessment of the quality of the teaching in the program.

There are a variety of different aspects on which a Program Evaluation can concentrate, and the following diagram from Macquarie University provides a useful summary of evaluation options and their role in the evaluation process<sup>7</sup>



Best practice in evaluation identifies that a systematic planned process of evaluation, using a variety of evaluation strategies and tools will provide the most comprehensive picture of how well a program is meeting its aims and objectives, and the needs of the students.

The Evaluation Template provided here aims to provide you with a variety of options and tools for the development of a Program Evaluation Plan for your specific program. Rather than being a prescription for how you must evaluate your program, we have provided tools to enable you to develop the Program Evaluation Plan that most fits with your specific programs and courses and the resources available to you. Some of the options we strongly recommend including in your Plan, whilst others may not be useful for you.

If you have any queries about the Program Evaluation Template, or developing your Program Evaluation Plan, please contact:

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey J. [Ed]. 1998. Evaluation Cookbook. <http://www.icbl.hw.ac.uk/lt/di>

<sup>2</sup> The Centre for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship, University of Canberra. 2007. Evaluation as Academic Practice. . <http://www.canberra.edu.au/celts/evaluation/evaluation>

<sup>3</sup> University of Adelaide. 2007. *Building a Great Research. University of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012.* <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/34/>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Adelaide. 2006. *Strategic Plan 2006-2008* [https://www.health.adelaide.edu.au/learning\\_teaching/FHSLTPlan.pdf](https://www.health.adelaide.edu.au/learning_teaching/FHSLTPlan.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Strategy and Planning. University of Adelaide. 2008. Survey Management. <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/sp/surveys/ceq/>

<sup>7</sup> Learning and Teaching Centre. Macquarie University. 2008. Evaluation.. <http://www.mq.edu.au/learningandteachingcentre/about/lt/evaluation.htm>