YourJCU Subject and Teaching Survey

Guidelines for Survey Data Interpretation and Use

The following guidelines provide advice on the interpretation and use of YourJCU Subject and Teaching Survey data.

Interpreting Likert-scale results

Mean scores can be misleading. It is often more useful to focus on the percentage agreement (agree + strongly agree) and disagreement (disagree + strongly disagree) for each item on the YourJCU Subject and Teaching Surveys.

While it is important to compare subjects on percentage agreement and disagreement for each item, be wary of contextual factors that may influence results. Only compare subjects in the same discipline area with similar class sizes at the same year or course level.

Reliability of Likert-scale results

When considering reliability, it is important to consider whether response rates are adequate for each subject offering. Nulty's (2008) liberal criteria are a useful guide for determining adequate response rates. Nulty's criteria are scaled to class size (i.e. small class sizes require greater response rates). When considering survey results for very small class sizes, it is important to focus on other data sources and/or review results over an extended period (i.e. several semesters or years).

Interpreting open-ended responses

Students' open-ended responses can provide insight into their learning experience and clarify Likert-scale results. It is helpful to consider responses under categories or themes (e.g. assessment design, feedback). Determine the proportion of negative to positive responses to identify strengths and areas that may require improvement. Be wary of investing too much significance in any single response. Anonymity and pressures unrelated to students' learning experiences can occasionally tempt some students to respond in an unhelpful way (Tucker, 2014). Student responses that include threatening, intimidating, abusive or discriminatory content should be reported to the Directorate of Learning, Teaching and Student Engagement.

Contextualising YourJCU Survey data

YourJCU Survey data should be interpreted within a meaningful context, including (and not limited to):

- The subject's aims and learning outcomes
- Design of assessment and the blend
- Changes made to the subject in response to previous student and/or peer feedback, self-evaluation and/or current literature on effective teaching and learning in the discipline
- Respective role(s) and contribution(s) to teaching in the subject (if applicable)
- Subject mode
- Whether the subject is compulsory or elective
- Cohort size
- Year and course level; and
- Any major local disruptions during the teaching period.

Review YourJCU Subject and Teaching Survey data alongside other data sources. Beyond the 'Student Experience' quadrant, see other quadrants in the 4Q Model of Evaluation (adapted from Smith, 2008).

Discussing and acting on YourJCU Survey data

It may be helpful to share YourJCU Teaching data with a trusted colleague or discipline specific mentor. Where subjects have more than one teacher, YourJCU Subject data should be shared with the whole teaching team, including sessional staff, and discussed and interpreted together. It is helpful to agree to this process before collecting the data. Students' open-ended responses that relate to individual teachers should be removed before circulation. Key strengths and issues/areas for improvement can be identified and an action plan, devised accordingly. See the 4Q Reflective Resource for Subject Coordinators.

Closing the feedback loop

It is important to inform students of actions that have been taken in response to survey data, often referred to as 'closing the feedback loop'. See *Section 2.4 Student feedback on subject* in the Subject Outline Template and Guide. Research suggests that students are willing to continue to provide feedback about their subjects and teachers if they see that actions have been taken based on previous feedback (Bennett & Nair, 2010). Higher response rates, in turn, enhance the reliability and usefulness of YourJCU Subject and Teaching Survey data.

Resource adapted from University of Sydney (2017). Teaching Insight: Making use of data from unit of study evaluations.

Purposes/contexts for YourJCU Data Use

Teaching and curriculum enhancement

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy Core *Principle 9. Teaching that develops learning is well organised and subject to enhancement led through the cyclical process of reflection, revision and improvement.*

> *9.2. The provision of efficient and robust learning experiences within all courses will be based upon a Quality Enhancement Framework. Through this process, learning and teaching will aim to create a continuous cycle of improvement,* ***with emphasis on self-reflection and critical self-evaluation that draw on evidence to inform and enhance practice.***

Peer Review of Teaching (PRoT)

JCU Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy

> *5.17. Subject Coordinator must seek a biennial peer review of the subject's assessment plans and grading practices.*

Performance and Development Planning (PDP)

Student Experience of Learning and Teaching Policy

YourJCU Subject and Teaching Survey Likert-scale results, as well as Your JCU Subject Survey open-ended responses, will be incorporated into annual PDP conversations for all teaching staff. PDP supervisors are aware that student feedback is to be considered in a constructive, not punitive, fashion.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

SoTL promotes a research approach to practice and can be enacted through a staged process, involving:

- **Utilising data and/or feedback** to identify an intervention designed to enhance learning or teaching
- Using a theory, model or framework to ground the intervention and providing the justification for action
- Formulating an investigative question
- Conducting an investigation (empirical, theoretical or literature-based) designed to address the question; and
- Disseminating findings to internal and external audiences (Trigwell, 2012).

Any use of YourJCU Subject and Teaching Survey data for research purposes will require ethics approval from the JCU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

Recognition: Teaching Citations/Awards

A range of teaching awards and citations are offered through the Directorate of Learning, Teaching and Student Engagement for full-time and sessional teaching staff, which align with national awards schemes. **Submissions for teaching citations/awards are evidence-informed**.

Advancement/Academic Promotion

JCU Academic Promotion Procedure *Section 3a. JCU recognises and rewards staff members who have demonstrated sustained achievement in the key elements of academic endeavour: (1) Learning and teaching; (2) Research and scholarship; and (3) Service and engagement.*

Learning and teaching refers to the scholarly activity which draws on professional and disciplinary expertise, including any clinical experience, to enhance the opportunities for students and HDR applicants to learn and develop academically, particularly in their chosen University degree programs. **Evidence of teaching quality and impact must be submitted as specified.**

References

Bennett, L. & Nair, C. (2010). A recipe for effective participation rates for web based surveys. *Assessment and Evaluation Journal*, 35(4), 357-366.

Nulty, D. (2008). The adequacy of response rates to online and paper surveys: What can be done? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 33(3), 301-314.

Smith, C. (2008). Building effectiveness in teaching through targeted evaluation and response: Connecting evaluation to teaching improvement in higher education. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 33(5), 517-533.

Trigwell, K. (2012). Scholarship of teaching and learning. In L. Hunt and D. Chalmers (Eds.), *University teaching in focus: A learning-centred approach* (pp. 253-276). Victoria: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Tucker, B. (2014). Student evaluation surveys: Anonymous comments that offend or are unprofessional. *Higher Education*, 68, 347-358.