

UBC Student Experience of Instruction (SEI) surveys: Changes in Fall 2021 (For Faculty)

Starting from the principle that evaluation of teaching should include student feedback, the UBC Vancouver and Okanagan Senates have endorsed recommendations for gathering this feedback through end-of-course [evaluations](#), which will now be referred to as *Student Experience of Instruction (SEI) surveys*, using questions that focus on students' experiences in classes. This document provides a high-level overview of upcoming changes. Further details can be found at student experience of instruction website (seoi.ubc.ca)

Changes to University Module Items

Key changes to the end of course evaluations included wording of the questions and establishing a common set of six university-level items (UMIs) to be used across both campuses. For UBC Vancouver, the number of UMIs remains the same, but the wording has changed. For UBC Okanagan, the change is more significant, with a shift from 19 UMIs to 6 UMIs as well as the wording changes.

A mixed-methods process was undertaken to produce new wording for the six UMIs, including 24 focus groups with both students and faculty (156 participants), 29 individual think-aloud interviews with students, and pilot-testing the revised questions using an online survey with student volunteers and conducting a quantitative analysis using Item Response Theory (IRT) and Differential Item Functioning (DIF) to determine how well the new items functioned across individuals and respondent groups.

Based on the results of this mixed-method approach, the UBCO Senate Learning and Research Committee, and the UBCV Senate Teaching and Learning Committee, approved the following UMIs to be implemented starting in Fall2021:

1. Throughout the term, the instructor explained course requirements so it was clear to me what I was expected to learn.
2. The instructor conducted this course in such a way that I was motivated to learn.
3. The instructor presented the course material in a way that I could understand.
4. Considering the type of class (e.g., large lecture, seminar, studio, etc.), the instructor provided useful feedback that helped me understand how my learning progressed during this course.
5. The instructor showed genuine interest in supporting my learning throughout this course.
6. Overall, I learned a great deal from this instructor.

The following three open-ended questions will also be included in the SEI surveys:

7. Please identify what you consider to be the strengths of this course.
8. Please provide suggestions on how this course might be improved.
9. Do you have any suggestions for what the instructor could have done differently to further support your learning?

Changes to Reported Metrics

In the past UBC has reported the arithmetic average (“mean”) and standard deviation of student responses to the student survey questions. Although this choice is common practice, these values can disguise important differences, since courses with very different distributions of student responses can have the same mean. UBC has recently moved to reporting the **interpolated median** rather than the mean, and the **dispersion index** rather than the standard deviation and has included **percent favourable**. For further details on changes to metrics please visit <https://seoi.ubc.ca/metrics/>

Moving Beyond the Basics: Next Steps in analyzing SEI data

Two of the [Senate recommendations](#) also refer to work needed beyond the typical analyses undertaken with the SEI survey results moving forward.

Recommendation 12: “UBC should prioritize work to extract information from text/open comments submitted as part of the feedback process.” The SEI Implementation Committee is working on pilot testing a UBC-developed natural language processing system aimed at helping individual instructors more easily find patterns, commonalities, and differences within the text comments on SEI surveys for their courses.

Recommendation 13: “UBC needs additional and regularized analysis of our own data to answer questions related to potential bias” The SEI Implementation Committee is working with UBC Planning and Institutional Research and the Equity and Inclusion Office to plan and conduct such analyses, some of which can best be undertaken after new processes for gathering better demographic data from faculty and students are put in place during the 2021/2022 academic year.

Ongoing Work in Evaluation of Teaching at UBC

The recommendations from the UBCV and UBCO Senates also emphasized the importance of supporting the adoption of an integrative approach to evaluation of teaching that includes and integrates multiple sources of data. Initial work has begun by the SEI Implementation Committee via a discussion paper on this topic that will be completed in early Fall 2021. This paper will feed into the work of a cross-campus Senate Working Group to be formed in Fall of 2021 that will be tasked with developing a broader policy on the evaluation of teaching.

Implementation Timeline

- **Senate committee approval of new UMI:** Summer 2021
- **New UMI in surveys:** Fall 2021 through Summer 2022
- **Text analyses:** Fall 2021 through Summer 2022
- **New demographic data and analyses:** Fall 2021 through Summer 2022
- **Integrative evaluation of teaching:** Fall 2021 through Summer 2022

Contact

If you have questions, or would like to know more, please visit <https://seoi.ubc.ca/> or email us at sei.support@ubc.ca.