

Standardized Procedures for Student Evaluation of Instruction

Course and instructor evaluation systems like PICES are designed as diagnostic tools. Precautions should be taken to ensure that data are obtained properly and interpreted fairly and intelligently. To achieve procedural consistency in the student response process, a faculty committee dealing with the evaluation of teaching recommended the following guidelines for hard-copy evaluation systems. (For on-line evaluation systems, analogous precautions are necessary, contact CIE for details).

1. An independent person (other than the faculty member or teaching assistants associated with the course) should administer, collect, and forward to the Instructional Data Processing the evaluation forms.
2. The faculty member should not be present during the evaluation procedure.
3. The students should be given a standardized set of instructions for filling out evaluation instruments.
4. The timing of the evaluations should not coincide with special classroom events.
5. Both the faculty member and the department head should independently receive the processed evaluation information from the Instructional Data Processing at the same time (in departments where this is the procedure) and after meeting the deadline for submitting course grades.

In addition to the above guidelines, consideration should be given to the following:

- To maintain anonymity, responses should be obtained from at least 5 students; to ensure that the results are representative, responses should be obtained from the greater percentage of the class.
- Comparisons of the evaluations of different faculty should use appropriate norms that are specified by the department. Other comparisons might be the progress of a faculty member's evaluations over time, that is, demonstration of improvement, and of a specified course over time with different instructors.
- Student evaluations are only one component of a complete teaching evaluation system. Some other sources that should be considered are evaluation by teaching assistants, peers, and external referees.
- Instructions cautioning against marking demographic items should be offered in courses where gender, for instance, would identify one group of students over another group of students, i.e., so few female students in a course that they could be easily identified.

The Center for Instructional Excellence (49-66422) is prepared to assist and answer questions regarding the establishment of departmental teaching evaluation systems. Questions about PICES should be directed to Instructional Data Processing at 49-45 112.