

Introduction

The American University of Armenia (AUA) strives for excellence in pedagogy. Student feedback is critical to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Student evaluation of courses is also considered in the faculty evaluation process, as well as in promotion and contract renewal. It is the shared responsibility of faculty, students, and administration to contribute to the course evaluation process which entails 1) conducting the evaluations, 2) disseminating results, 3) reviewing findings, and 4) implementing changes, as needed.

Purpose

Students' course evaluations are one component of an overall course and instructor assessment. Course evaluations serve three objectives:

1. Providing students with an opportunity to share feedback on course structure, assignments, workload, and pedagogy;
2. Helping the instructor improve future delivery of the course through consideration of student comments and suggestions;
3. Providing AUA's administration with data to ensure course and curricular quality.

Application

In addition to answering the standard course evaluation questionnaire, students are able to provide written comments to offer additional useful information and suggest improvements. Course evaluations are completely anonymous. Results are not available to instructors or leadership until the final grades for the course have been submitted and verified by the Office of the Registrar. In the final course evaluation report, the instructor only sees numerical answers to the questionnaire and anonymous student comments. Average scores are provided for courses with multiple sections, for courses in various colleges, and separately for lower division, upper division, and graduate courses. In computing these averages, course evaluations with lower than 25% student participation are excluded.

The Program Chair and Dean discuss the results of the course evaluations with the instructor at the end of each semester. Summary results from course evaluations are included in the Faculty Annual Report of Accomplishments. The data is used by faculty review committees and the University leadership in promotion and contract extension decisions. Normally, poor course evaluations become a matter of concern when there is consistency over several courses or course sections, or persistency from year to year.

Timing

For 10-15 week courses, the course evaluation starts 14 calendar days before the final day of classes. For 6–8 week courses, the course evaluation starts 8 calendar days before the final day of classes. For courses with a shorter duration, the evaluation starts 4 calendar days before the final day of classes.

Responsible unit

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) is charged by the Provost to administer course evaluations:

- -At the end of each semester, OIRA provides the Instructor and the Dean and Chair of the academic program with the course evaluations so they can discuss the results, as necessary.
- -OIRA maintains a secure archive of end-of-course evaluations indefinitely.
- -Course evaluations are made available to the Instructor, the Dean and Chair of the corresponding academic program, the Provost, and to committee charged with review of the promotion case of the Instructor.
- -At the end of each semester, OIRA consolidates end-of-course evaluation information for review by the Provost.

Each academic unit at AUA is responsible for ensuring that all faculty know the importance of end-of-course evaluations as well as actively encouraging their students to complete the form at the end of each course.