

# CES Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## Logistical questions

### **1. How will students and instructors know the course is being evaluated and how do they get access to the system?**

In the most basic terms, students will receive an email with an embedded link inviting them to complete the CES. The student will click on the link within the email and log in with their UVic NetLink ID. The system will show them the entire list of their courses for which they need to complete surveys. Instructors will be sent an email once their course is open for evaluation with an embedded link that allows them to check their response rates at any time. Instructors can also directly access the [CES dashboard](#) to retrieve their default course CES start/end dates.

### **2. During what window of time will courses be open for evaluation?**

Courses will be surveyed in the last 1/6th of the course. For a 12 week course this would be two (2) weeks. For the shorter term courses, for example for a one week long course, the last two days of the course will be when the evaluations take place. For courses shorter than one week, two days is still the minimum. For courses longer than 12 weeks, two weeks is still the maximum. Students will be emailed automatically when the survey time is open for them to evaluate their courses. If you want to wait until the last day of class to conduct your evaluations in class, please be sure to mention to the students that they only have until 11:59 PM that last day of classes to complete them.

### **3. Can I change the window for when my course evaluations are open to students?**

[In some instances](#), yes. Courses that are correctly entered into Banner will automatically generate the CES start/end dates but we are able to alter these dates in some specific instances.

Both the length of time (window length) and the start and end dates (window open/close dates) that the CES is available have been determined by the Faculty Advisory Committee charged by Senate with implementation. The window has been very carefully considered repeatedly over the years that the committee has been working. There are many colleagues who wish the window to be earlier and many who wish it to be later. Some wish it to be shorter; others longer. There are firmly held opinions on all sides. After careful consideration, including advice from the Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching, the committee decided to remain with what existed previously. Thus there has been no change to the policy that existed for years prior to going online (the window should be the last one-sixth of the course—generally the last two weeks). Colleagues may perceive a change in practice because all windows are now administered consistently by the CES system. However, this is not the case.

The committee is also committed to maintaining protection for students and colleagues on both sides. Thus the committee has reaffirmed that a) CES reports may not be sent to colleagues before grades are in, and b) that students may not complete the CES in the exam period.

### **4. How does the instructor know when the system is open for his/her students? How can the instructor check his/her response rates?**



At the same time as students in a course receive an invitation to complete the CES survey instructors also receive an email with an embedded link allowing them to view their CES dashboard and response rates as often as they wish during the evaluation period.

#### **5. What do the system generated emails to instructors and students look like?**

- [Sample of CES Online Instructor Email](#)
- [Sample of CES Online Student Email](#)

#### **6. How will instructors and chairs/directors/deans receive the results?**

All individual instructors will receive an email inviting them to review their reports. The email contains an embedded link asking them to sign into the secure CES environment with their UVic NetLink ID. As long as the instructor is listed as an instructor of record reports can also be accessed anytime by checking their CES dashboard at [ces.uvic.ca](http://ces.uvic.ca). If the instructor is not currently teaching, please contact [ceshelp@uvic.ca](mailto:ceshelp@uvic.ca) to request reports. Chairs and Deans reports will be released after the term has been completed (usually 4-6 weeks after the last day of classes to allow for late grade submissions). Notifications will be sent through the CES Admin listserv.

#### **7. When will we get our term reports?**

CES Reports are automatically released once grades have been submitted and finalized by the department. If you have not received your reports, check that your grades have been submitted.

#### **8. Will all courses be evaluated?**

All courses in Banner with a CRN number will be surveyed unless:

- there is no instructor noted for the course in Banner
- the instructor of record does not have a NetLink ID or valid email
- less than five (5) students are enrolled PER CRN, e.g. independent study or some graduate courses and in some cases, cross-listed courses
- the teachers are either TAs or lab instructors

All courses with five or MORE students enrolled will have reports generated even if less than five students complete the survey. It is very important that you make sure that Banner has all the instructors noted for that course so that they are all evaluated. The accuracy of the system depends on departments ensuring the accuracy of the information they put into Banner.

#### **9. What about Co-op or Continuing Studies courses?**

If the course has a CRN number and is in Banner invitations will be sent to evaluate it unless one of the exceptions in Section A, Question #8 above applies.

#### **10. How are year long courses evaluated?**

All year long courses have two CRNs (one per term). The default is that the course will be evaluated at the end of each term. This also allows for year long courses taught by different

instructors in each term but if no grades are assigned to the first half there will not be a CES report. It may be helpful to contact [ces.uvic.ca](http://ces.uvic.ca) for assistance as it is possible to exempt the first half of these particular courses.

### **Data management, confidentiality and security questions**

#### **1. How will the instructors as well as the chairs/directors/deans get their results?**

Instructors will receive a direct invite to view their reports. An invitation to view the chairs/directors/deans versions of reports will be emailed to the CES Admin listserv 4-6 weeks after the final day of classes.

#### **2. Where can reports be accessed by Instructors and their chairs/directors and deans?**

Instructor reports can be accessed at any time by going to your [CES dashboard](#) and signing in using your secure UVic NetLink ID. Please be aware that when you are not teaching your access status will have changed. If you are denied access please contact [ceshelp@uvic.ca](mailto:ceshelp@uvic.ca). Chairs/directors/deans reports can only be accessed through [Connect](#) once permission has been provisioned by your departmental technical support staff.

#### **3. Does the chair/director/dean see the comments from the students?**

No. Not unless provided to them by the instructor if the instructor is a faculty member. However, they do have access in the case of sessional or continuing sessional instructors.

#### **4. Will Administrative Assistants be able to have access to the results and can access be delegated?**

LTSI no longer manages the permissions for the Connect CES sites. If you need assistance with Connect permissions please contact the technical support staff that created your departmental Connect AD group. Permissions can only be given by the chair/director/dean of any given department/faculty.

#### **5. Will team teachers see each other's results?**

No. Each individual instructor will see the results for the course overall and their own results, not those of the other instructor(s).

#### **6. Will the documents for past terms still be available for access on CES SharePoint (now Connect)?**

Yes, the existing CES SharePoint site will live on as a historical archive and you will be able to access past reports for reports prior to Summer 2014.



## **7. Are student responses confidential?**

Yes. Instructors receive only summary reports with the written statements and only after grades have been submitted. The summary reports do not include any identifying student information. Even in small classes there will no longer be hand written comments. In this sense students can have greater confidence that their answers are confidential since their handwriting can no longer be recognized.

From a purely technical perspective, the CES system does maintain a linkage within the survey database, which enables automatic inclusion/exclusion of responses based on course enrolment. But because we do not have any people handling individual student surveys, the survey results are effectively anonymous. That is, no instructors, deans, chairs or departmental academic staff have the ability to access individual student surveys. A small number of Systems administrators do theoretically have the ability to access individual student surveys. However this is strictly forbidden, just as it is forbidden for them to view any confidential information with which they are entrusted. Employees in these roles are entrusted with a wide variety of highly confidential information at UVic such as personnel records. These employees sign a confidentiality agreement with the university before being hired.

### **What is my role as a CES liaison and how can I help my academic unit transition successfully?**

#### **1. As a CES liaison and an administrative assistant in my academic unit what should I be doing?**

Admin assistants have historically played an enormous role in making CES work. We recognize this and hope that your role will be less onerous in future. In this important period of transition could you please check all your instructors:

- and your course information are accurate in Banner
- have NetLink IDs and emails
- have access to the suggested statement for their syllabus/course outline
- have reviewed the tip sheet for keeping response rates high

You may also wish to check in with your new instructors to make sure they are aware of the CES. Please refer people to the information on the CES page for the most up-to-date information.

#### **2. Is there a simple explanation I can show instructors that they can cut and paste on to their syllabus or outline?**

Yes, it can be found on the [Faculty CES page](#).

#### **3. Where can I point instructors for tips if they want to keep their response rates to their surveys high?**

Tips for keeping response rates high can be found on the [Faculty CES page](#).

#### **4. Who do we contact to add instructors in Banner for a course?**

Please contact [ttadmin@uvic.ca](mailto:ttadmin@uvic.ca) and they can help you.

## **Trouble shooting and unusual circumstances**

### **1. How do instructors and students get into the system? Do they need a NetLink ID?**

Yes to be able to be recognized securely in the system all instructors and students need to have a NetLink ID. Instructors and students who do not have a NetLink ID cannot be evaluated in the system.

### **2. Why has a faculty instructor failed to be evaluated?**

If a faculty instructor has not been evaluated please first check that they have a UVic NetLink ID and email. If they have these, please confirm that they are properly listed as the instructor for the sections they are teaching. Team-taught courses require all instructors to be enrolled as instructors for the section in Banner. Non-graded courses, courses with less than five (5) students and TA/lab instructors are not currently evaluated online.

### **3. Do students have to use their UVic email to receive the invitation email to complete the survey?**

No, the invitation email will be sent to the student's declared preferred email (as they have indicated to the university). However, for security and privacy reasons they must use their UVic NetLink ID to be able to log in and answer the survey.

### **4. What if the preferred email of the student does not work? How do we know the student has seen the email to complete their evaluations as not all the students preferred emails work properly?**

It is highly recommended that all instructors in face-to-face classes set time aside in class, when the evaluation period is open, to allow students to complete the CES on their mobile (or other) devices. This helps enormously with response rates. It is also recommended that instructors put the instructions and the date the evaluations are going to be done in class and the direct link to [ces.uvic.ca](https://ces.uvic.ca) on their syllabus/class outline. Students can always access the link even if they lose the email. If a student is sick the day of the evaluations, then they can log in and do the evaluations from home.

### **5. Can students from other universities (e.g. TRU) receive the survey?**

All courses listed in Banner will be evaluated and all students listed in classes in UVic's Banner system will be sent emails automatically to do their evaluations unless one of the exceptions in Section A, Question #8 above applies. If students are not listed in courses in Banner they will not be sent emails to do evaluations on that course.

### **6. How will courses with multiple instructors be evaluated?**

All students will receive one CES survey for each course they are to evaluate. If there are multiple instructors in a particular course and they are all noted in Banner then the survey will come up with each instructor to evaluate within the survey for that course. The

students only have to complete the course information once, but they receive questions for each of the instructors they had teaching them.

### **7. What happens if an undergrad and grad course are being taught together?**

They will have two CRNs and will be evaluated as two courses.

### **8. What will happen with team taught/cross listed courses? Right now one department takes responsibility. Which department will receive these reports?**

All department chairs/directors/deans and instructors in all courses will be able to access their relevant course reports with the new CES system as appropriate. Admin assistants will no longer need to manually get copies of reports from other departments and share reports for team taught courses.

### **9. For interdisciplinary courses, who gets the reports?**

Whoever the instructor/s is/are for the interdisciplinary course/s will receive the results for the course.

### **10. For those departments with additional questions (21-25), will the actual question show up on the new CES system?**

Yes, where there were questions on the old paper form in any category these have been reproduced in the new system.

## **Governance, decision-making and processes**

### **1. Who got to make all these decisions about how CES is run at UVic? What is the decision-making process if I or others have questions?**

The Senate of the university passed the decision to implement a course evaluation (subsequently the Course Experience Survey, or CES) in 2002. The CES Faculty Advisory Committee was struck in 2006 and has met regularly ever since to advise and provide guidance to the campus-wide implementation of the survey, as well as to make recommendations on policy, approaches and research questions. The first campus-wide survey began as a pilot in 2007. The CES Faculty Advisory Committee reports regularly to the Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching and is included in its annual reports to Senate. More recently the move to CES online was discussed broadly in various venues including Deans Council, examined carefully at the Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching during the 2012/13 and 2013/14 academic years, and presented for discussion and information at Senate. University Counsel has also been consulted as appropriate. All formal documents (e.g. Memos from the Provost's Office) can be accessed through the [Background information page](#) or through the University Secretary's Office (for Senate documents).

## **Interpreting the new reports**

### **1. What do the new CES forms and reports look like?**

Sample CES Online Form and Report:

- [Sample CES Student Online Form](#)
- [Sample CES Instructor Report](#)

## **2. How should CES results be used for merit/tenure decisions?**

It is inappropriate to base any personnel decisions solely on CES results. Ranking colleagues by CES scores is totally inappropriate since it does not take into consideration context, level, and other important sources of data. For more information and best practices please refer to [Using the New Course Experience Survey to Assess and Improve Teaching at UVic: A manual of best practices](#) and [Teaching Assessment Guidelines](#)

