UCONN

CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
IN TEACHING & LEARNING

Student Experience of Teaching: Providing Constructive Feedback to Your Instructors

Feedback is an essential part of the learning process, for students and instructors alike. Instructors often find students' *written* comments the most valuable element of experience surveys.Being able to give effective feedback is also a life skill you want to cultivate. To help your teachers get the most out of your end-of-term feedback on your course experience at UConn, please keep the following in mind before completing the end of semester survey or SETs:

◊   **Anonymity:** Your course evaluations are completely anonymous, both the numerical results and written comments. Your **responses are not linked to your ID number**; any reports are cumulative, i.e. as frequencies in a class and summary report

◊   **Confidentiality:** The complete results are confidential to the instructor and unit head (Chair, Director, or Dean).

◊   **Your instructor cannot see the results until the final grades for the course have been submitted and processed.**

Considerations when answering SET questions

Questions are asked on a 5-point scale:1 = "Strongly Disagree," 2 = "Disagree," 3 = "Neutral," 4 = "Agree," 5= "Strongly Agree, N/A"

•   You should choose 3 = "Neutral" only when you feel that your response is between the two endpoints.

•   Choose "Not applicable, N/A" when the question is not relevant to your course or instructor.

•   When you are providing feedback, you will be comparing the instructor to other instructors, either consciously or unconsciously. Be alert who you pick as **comparison group should be other instructors at comparable courses at the University level**, not e.g. teachers and courses at high school.

Considerations when writing comments

•   **Be specific and provide examples when commenting on the course or the instructor.** Specific constructive suggestions that focus on your learning are far more useful than general critiques. Help instructors understand how their instructional choices facilitated or hindered your learning. Speak based on your own experiences, not on behalf of your classmates.

•   **Be respectful:** Comments that are not related to your learning diminish the value of your feedback. For example, it is not helpful to comment upon an instructor's appearance when giving feedback. *Comments or criticisms based on instructor identities, including race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc. are NEVER appropriate in course feedback.*

- **Be sensitive when you frame comments related to personal traits (for example, accent or apparent unfriendliness)** Focus your comments on teaching behaviors that can be improved and describe how your learning would benefit from these changes.
- **Focus on observable behaviors of the instructor or on specific aspects of the course**. Describe the situation you are commenting on.
- **Offer alternative solutions or suggestions to address your critiques of the instructor or the course**, which helps the instructor when planning the course for the following year.

Your SET responses are valuable to the instructor and other students, as it might influence instruction at UConn. Future students will rely on your feedback, just as students before you had the opportunity to impact what you are experiencing. Time in this class was set aside to collect your response. Thank you for your thoughtful feedback.

Examples of constructive feedback	
Instead of … *[Vague critique or praise]*	**This is more helpful:** *[Specific suggestions that could improve your learning, OR explanations of why the course helped you learn]*
"The reading material was redundant."	"The reading material was redundant…. "…I didn't understand why we had to read so many different articles on the same topic." "...Could you offer more guidance on what we're supposed to look for in the readings?"
"Discussions were the best part of the course!"	""Discussions were the best part of the course,… "...I loved how you created an environment where students were willing to share perspectives and disagree." "...It was really helpful that you kept notes on the board during our discussions."