

## Undergraduate Courses with Low- and High-Rating Course Evaluations

### Learning and Teaching Committee Policy

<b>Category:</b>	Academic
<b>Last Modified:</b>	May 2012
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<b>Approved By:</b>	Chair, Academic Board
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Secretary, Learning and Teaching Committee, Extn 6229

#### Introduction:

The aim of this policy is to help courses that might have difficulties, as indicated by low course ratings, to improve. A further aim of this policy is to encourage good practice by acknowledging those courses with high ratings.

#### Definitions:

University of Canterbury **Standard Surveys** are intended to provide broad indications of student perceptions of teaching and to offer students a regular opportunity to comment on their courses.

#### Policy Statement:

##### 1. Goals

The aim is to help courses that might have difficulties, as indicated by low ratings, to improve. To this end it is necessary:

1. to ensure that all courses are surveyed each time they are offered so that low-rating courses can be identified;
2. to provide advice and consultation to help teachers improve these courses;
3. to support HODs, who must be involved if departments are to take responsibility for these courses.

A further aim is to encourage good practice by providing feedback to those departments with consistently high-rating courses.

## 2. Proposed Actions

- 2.1 The Survey Coordinator, at the beginning of each semester, will send a letter to HODs informing them of the courses in their department which fall below the faculty reference level at the last survey.
- 2.2 **Those courses identified by the LTC as low-rating will be subject to the following two-year, two-step process.**

### Year 1

When a course receives a rating below the lower reference level of the faculty this will trigger a letter of notice to the HOD and course convenor from the LTC as a reminder of the LTC's measures for addressing low-rating courses. The Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will contact the course convenor and the HOD to discuss the particular circumstances and context relating to the course, what has been done already, what may need to be done in the next year to improve the course, what other methods of feedback might be used.

The course convenor is the person listed as Course Coordinator in the Course Information System.

When a course receives a rating above the upper reference level of the faculty, this will trigger a letter of acknowledgement to the course convenor. Each year a schedule of all courses which receive either letter will be copied to Pro-Vice-Chancellors and Deans.

### Year 2

If the course receives a rating that takes it above the faculty reference level, no further action will be taken. The LTC will acknowledge in writing the improvement made.

If a course receives a second rating below the faculty benchmark, the LTC will initiate a formal review of the course and advise the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor accordingly.

The review panel will comprise the HOD (or nominee), a member of the LTC (who will act as chair), and a staff member from an allied discipline within the University.

The review panel, which will report to the LTC, will consider, *inter alia*:

- the particular circumstances and context behind the low rating;
- means by which the course might be improved
- possible courses of action in the absence of improvement.

The AVC (Academic) will be advised each year of any courses that are being reviewed.

## 3. Reporting

The LTC will report annually to the Academic Board on actions taken under this policy, and inform the UCSA.

## Related Policies, Procedures and Forms:

- [Teaching and Course Surveys](#)

## Appendices:

- Appendix A: Reference Levels for LTC Response to Surveys of Undergraduate Courses

<b>Version Control Table</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Approval Body</b>	<b>Date Amended</b>
Annual Review (Rolled Over)	Chair, Academic Board	23 July 2009
Annual Review <i>minor change in title under Year to AVC (Academic)</i>	Chair, Academic Board	23 May 2011
Minor procedural updates	Chair, Academic Board	November 2011
Full review <i>Minor amendments made including name change from Teaching and Learning Committee to Learning and Teaching Committee</i>	Chair, Academic Board	11 May 2012

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## Appendix A

### Reference Levels for LTC Responses to Surveys of Undergraduate Courses

#### 1. Mechanism

The Learning and Teaching Committee seeks to establish reference levels which are unambiguous, relatively stable, and sensitive to differences between faculties. Several different approaches were considered before adopting the present procedure, which is initially based on scores +/- 2 Std Devs and the 4<sup>th</sup> and 96<sup>th</sup> percentiles.

Reference levels are based on survey results to the overall question (Q.7) on the standard course survey:

*'Overall, this was a good quality course'*

Response scale: 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree)

#### 2. Reference Levels, 2011-2012

The Learning and Teaching Committee has set reference levels as follows.

- a. For action in respect of courses that receive low ratings the reference levels are:

Humanities and Social Sciences, Music and Fine Arts	3.2
Education	3.1
Science	3.0
Commerce	3.1
Law	3.2
Engineering and Forestry	2.9

On the basis of data from 2006-2009 these scores lie at the lowest 4%ile.

- b. For acknowledgement of courses that receive high-ratings the reference levels are:

Humanities and Social Sciences, Music and Fine Arts	4.9
Education	4.9
Science	4.8
Commerce	4.7
Law	4.8
Engineering and Forestry	4.6

On the basis of data from 2006-2009 these scores lie at the highest 4%ile.

Some courses are offered in more than one faculty grouping. It is possible for such a course to be identified for action in one faculty context but not others. Such courses are included for follow-up.

#### 3. Review

The Learning and Teaching Committee review the reference levels on an annual basis. However, as faculty averages have tended to remain stable, changes to the publicised levels are expected to be infrequent.