




Donna K. Arnett
Executive Vice President for
Academic Affairs and Provost

Memorandum

To: Academic Deans
Department Chairs/School Directors
Unit Tenure and Promotion Committee Chairs

From: Donna K. Arnett 
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Date: October 4, 2024

Subject: Student Course Experience Surveys

The University of South Carolina Columbia and the Palmetto College campuses will pilot a revised student course experience survey this academic year, including changes to both the survey questions and delivery platform. The university-wide rollout of the updated student course experience survey, formerly known as student evaluation of courses, is planned for Summer 2025.

In Spring of 2023, the Columbia Faculty Senate tasked the Committee on Instructional Development (InDev) with conducting a review of teaching assessment to lay the groundwork for efforts to improve assessment and provide our students with the most effective instruction possible. The committee has since completed two reports, [InDev Teaching Assessment Report](#) and [Recommendations to Increase Course Survey Response Rates](#), and is engaged in ongoing research, as well as policy and guideline revisions. We have adopted the committee members' thoughtful recommendations for both the new tool and the revised student course experience questions. Thank you to all faculty who participated in this process.

Explorance Blue will replace Class Climate on all USC campuses beginning July 1, 2025. A more robust and flexible survey tool, Blue will improve faculty access to your own student course experience surveys, allow students mobile-friendly access to course surveys, and automate their delivery, saving staff time administering the evaluations. The university will implement the new software in phases, beginning with a select pilot group in Fall 2024, a broader deployment in Spring 2025, and full implementation in Summer 2025.

The new core questions are being finalized now and will be used at USC Columbia and on the Palmetto College campuses. The questions will be implemented on the same timeline as Blue. In addition to the core questions, each academic unit will be able to append supplemental questions to gather additional insight from students on their course experience. The Office of the Provost and the Division of Information Technology are also investigating the ability to utilize Blue's question bank, which captures the most common themes in qualitative feedback. Supplemental questions should be determined by the appropriate faculty governance body. The comprehensive campuses may opt to adopt the new core questions, continue using their current questions, or create their own.

One immediate concern for faculty is the use of student course experience surveys in faculty evaluation. During the implementation phase, any faculty who participate in the pilot have the prerogative to include or not their student course experience surveys for that period in their annual performance reviews or other major reviews such as tenure and promotion, tenure-progress review, or post-tenure review. Those faculty should insert the accompanying memorandum in their evaluation portfolios for that period in either case. The absence of comparative evaluative data for this period should not be interpreted by reviewers as indicating a weakness in a candidate's file.

The Office of the Provost will work with the University Committee on Tenure and Promotions and the University Committee on Professional-Track Faculty to develop additional guidance if necessary to support faculty in these evaluation processes during the transition.

Changes to course survey experiences will inevitably raise questions. During the implementation phase, the university will roll out materials supporting all users of the new process. Faculty Senate continues to be engaged in conversation about best practices in teaching assessment, and I both welcome and strongly support the faculty's taking a central role in determining assessment policies at the university.

Please contact the Office of the Provost at provost@sc.edu or the Office of the Faculty Senate at faculty.senate@sc.edu with any questions or concerns you have about the new process for student course experience surveys.


cc: Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, Vice Provost and Dean of the Faculty
Lara Lomicka Anderson, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs and Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Susan Elkins, Chancellor, Palmetto College
Wayne Outten, Chair, Faculty Senate
Lauren Sklaroff, Chair, University Committee on Tenure and Promotions
Sheryl Mitchell, Co-Chair, University Committee on Professional-Track Faculty
Kate Chappell, Co-Chair, University Committee on Professional-Track Faculty



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To: Academic Deans
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From: Donna K. Arnett 
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Date: October 1, 2024

Subject: Pilot Implementation of New Student Course Experience Surveys in
Faculty Evaluation Processes

In the 2024-2025 academic year, select faculty members will participate in a pilot group as part of the implementation of a new tool for collecting student course experience surveys, formerly known as student evaluation of courses, as well as a new set of core questions.

All faculty who participate have the prerogative to include or not include their student course experience surveys for that period in their annual performance reviews or other major reviews such as tenure and promotion, tenure-progress review, or post-tenure review.

The absence of comparative evaluative data should not be interpreted by reviewers as indicating a weakness in a candidate's file. Please ensure that file reviewers are aware of this matter during the implementation period.

cc: Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, Vice Provost and Dean of the Faculty
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