

Student Feedback Survey (SFS) - Student FAQ

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 What is the Student Feedback Survey (SFS)?

The Student Feedback Survey (SFS) is a UTS-approved method of collecting student evaluation on subjects and learning at UTS. The SFS aims to provide all enrolled students with an opportunity to provide their feedback, by logging in to their SFS student accounts at www.sfs.uts.edu.au, and completing their surveys. Students can evaluate a subject by submitting a completed or partially completed survey, or indicate that they want to opt out by submitting a blank survey.

1.2 What are the differences between the early-session EFS and the late-session SFS?

The EFS is a short survey for gathering early student feedback, in order to allow sufficient time during the session to address any issues of concern that students identify. The EFS is deliberately short with only 3 subject evaluation items and 1 open-ended question. These items complement the core subject evaluation items in the late-session SFS. Subject coordinators and teaching staff receive EFS results immediately following the survey's closure.

The late-session SFS has a focus on student engagement and learning, and gathers student feedback with the aim to improve the learning experience for future student cohorts. The late-session SFS is a 'three-tiered' questionnaire, comprising 6 core items (3 subject evaluation items, 1 teacher evaluation item and 2 open-ended questions), up to 2 learning modes the subject coordinator chooses that are relevant to their subject's delivery and learner experience (each learning mode, aligned with the UTS Model of Learning, has 2 pre-set items) and up to 2 optional items for teaching staff to select from the item bank or create if needed.

Teaching staff receive SFS results after all student marks for the session have been finalised. There is a staggered release of overall subject and faculty SFS results to subject coordinators and Deans and Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) 2-3 days after.

More details about the questions can be found here:

- <https://www.uts.edu.au/current-students/campus-life/communication-uts/your-feedback-counts/student-feedback-survey>

1.3 When does the SFS take place?

The early-session EFS runs for 1 week in week 4 of the Autumn and Spring sessions. The late-session SFS runs for 3 weeks in the Autumn and Spring sessions, during the last 2 teaching weeks and the final stuvac week. For other sessions, such as Summer, the SFS runs for two weeks (the last teaching week and stuvac). Students are notified by email when the surveys become active and will receive a number of reminder emails during the survey period, including one on the day of closing.

1.4 Who manages the SFS?

The SFS is managed by the faculties, in conjunction with the Data Analytics and Insights (DAI) unit, and is guided by the [Student Feedback Survey Policy](#) and [Procedures](#) and other internal policies including the UTS Academic Staff Agreement.

UTS faculties ensure that all subjects, including those taught offshore, are surveyed every year and preferably once in each major teaching period. DAI coordinates the online administration of the SFS and provides the faculties with analysis and reporting of the results at the end of each major session.

The [Student Feedback Survey Policy](#) and [Procedures](#) provide details on how the survey is administered and how the data is used:

- <https://www.uts.edu.au/about/uts-governance/policies/uts-policy/feedback-survey-policy>
- <https://www.uts.edu.au/about/uts-governance/policies/uts-policy/feedback-survey-procedure>

2. COMPLETING THE SFS

2.1 Do I have to complete the SFS?

The surveys are not compulsory, but we do encourage you to give us your feedback so that we can fix any problems you have experienced and continue offering the things you have enjoyed. If you feel you have

nothing to say about a subject, please go to the survey anyway and submit a blank form, so that the SFS system can register that you have 'opted out' and credit you with Incentive Points. This will also stop the system sending you further reminder emails in the future.

2.2 Why should I complete the SFS?

It's your best opportunity to make your voice heard about the quality of the learning experience you receive at UTS. The only way teaching staff can improve what they do – or keep doing the good things they do – is by hearing about what you liked and didn't like about your learning experience. UTS also uses your feedback to evaluate every subject and to help develop new subjects - and even new degrees. So your feedback really does count, and UTS genuinely wants to hear it. Also, you receive incentive points when you complete an online survey, which allow you to donate to charity, even if you submit a blank form.

2.3 Why should I bother when the SFS appears to make no impact on improving subjects/teaching?

This is not the case. All SFS results are reported to faculty management and also benchmarked against the university's key performance indicators. With the large number of subjects and staff involved, it often takes time for changes or actions to be made, so often you may not be able to notice direct or instantaneous results. It is also often the case that some changes (i.e. to subject outlines, or class rooms/facilities) cannot be put into practice until the following session. Check your LMS for any recent improvements made on your subject/s.

2.4 Why are there so many email reminders about the SFS?

The online SFS System is configured to send out automatic emails to students who have not yet completed their surveys. The only way to stop receiving the email reminders is to submit a survey (completed or blank). If you are not willing to participate you may choose to ignore the emails, but please also be prepared to receive further emails until the close of the survey period.

The SFS is an important part of your course as teachers and faculties make changes to subjects based on the feedback received from students. This helps improve individual subjects for current students (with the early-session EFS feedback) and future students (with the late-session SFS feedback). Every single response counts, in order for the subject results to be a true representation of the whole class and not just for a small group of students. Furthermore, many students do find the emails to be quite useful in reminding them to provide subject/teacher feedback and to redeem their incentive points.

Please note as the SFS is an official university system, it only sends emails to your UTS student email account. Any SFS email reminders sent to non-UTS email accounts are due to email forwarding rules put in place by students themselves.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

3.1 Will my SFS responses be treated confidentially?

Absolutely. Once you hit the 'Submit' button for your surveys, your responses are stored in a database without your student ID information – only demographic information that can't directly identify you is attached to your response. A separate database retains your student ID information and records the fact that you have submitted a survey so we can reward you with SFS incentive points, but does not record your survey responses.

When the survey period is over and student marks are finalised for the session, the whole class's survey responses are collated and forwarded to your academic teaching staff, without any identifying data linking the responses to individuals. There is no way for teaching staff to find out who completed a survey and who didn't. The SFS reports only state how many people in the class participated.

However, in cases where a student has clearly breached the UTS [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#) or Student Rules by making malicious or threatening comments about staff or other students in their open-ended comments, UTS has the authority to identify the student and pursue appropriate action as an authorised exemption for the use of personal information under the [Privacy Policy](#) and Privacy Management Plan.

4. PRIZES AND INCENTIVES

4.1 How do I qualify for the prize draw?

To qualify for the prize draws, you will need to complete all your available Early Feedback Survey or Student Feedback Surveys for the Autumn or Spring sessions in the 'Active Surveys' page of your SFS student account. There are 24 prepaid Visa cards to be won.

4.2 How does the incentive point system work?

Incentive points are earned each time you fill in an online survey for a subject or class, as a small token of appreciation. You can use these points to donate to some worthy charities as provided on the 'My Incentives' page of your SFS student account.

4.3 Can I divide my incentive points between charities?

Yes, but because your Incentive Points are credited as soon as you complete an individual survey, you need to click on the 'My Incentives' tab immediately after you complete each survey. You can then redeem your points to donate to a charity before going back to your 'Active Surveys' page to complete your next survey, etc. If you wait to redeem after you complete all your available surveys, your Incentive Points are accumulated and you can only redeem them to donate to a single charity. If you did not choose a charity after completing all your surveys, your Incentive Points can still be redeemed for charity donation until the survey period closes.

4.4 Is UTS able to provide more/better incentives?

At present, the SFS incentives consist of charity donations and two large prize draws every session. Please understand that the current incentives take into account the entire UTS student population of over 30,000 students participating in the EFS and SFS every session, each completing at least eight surveys, and that there are cost limitations on what incentives can be offered.

General consensus from past focus groups was that students greatly preferred an opportunity to win a range of larger prizes, which lead to our current prize draw offerings, and to be able to donate to charity groups that are relevant to UTS students.

5. SFS RESULTS

5.1 Will I get to see any of the survey results?

Yes, you will be able to see the aggregated survey results for your enrolled subjects according to your specific class allocation. These available SFS results will be for subject evaluation questions only and can be accessed by clicking on the 'My SFS History' tab of your SFS student account. You can view the survey results for your past SFS at any time after one week of your session grades being finalised. The only exception to this will be when your academic teaching staff, who are the sole teacher for a class, have chosen to withhold SFS results from being published to students.

5.2 Why do some subjects show SFS results and others do not?

SFS results on your 'My SFS History' page are only shown for subjects where 5 or more student survey responses were submitted. With less than 5 responses, it can be hard to protect the confidentiality of the students surveyed, so the SFS results for subjects with less than 5 responses are not published. Similarly, subjects with less than 5 enrolled students are not surveyed to protect student confidentiality and will have no SFS results. In addition, if your academic staff member is the sole teacher on the subject or class survey, they have the option to withhold their SFS results from being published to students for privacy reasons.

6. ADMINISTRATION QUESTIONS

6.1 What do I do if the teacher, class or subject information is wrong on my SFS?

If the teacher's name is incorrectly listed, let us know by unchecking the 'This is the correct teacher' checkbox next to the teacher's name on your survey. You will still be able to provide feedback on the subject, but you won't be able to evaluate your teacher directly.

If the class or other subject information is incorrect, please email the UTS Data Analytics and Insights Unit at Evaluations@uts.edu.au and provide us with your correct subject information so we can look into this error for you.

6.2 Can I return to the SFS website and change my responses later?

Yes, you can edit previously submitted survey responses while the survey period is still open. When you hit the 'Submit' button for your changed survey responses, any previously recorded responses will be overwritten, so it's a good idea to double check that you've entered the right responses on the right survey and that you haven't got mixed up between surveys, lecturers or subjects.

6.3 What do I do if my computer crashes before I submit my SFS?

Any information that you entered in an un-submitted survey will be lost. You'll need to restart your internet browser and log back in to start the survey again.

7. OTHER QUESTIONS

7.1 Why doesn't the SFS have questions on UTS facilities or other aspects of my university experience?

The SFS is primarily focused on assessing the performance of the subject and its teaching. There are other surveys administered throughout the year that seek data on other aspects of the university experience. For example, the Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS) measures student satisfaction with university services and facilities, including administration, retail outlets, computing accessibility, etc. It is run in the second session every year, but in order to avoid survey fatigue amongst students, not everyone will be asked to complete it; instead a representative sample of the student population will be chosen. More information about the SSS and other UTS surveys on the student learning experience can be found at <https://www.uts.edu.au/current-students/campus-life/communication-uts/your-feedback-counts/student-feedback-survey>.

7.2 Why isn't there an SFS for feedback on a whole course, faculty or school?

The Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) funds the Student Experience Survey (SES), which you complete during your degree, and the Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS), which you will be asked to complete at the end of your degree. The SES allows you to give feedback on your broader experience while at university – including your course, faculty, school and institution. The GOS is offered to all graduates of Australian higher education institutions and is designed to collect information about the experience of each student during their entire course, as well as the type of work or further study being undertaken after graduation. More information about the SES and GOS can be found at www.qilt.edu.au.

7.3 Who should I contact if I have further questions or comments about the SFS?

We try to provide as much information as possible on the SFS website, the UTS website, emails, campus screens and computer wallpapers. However, if you have questions or suggestions on any aspect of the SFS, please email the UTS Data Analytics and Insights Unit at Evaluations@uts.edu.au.