

Samples of Mid Semester Assessments

Princeton

As distinct from the course evaluation forms distributed and collected centrally by the Registrar's Office, these questionnaires are designed solely for your own use, to provide an additional channel of communication with your students. For that communication to be most successful, it's important both to prepare your students briefly and to provide feedback to them. When you distribute the questionnaire, clarify for your students your intent. For most faculty, incremental adjustments are possible, but major redesign of a course is neither feasible nor appropriate. Being clear about this up front gives students reasonable expectations for the outcome. It's particularly important to talk with your students after you have compiled the results, telling them which suggestions you found helpful and are going to act upon, and which ones you feel are not feasible and why. Closing the loop in this way lets the students know that you value their input, and it can further illuminate your teaching goals and expectations for them.

Most faculty find that students whose views are solicited via mid-semester feedback feel more committed to the course, engage more actively in it, and consider themselves partners in ensuring successful outcomes for the course.

Dear Student:

Please use this questionnaire as a constructive way to provide feedback to your instructor about his/her teaching. Please take a moment and think through your comments to be as specific as possible so that your instructor can determine what steps to take to make his/her teaching more effective for you. Your answers to this questionnaire should be returned to your instructor and will be seen only by your instructor. You will be asked to complete a different survey at the end of the semester that will be used for course and instructor evaluation for administrative purposes and for the Student Course Guide.

Thanks for your help.

Course _____ Instructor _____

Reason you are taking this course: Your class level:

(Check as many as apply.)

____ requirement for the major

____ freshman

____ distribution requirement

____ sophomore

____ interested in subject

____ junior

____ wanted to have this instructor

____ senior

- Do you usually understand what is expected of you in preparing for and participating in this class? If not, please explain why not.

- What aspects of this course and your instructor's teaching help you learn best?
- What specific advice would you give to help your instructor improve your learning in this course?
- What steps could you take to improve your own learning in this course?
- What other ideas would you suggest to improve this course (e.g., changes in course structure, assignments or exams)?

Suggestion: You may wish to choose several more specific evaluation questions of your own devising or from among those listed here.

Questions of General Applicability:

- I find the format of this class (lecture, discussion, problem-solving) helpful to the way that I learn.
- I feel that this class format engages my interest.
- I feel comfortable speaking in this class.
- I learn better when the instructor summarizes key ideas from a class session.
- I find the comments on exams or other written work helpful to my understanding of the class content.
- I find that this class stimulates my interest in reading about this subject outside of class.
- I feel comfortable approaching the instructor with questions or comments.
- I think that I would learn better if a different format were used for this class (suggested below).

Questions Applicable for Problem-solving or Laboratory Classes:

- The problems worked in this class help me in working other problems on my own.
- The problems worked in this class help me in learning the content ideas in this class.
- I feel that I learn how to solve problems more easily when I work with a group of students.
- I find the laboratory lectures helpful in understanding the purpose of the experiment.

- I find the instructor's comments during laboratory help my understanding of key steps in the experiment.
- I find the comments on my written laboratory reports helpful in understanding the experiment.
- I learn more from the laboratory when I am given questions about it to think about first.
- I learn more from the laboratory when I am given questions about it to write about first.

Questions for Discussion-Oriented Classes:

- I find class discussions help me in understanding the readings.
- I find class discussions help me in understanding key ideas in the course.
- I learn more if class discussions are more structured.
- I feel that class discussions are dominated by one or a few people.
- I learn better when I have more of a chance to speak.
- I learn more from discussions when I am given a question to think about first.
- I learn more from discussions when I am given a question to write about first.

Questions for Classes Using Team or Group Work:

- • I feel that I learn more when I work with a group.
- • My group works well together
- • I feel that I need more guidance for our group work.
- • I find that working in a group confuses me.
- • I find it helpful if the instructor summarizes results obtained as part of group work.
- • I find it helpful to get feedback from my group on my own performance in the group.
- • I think that groups work better when each person has an assigned role in the group.

Middle Tennessee
MID-SEMESTER EVALUATIONS

No matter which approaches are used, a mid-semester evaluation is particularly important because it allows you to make changes that affect the students you are teaching now, while the end-of-term surveys only affect future classes. In addition, handing out a mid-term evaluation signals to your class that you are indeed interested in what and how they're learning, and in their responses to your teaching. If you do use some form of mid-term evaluation, it's important to discuss the results with your class, explaining for instance, why you can't cut down on some topic, or why, based on the suggestions of the class, you will add a discussion of a particular topic.

Example: How to present a mid-semester evaluation to your class--

"Today, I'd like you to fill out a short mid-semester evaluation. The information you provide is just for me, and your input is extremely valuable. It helps me gauge how the course is progressing at the moment, that is, what is going well from your standpoint and whether you have any suggestions for how we might proceed for the rest of the semester. It also lets me know whether you are learning what I hope you are. I will report back to you about the results of this evaluation."

Below is a generic example of a mid-semester evaluation form, which you can modify in any way to suit your course.

Your answers to the questions below will help me plan for the second half of the semester.

1. What are the most important things you have learned so far in this class?
2. What don't you think you understand well enough yet?
3. What would you like to see more of between now and the end of the semester?
4. What do you think we could cut down on?
5. What do you need to do in terms of understanding the material between now and the end of the semester?
6. How much of the reading that has been assigned so far have you completed?

100% 90% 75% 50% less than 50%

7. How many hours per week, outside of regularly scheduled class meetings, do you spend on this class?

1-2 2-4 4-6 6-8 more than 8

8. If you have comments about the class not covered in the above questions, please use this space to make them.

Otis college of art (Los Angeles)

Questions that ask for useful information (your's may vary depending on the course):

- What have you learned in this course that you find particularly interesting or compelling?
- At this point in the semester, what do you find still confusing or unclear?
- What aspects of this course and your instructor's teaching help you learn best?
- What specific advice would you give to help your instructor improve your learning in this course?
- What steps could you take to improve your own learning in this course?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses in class?
- What other ideas would you suggest to improve this course (e.g., changes in course structure, assignments or exams)?

I take these home, read them, and place them into three categories:

- Things that are going well.
- Things that we could work on.
- Things that we can't change.

At the next class I allow about 5-10 minutes and discuss the results. Under "things that are going well," I congratulate them (and implicitly myself). For "things to work on," they generally list some things that they are not doing well (not spending enough time on the homework, not particularly adept in an area, lack of sleep, etc.). They are also happy to list things that I do that cause them problems such as going over a concept too quickly, not explaining thoroughly what something meant, assigning a difficult reading the same week a paper was due, talking too fast (I'm from New York), etc. We briefly discuss ways we both can improve things, assuming mutual responsibility. I have often made some changes based on this input including:

UCal Berkeley

Examples of faculty devised midterm evaluations

Ole Hald Mathematics

I always ask 3 questions:

(1) Which aspect of the course is most helpful to you?

(2) Which aspect of the course is least helpful to

you?

(3) Are there any suggestions you would like to make about how to improve the course?

Louise Fortmann Environmental Science

I use the technique in Tools for Teaching for collecting feedback during the semester:

- 3x5 card
- answer one question on each side
- how is the class going for you?
- one concrete suggestion for improving the course.

Sara McMains Mechanical Engineering

- What is the most important/valuable thing you have learned in this course so far?
- What is the least important/valuable thing you have learned?
- What, if anything, is still unclear?
- Is the pace of lectures too fast/too slow/about right?
- How many hours a week, on average, do you spend on E28 (including lecture, lab, HW)?
- What suggestions do you have for improving the course?

Michelle Winn College Writing Programs

Here is the simple mid-term evaluation I administer as an in-class journal:

- 1) What is helping you to learn in this class?
- 2) What is making learning difficult?

I got this format from the Learning and Teaching Center at the University of Hawai'i. After I read the journals, I try to address trends in class and show how I'm making a couple changes based on student feedback -- oftentimes changes I've (secretly) already planned to implement.

Berkeley – generic mid semester eval

Midsemester Evaluation

Your answers to the questions below will help me plan for the second half of the semester.

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2. What don't you think you understand well enough yet?
3. What would you like to see more of between now and the end of the semester?

4. What do you think we could cut down on?
5. What do you need to do in terms of understanding the material between now and the end of the semester?
6. How much of the reading that has been assigned so far have you completed?
100% 90% 75% 50% less than 50%
7. How many hours per week, outside of regularly scheduled class meetings, do you spend on this class?
1-2 2-4 4-6 6-8 more than 8
8. If you have comments about the class not covered in the above questions, please use this space to make them.

Brown

Has adopted Professor Craig Nelson's approach to "Mid-Semester" Evaluations (Craig Nelson is Professor Emeritus of Biology, Indiana University-Bloomington. He has contributed extensively to teaching and learning in higher education, and was honored as Outstanding Research And Doctoral University Professor Of The Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Council for the Advancement and Support of Education in 2000.)

- He asks the students to take out a sheet of paper and respond to these open-ended questions (names are optional--some students want him to know what they are saying or suggesting):

(1) What are three important things you have learned so far? [This gets each student to admit that something is important.]

(2) What are three aspects of the class that have helped your learning so far?

(3) What are three things do you wish were different?

- He tabulates the answers after class using whatever categories emerge. In a large class he sometimes only tabulates the first 75 papers or so and then asks anyone who wants to add something to give him a second note. This rarely happens.
- He then presents the tabulation in class, noting that since students are different, he can't make the course perfect for each of them at every moment and often mentions learning styles. It is often news, for example, to those who don't like discussions, that a substantial majority of students do like them. This tends to reduce dissatisfaction.
- He also re-explains why he is doing any course features that elicited a number of complaints, even though most items were explained on the syllabus and briefly discussed in the first week. This gives him an opportunity to reinforce the course objectives (emphasizing the importance of critical thinking) and to focus on the rationale for learning centered teaching practices.
- When student suggestions for changes make sense, he announces that he is making those changes during the feedback sessions.
- Students have occasionally commented that they really appreciated the chance to provide feedback while it might change the course they are taking instead of only after the course is over.

Carnegie Mellon

Carnegie Mellon Instructor _____

Early Course Evaluation Course _____

The purpose of this evaluation is to gather input so that I can improve this course and how it is taught and therefore help you improve your learning. I am the only one looking at your responses, and I will report back to you on the feedback I receive.

1. What are the strongest features of this course and of my teaching? In other words, what contributes most to your learning?
2. What specific suggestions do you have for changes that I can make to improve the course or how it is taught?
3. Is the pace of the course:
too fast just right too slow

NYU center for teaching excellence

Mid-Semester Feedback

Though at the end of each semester, you will be asked to distribute course evaluations to your students (and will receive a copy of these soon after you turn in your grades), many faculty like to receive feedback earlier. One of the best ways to do that is to create your own mid-semester evaluation. Below are some format suggestions from the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE):

Stop, Keep, Start, (very quick feedback):

Ask students to write down one thing they would like you to **stop** doing, one thing they'd like you to **keep** doing, and one thing they'd like you to **start** doing.

Two short, open ended questions:

1. What's helpful to your learning?
2. What suggestions do you have for change?

Two other, short, open ended questions:

1. How is the course going for you?
2. What would help make it a better learning experience for you?

Rate the course and explain the rating:

1. On a scale of 1-7, with 1 being low and 7 being high, how is the course going for you?
2. Why did you choose this number?

One more tip from CTE: after collecting the evaluation, at the next class thank students for the feedback, briefly address their comments, and tell them how things will be adjusted based on their suggestions.

Humboldt state u

Mid Semester Course Adjustments

The sixth or seventh week of a semester long course is a good time to gather information from your students about their perceptions of what is working and what is not in your course. You may want to use the process of Mid Semester Evaluation that Diane Johnson facilitates. While it may be ideal to have a trained facilitator conduct such an evaluation, you can do this your self. At the end of a class session, ask your students to write their responses anonymously to the following questions:

1. What helps you learn in this course?
2. What improvements would you like, and how would you suggest they be made?

It is critically important that you report back to the students in your next class session what you have learned from their comments. Discuss with them what changes you plan to make based on their suggestions and why. Also discuss with them changes they suggested that you can't or won't implement and explain why.

This seemingly simple process allows you to "catch" impediments to student learning while there is still time to make adjustments in assignments and your teaching strategies. There is evidence that strongly suggests that using and responding to a mid semester evaluation improves end of the semester student evaluations of your teaching.

Washington Univ

Incorporating Midterm Course Evaluations

The middle of the semester is an excellent time to ask your students to think about, and comment on, their perspectives on the course and on your teaching. Unlike end-of-semester course evaluations, midterm evaluations offer you the opportunity not only to make adjustments in your teaching "mid-stream," but also to return to the class with thoughtful commentary on your students' feedback and suggestions. Asking students to provide feedback at mid-semester makes it clear that you take their ideas seriously and that you are dedicated to improving the course and their learning.

While you should always encourage students to talk with you if they have concerns about the course, students often need another, "low-stakes" means of communicating with you about those concerns. Moreover, providing students a chance to respond to the course, in an anonymous format, will encourage them to communicate responses that they may not feel comfortable providing in person--including positive comments.

Asking for student comments on midterm course evaluations may also help you to identify and address issues related to classroom dynamics that students might otherwise be reluctant to mention, such as issues that arise when other students are not fully participating in group work or are disrupting class by arriving late, talking to their peers, or surfing the internet on their laptops. Even when students do not address these issues themselves, midterm is an excellent time to reinforce course policies and expectations related to these issues--without "calling out" individual students.

Incorporating midterm student evaluations is a 3-step process: designing the evaluation questionnaire, administering the evaluations, and responding to student comments.

1. Designing the Evaluation Questionnaire

Prepare an evaluation questionnaire that contains a few questions about the major aspects of the course (e.g. lectures, discussions, assignments, group work). Open-ended questions are best, and it is often useful to ask students to provide both a quantitative rating and comments. The following questionnaires are samples that you may use, or adapt to fit your own course. If you would like some advice about the questionnaire you have designed, please contact The Teaching Center. Remember, do not ask students to write their names on the evaluations. Maintaining anonymity will encourage your students to provide the honest and specific responses that will be useful to you.

2. Administering the Evaluations

Set aside 15-20 minutes during a class period to ask students to complete the evaluation questionnaires. When you distribute the questionnaires, tell students that you value their responses, which will help you to understand their perspectives on the course, your teaching, and the assignments. Encourage them to be specific in their comments.

3. Responding to the Evaluations

After you collect the evaluations, read the students' comments carefully. Think about whether any of the comments might lead you to make changes in your teaching approach. Alternatively, you might consider whether any of the comments suggest that you need to communicate more clearly or explicitly with students about the major requirements of the course or about the purposes behind various class activities or assignments.

Make a brief list of comments that you would like to respond to during the next class. Discussing your response to a few of the students' responses or suggestions will underscore to students that you do indeed take their comments seriously. For example, if students indicate that they find it hard to keep up with the pace of the lecture, you might tell them steps you are taking to adjust the pace (e.g. taking time to reinforce and review important points in the lecture, or using the chalkboard rather than PowerPoint slides to present visual information). You might also respond to student suggestions with an explanation of why you have decided NOT to make any adjustments. For example, a student in your discussion class might comment, "We should not have to raise our hands in a small class like this." You might want to mention this suggestion in class, and note that you can see some rationale for doing away with the practice of hand-raising, but then explain that you want to maintain this practice to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate (not just those students who are comfortable jumping into a discussion without raising their hands). Of course, how you respond is up to you. The important point is to make clear that you have read and devoted thought to the students' comments. Doing so will go a long way toward encouraging students to communicate with you, or your teaching assistants, about the course.

At the end of the semester, revisit the midterm evaluations, along with the end-of-semester course evaluations, to remind yourself of the feedback students provided at each stage.

Then, write a few notes to yourself about specific aspects of the feedback that you will want to remember the next time that you teach.