

## Graduate Business Student Course Evaluations Baselines

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Process: Student Course Evaluations

ACBSP Related Standards: #3 Student and Stakeholder Focus

#4 Measurement and Analysis of Student Learning and Performance

### **Purpose**

This paper sets the baseline criteria for assessing student feedback about courses and instructors as part of the student course evaluation process. Course evaluations provide information about how well we are delivering knowledge to students in the modalities that we have chosen for that purpose. Student course evaluations are a source of data for determining student satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their program of studies and courses (ACBSP Criterion 3.b and 3.g). Student course evaluations also provide level 1, Reaction and Satisfaction, data for assessing program outcomes (ACBSP Criterion 4.1).

### **Use of Student Course Evaluations**

Student course evaluation results should be viewed individually by instructors as legitimate feedback on their delivery of knowledge and interaction in the classroom. As level 1 evaluation feedback, student course evaluation data does not measure student learning. The data does provide valuable information about the specific level of satisfaction and reaction to courses and, in aggregate, to the program of study as revealed and communicated to students (Phillips, Stone, & Phillips, 2001:47).

We suggest that individual faculty review the student course evaluations soon after receipt of the results from the Associate Dean. There are often excellent comments in response to open-ended questions from students. There is also good information in the results from the scale items to which students respond. Compare your individual results with the results in the figures below:

- Where do your results lie, both for individual items and the measures themselves, with respect to those shown below?
- What can you conclude from differences between your results and the averages shown in the figures?
- What can you do to improve your results and exceed the average results displayed in the figures?

Course evaluations will be a topic of discussion in the post-class review with your program director.

To assist you with understanding the student course evaluations we have compiled baseline results for three measures in the current course evaluation instruments. The baseline data is shown in figures below.

## Measures

There are three distinct measures within the data collected from students as part of the course evaluation. Those measures are About the Course, Class Discussions, and the Learning Environment.

### *About the Course*

This measure focuses on the usefulness of the course to students, the mix of theory and practice in the course, and the value of the course to the students for meeting high level learning objectives (SLOs) for analyzing, deciding, collaborating, information technology, organizing, and reflecting. The measure is comprised of items numbered 1 through 10 of the course evaluation instrument. They are measured, like the others, on a scale of (1) Strongly Agree to (5) Strongly Disagree. The individual items are displayed in Appendix A of this paper.

The 10 individual items form a single measure (Chronbach's  $\alpha = 0.93$ ) with a mean of 20.8 (standard deviation of 10.4); the statistical characteristics of the three measures are provided in Appendix B. Figure 1 shows the items in the measure and the average response from students for all course evaluations collected for academic years 2009-10 and 2010-11, respectively.

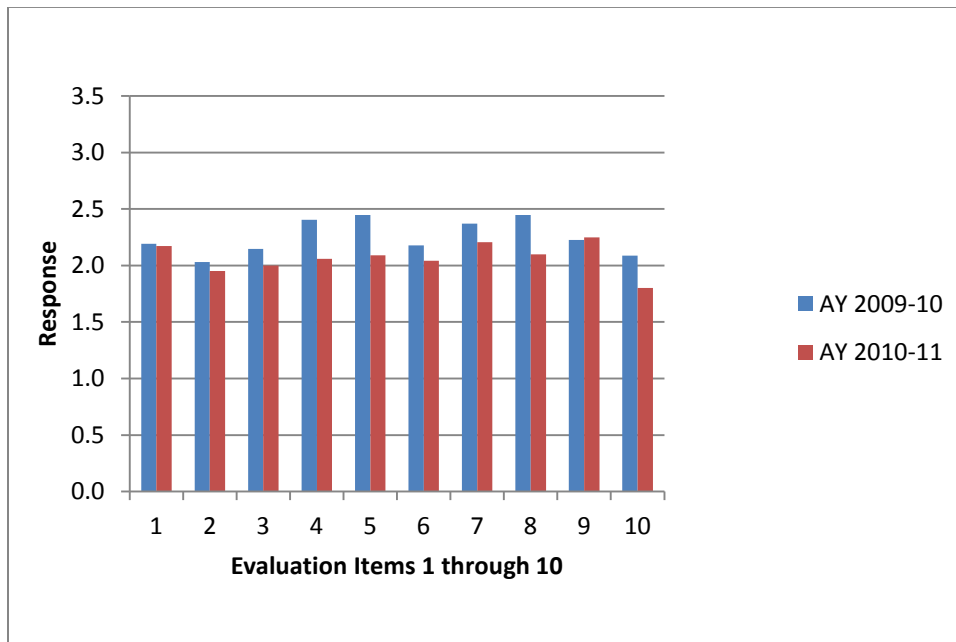


Figure 1: Individual Item Results for the Measure “About the Course”

### *Class Discussions*

This measure is comprised of three items that address students participation in discussions in the class or online, the asking of questions by students of the instructor and other students, and the sharing of different ideas and opinions in class. The individual item results are displayed in Figure 2. The items form a single measure (Chronbach's  $\alpha = 0.91$ ) with a mean of 6.5 (standard deviation of 3.9).

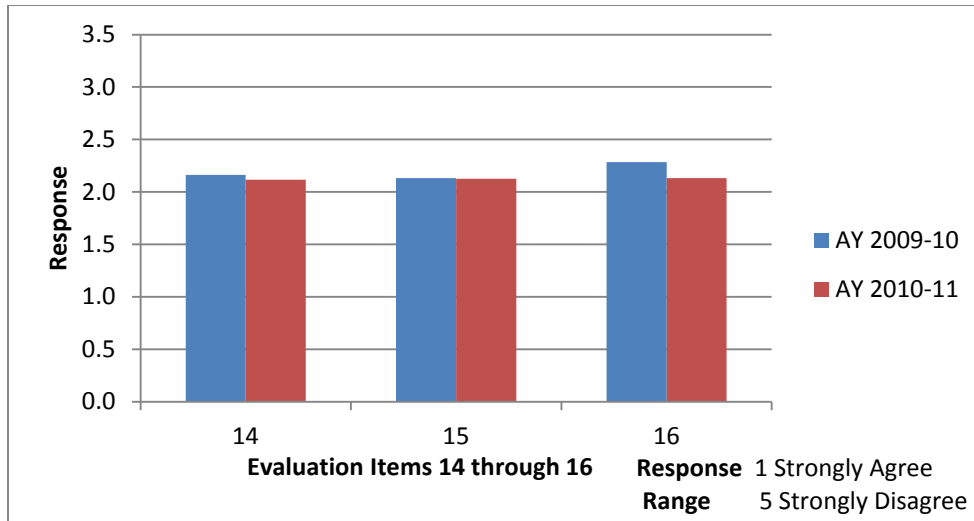


Figure 2: Individual Item Results for the Measure “Class Discussions”

*The Learning Environment*

This measure is comprised of seven items from the course evaluation survey instrument. The items focus specifically on the instructor’s preparation, communication skills, and use of technology, the textbooks, readings, and lectures, and whether the student developed new knowledge and skills. Interestingly, though there would appear to be three distinct measures within this set, factor analysis identified a single component with a Chronbach’s alpha of 0.91 (mean = 15.1, standard deviation = 7.9). Figure 3 displays individual item results.

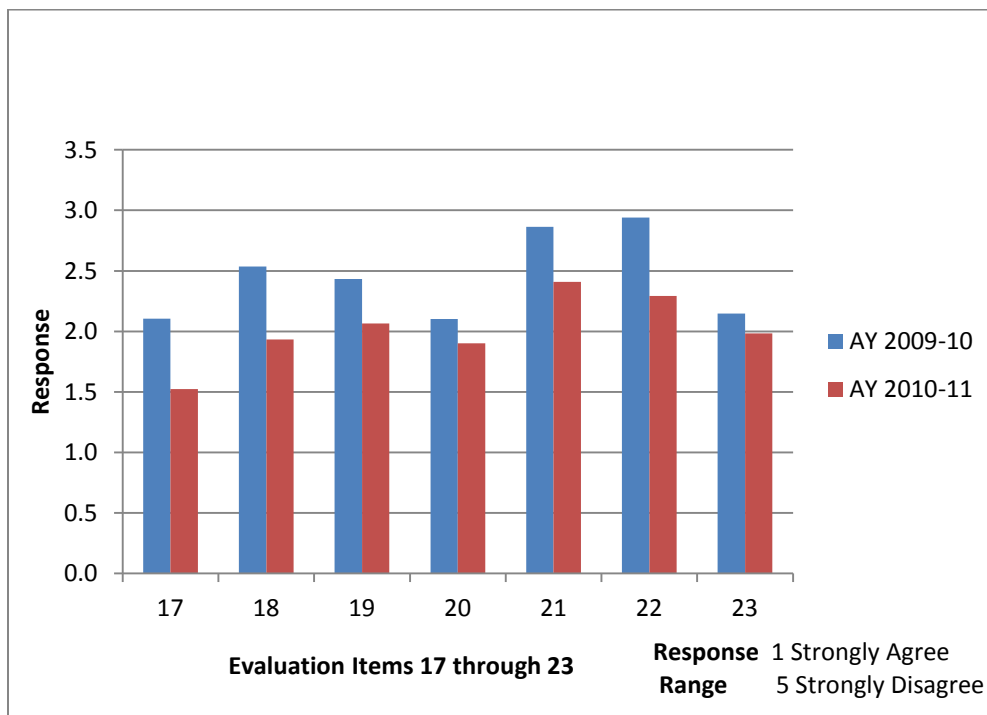


Figure 3: Individual Item Results for the Measure “Learning Environment”

## Use of Measures in Outcomes Assessment

As noted previously, course evaluations completed by students are reaction and satisfaction level data. Course evaluations do not provide data for assessing learning outcomes themselves. Yet, for learning to occur, the students need to react favorably to the course and its presentation. This level of information is also important for us to use to adjust course content and delivery and for keeping the graduate programs focused on their goals.

We will be looking regularly at the three measures and how they change as measures of continuous improvement. Figure 4, Key Metrics on Student Satisfaction, is the two year plot for each of the three measures discussed above. We have seen slight declines in the average values for satisfaction from the 2009-10 academic year to the 2010-11 academic year in all three measures; discussion is almost flat; the minimum value for Discuss is 3 (strongly agree). This is a good trend but there so there is still room for improvement in each measure. For Course, the minimum value to strive for as a program is 10; for Learn, the minimum value is 7.

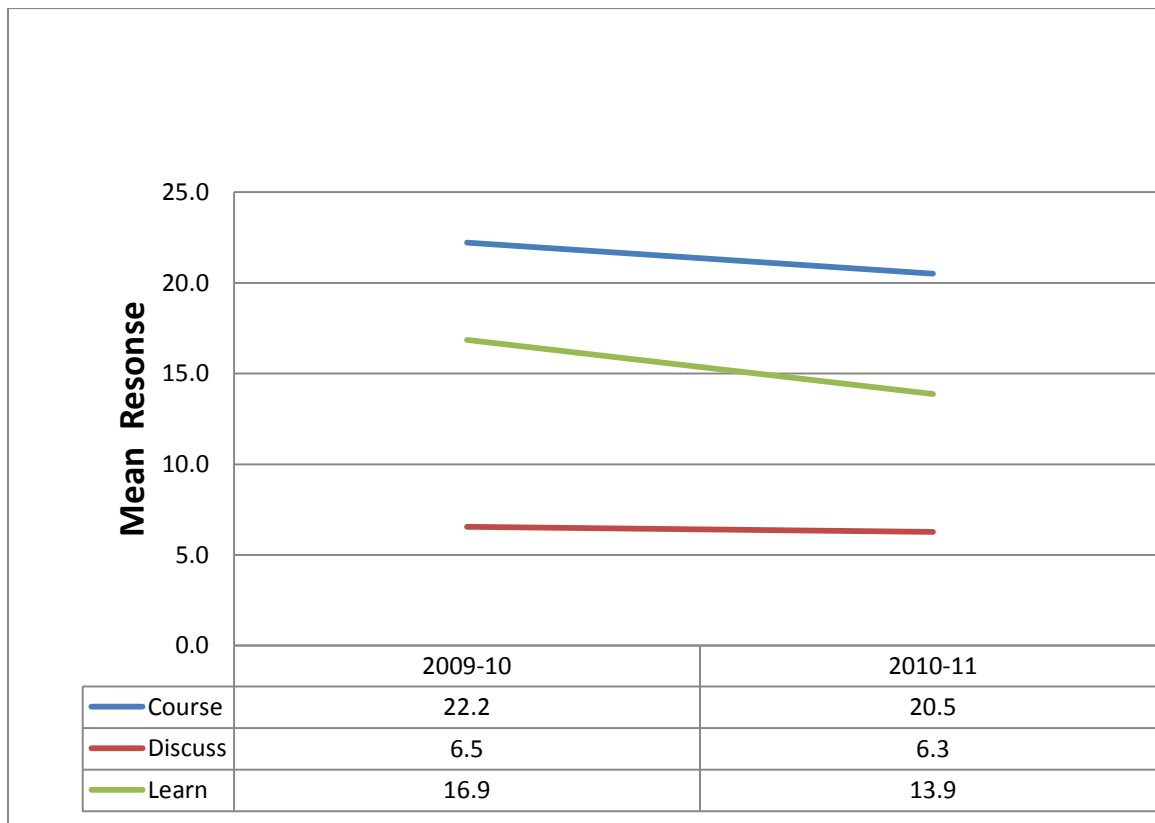


Figure 4: Key Metrics on Student Satisfaction

### Reference

Phillips, J. J., Stone, R. D., & Phillips, P. P. (2001). *The human resources scorecard: Measuring the return on investment*. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.

## Appendix A: Graduate Business Course Evaluation Items and Measures

Item	Wording
1	This course is very useful in my current work.
2	This course will be very useful in my future work assignments and jobs.
3	There is a helpful mix of academic theory and business practice in this course.
4	This course helped me to further develop my skills in analyzing data and information for strategic thinking.
5	This course helped me to develop further my strategic problem solving and decision making skills in situations of high complexity and information density.
6	This course helped me to further develop the knowledge and skills I need to collaborate successfully with people in my workplace.
7	This course helped me to develop further my knowledge and skills in communicating information in interpersonal and electronic networks.
8	This course helped me to develop a better understanding of organizations, organizational processes, and change management.
9	This course helped me to develop and improve my skills of reflective practice.
10	This course contained substantive information and material appropriate for a graduate-level course
14	Students actively participated in discussions in the classroom or online
15	Students regularly asked questions of the instructor and/or other students.
16	Ideas and opinions different from the instructor's were regularly shared by students and discussed in the class.
17	The instructor appeared to be prepared for each class with lectures, activities, and/or other assignments to be completed.
18	The instructor communicated ideas, instructions, and material clearly.
19	The instructor used technology effectively to teach the class and to provide information.
20	I developed new knowledge and skills in this class.
21	The textbooks used in this class helped me to learn and understand the concepts and ideas of the course.
22	The readings assigned in this class helped me to learn and understand the concepts and ideas of the course.
23	The lectures and/or discussions in class helped me to learn and understand the concepts and ideas of the course.
24	Grading in this class was fair.
Measure	Description
Course	About the Course (composite variable summing items 1 through 10, inclusive)
Discuss	Class Discussion (composite variable using summing 14 through 16, inclusive)
Learn	About the Learning Environment (composite variable summing items 17 through 23, inclusive)

Response scale for all items: (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Neither agree nor disagree, (4) Disagree, (5) Strongly disagree

Appendix B: Statistical Characteristics of the Three Measures

*Composite Item Analysis in SPSS Using Data from AY's 2009-10 and 2010-11, run 7/11/2011*

**Measure - Course, About the Course**

Scale Statistics  
Chronbach's Alpha = 0.93  
Mean 20.84  
Variance 107.73  
Std. Deviation 10.38  
N of Items 10  
Cases 177 (92.7%)  
Missing 14 (7.3%)  
Total 191 (100.0%)

Principal Component Factor Analysis

Q1 .767  
Q2 .812  
Q3 .819  
Q4 .761  
Q5 .824  
Q6 .856  
Q7 .817  
Q8 .795  
Q9 .684  
Q10 .819

**Measure - Discuss, Class Discussion**

Scale Statistics  
Chronbach's Alpha = 0.91  
Mean 6.46  
Variance 14.99  
Std. Deviation 3.87  
N of Items 3  
Cases 188 (98.4%)  
Missing 3 (1.6%)  
Total 191 (100.0%)

Principal Component Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation

Q14 .865  
Q15 .907  
Q16 .856

**Measure - Learn, About the Learning Environment**



Scale Statistics      Chronbach's Alpha = 0.91  
                            Mean 15.07  
                            Variance 63.02  
                            Std. Deviation 7.94  
                            N of Items 7  
                            Cases 179 (93.7%)  
                                    Missing 12 (6.3%)  
                                    Total 191 (100.0%)

Principal Component Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation

Q17 .679  
Q18 .769  
Q19 .661  
Q20 .688  
Q21 .847  
Q22 .864  
Q23 .652