

FAQs for Faculty and Staff

Course Evaluations at WSU and the Online System in eXplorance *Blue*

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Students are asked to provide feedback about their experiences in WSU courses via course evaluations. This feedback can provide valuable insight about the student experience that contributes to effective teaching and learning.

Course evaluations are offered online to all WSU courses, using a set of questions determined by their college. [Exempt from these course evaluations are: a) courses with five or fewer students; and b) courses of an individual/independent nature, as defined by each college (e.g. independent study courses, practica, research credits).]

1. Who do I contact with general questions about course evaluations in my college?

Each college has a course evaluation coordinator, who works with departments, faculty, Enterprise Systems Group (ESG), and the Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning (ATL) to coordinate delivery of college's course evaluations and instructor reports of results. Your dean's office can provide that person's name and contact information. For technical problems or support, contact esg.blue@wsu.edu

2. Will my class get an online course evaluation?

All course evaluations will be delivered in Blue. Your college, working with its departments, confirms which classes will get the course evaluation. For example, regular course evaluations are typically not appropriate for students enrolled in independent study courses, graduate research seminars, or very small enrollment courses. Please check with your college's course evaluation coordinator if you have questions.

3. What questions are on my course evaluation?

Questions are determined by your college. The online system is flexible, with a wide range of question types available. For example, over time, your college may choose to offer additional questions by department within the college, or to allow instructors to add their own questions, as determined by each college in coordination with ATL and ESG. Please check with your college's course evaluation coordinator for more information.

4. Can I add my own questions to the online evaluation?

The online system can allow instructors to add additional questions for each course. This optional feature is available, as determined by each college in coordination with ATL and ESG.

5. When are online course evaluations available to students?

Each college sets the dates for its course evaluations. In a regular 15-week course, evaluations generally open in week 14 and close after finals week. Students are notified by email. Your college's course evaluation coordinator can provide you with the exact dates each semester.

6. How do students get to the online course evaluations in Blue?

Students may access their online course evaluations in two ways:

- A. **Email invitations:** These are sent to students' WSU email address as soon as the course evaluation opens, typically with two reminders to students who have not responded.
- B. **myWSU to Blue Dashboard:** Students log into myWSU and choose the *Blue* Dashboard to see the online course evaluations for courses they are enrolled in. Evaluations will show up in the dashboard as they are opened for responses.

7. Can I share the link to my online course evaluation in my class?

Instructors who want to share a link in class should direct students to log into myWSU, select the *Blue* Dashboard in the center column and select your class.

Link to post in class: my.wsu.edu

8. Can students do the online course evaluation during class?

Since students can use a laptop or mobile device, instructors have the option of giving time in class for course evaluations. In-class delivery works well, with an adaptive display for any laptop or device (no app needed), provided your classroom has adequate wireless access.

9. My students don't see a course evaluation in Blue for my class. Who should I contact?

Send a help request to esg.blue@wsu.edu with your full name, the complete course subject code and section number (eg, HIST 105.13), a brief description of the problem, and your preferred contact information.

10. Who should I contact for support with course evaluations in Blue?

Logging into myWSU: If you have trouble logging into myWSU, contact **335-HELP**. For technical support or to report a problem, instructors should email: esg.blue@wsu.edu.

11. What are the benefits of using an online course evaluation system?

The many benefits include:

- Faculty have electronic records of their course evaluations, including comments.
- Student confidentiality is better protected online than as written comments on paper.
- Students have more time to complete thoughtful responses and provide meaningful comments.
- Students get email reminders to complete course evaluations.
- Students can use mobile devices to complete course evaluations, in class or outside of class.
- The online system allows for more flexibility in reporting and analysis.
- Faculty can add their own questions if permitted by their college.

12. What about response rates? I hear they go down with online evaluations.

Online response rates vary among universities, and technology alone does not determine response rates—the engagement of instructors and leadership can have a significant impact on student participation.

Nearly **7,800 classes** at WSU used Blue for course evaluations in fall 2016 and spring 2017, resulting in over 140,000 student responses across the Pullman, Spokane, Tri-Cities, Vancouver, Everett, Global campuses and other instructional locations. The overall response rate for all WSU courses using Blue was **58%**.

- Nearly half (44%) of classes received response rates of **60% or higher**
- Overall response rates by college ranged from **74% to 49%**

13. How can I get strong response rates in my own courses?

There are many strategies that support online response rates. **The single most effective way to boost response rates is for instructors to let students know that they read and consider the course evaluation responses each semester, and make changes based on student input.** Some instructors also give a small amount of extra credit to students who complete course evaluations. The online course evaluation system sends reminders to students who have not submitted their course evaluation and gives faculty access to see live response rates.