New Course Evaluation System
FAQ

1. Why are we shifting from e-Cafe?

The new course evaluation system (CES) is intended to offer several substantial improvements over e-Cafe. First, there will be updated and revised common questions. Second, the results of the survey will go to the Department Chair. Third, the new CES will be readable via phone and tablets making it easier to administer in class like a paper form. Finally, faculty and departments will be given the option of writing their own questions rather than selecting from a predetermined question bank. We are implementing these changes as a result of the March 8, 2016 memo issued by President Lassner outlining the decommissioning of e-Cafe (tentatively scheduled for Fall of 2017) and the implementation of a new course evaluation system (CES).

President Lassner’s memo can be found here:

2. For what purposes will CES be used?

President Lassner noted in his memo of March 8, 2016, that the new CES “will provide a transparent, consistent process to contribute to the assessment of program effectiveness and provide commonality of approaches across evaluations at the course/division/college/campus level. It allows students to provide feedback on their learning experiences which faculty can use to inform their teaching practices, to evaluate new teaching methods and techniques, and to demonstrate teaching effectiveness. Program directors/department chairs can also use these data in aggregated form to evaluate curriculum and program effectiveness.”

At the individual faculty member level, the purpose of the CES can be to supply feedback on the course. The common questions will be of use to individual faculty members who would like a uniform set of data to use in their own feedback and evaluation process. At the institutional level the intent of the common questions is to provide aggregate data on how Mānoa is doing to better communicate and understand our strengths and weaknesses.

Addressing the question of purpose was taken up by the course evaluation committee after the passage of the Mānoa Faculty Senate resolution of May 14, 2016. The uses of the CES, the common questions and the implementation of the new CES remain part of the ongoing conversation between the committee, the Mānoa administration and the Mānoa faculty.

3. Will these evaluations be used for personnel decisions?

While the CES will be distributed to all students in all courses, faculty retain control of whether to use the CES results to demonstrate effective teaching in personnel decisions. Faculty members are required to provide evidence of teaching effectiveness and most faculty
currently use e-Cafe or some other form of student evaluation to do so. *Chairs will not use the CES to make personnel decisions – faculty members remain in control of what is included in their tenure/promotion file.*

4. **Is participation in the new course evaluation system mandatory?**

Yes. All courses with more than three students will be evaluated using the new CES, as instructed by the March 8th 2016 memo from UH System President Lassner. For courses with 3 or fewer students, a method for evaluation that will not compromise anonymity is being developed.

5. **My department has been using the same questions for years. Can we still include these questions on the new evaluation?**

Yes. The CES will have multiple tiers. Departments, colleges or programs can insert their own questions. You will need to provide these to ITS so they can be integrated into the CES. However, departments may need to determine if their departmental questions overlap with common questions.

6. **What will be the common questions that appear on all evaluations?**

These are still under development. We invite the faculty to be involved in the creation of the draft common questions. The course evaluation committee was formed to develop the common questions. As we have worked to develop them, the committee sent a survey to department chairs and all faculty about how e-Cafe is currently used. We also surveyed the faculty about which possible common questions should appear. We held focus groups and will hold an open meeting to elicit further faculty feedback about the questions. Based upon this process we have developed draft common questions that we will send back out to the faculty to assess.

7. **Will the Department Chair be able to see the results of the course evaluation?**

Yes. Lassner’s memo says that Faculty and unit chairs will receive results. In a survey of UHM faculty, when asked if Department Chairs should see the results 78% of those responding (317 total) said that results should go to the Department Chairs.

8. **Will the results of the course evaluation be made available to upper administration?**

Yes, but only the common questions and only *in aggregate form* without individually identifiable information. Individual results will *not* be available outside the department level, unless instructors choose to make their results publicly available.

9. **One reason President Lassner gave for switching from e-Cafe to a new course evaluation system was that e-Cafe has poor student response rates. How will the new CES increase response rates?**
The CES can be filled out in class on a tablet, phone or computer while e-Café could not easily be done on a tablet or phone. Research has shown that response rates appear to be higher for paper evaluations than for on-line evaluations. With the new CES, as with a paper form, class time can be set aside for the evaluation to take place as one would with a paper form. For students needing accommodation please contact KOKUA.

10. Where will student evaluations be stored and for how long?

As with e-Cafe, evaluations will be available online and retained behind a password protected wall. They will remain archived perpetually.

With respect to student evaluations that are going to the department chair, chairs will be able to view the results by going through the password protected CES site. Only the current department chair will be able to access departmental results.

11. I have heard that faculty members who are demanding may get lower evaluation scores than faculty members who are not as demanding. How can this problem be offset?

We would like to include questions on the new CES that can hopefully be used to assess the validity of such claims.

12. What if my course ends at a non-traditional time or is taught on-line?

Like eCAFE, if the course finishes prior to, or after the end of, the semester, then it is included in the 'non-traditional' category. For non-traditional courses, eCAFE/CES will let the instructor choose a different end date.