

# Course Evaluation System FAQ

## **1. Why did we shift from e-Cafe several years back?**

The course evaluation system (CES) is intended to offer several substantial improvements over the previous system, e-Cafe. First, CES contains updated and revised common questions. Second, CES is readable via phone and tablets making it easier to administer in class, much like a paper form. Finally, each semester faculty and departments are given the option of writing their own questions rather than selecting from a predetermined question bank. These changes took effect following the March 8, 2016 memo issued by President Lassner outlining the decommissioning of e-Cafe and the implementation of a new course evaluation system (CES).

## **2. For what purposes will CES be used?**

President Lassner noted in his memo of March 8, 2016, that the 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.”

Faculty can use the CES to receive 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 evaluation process. Like e-Cafe, aggregate data will be provided on these common questions.

## **3. Will these evaluations be used for personnel decisions?**

Although the CES will be distributed to all students in all courses, faculty retain control over 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 used e-Cafe or some other form of student evaluation to do so. *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 will be evaluated using the CES, as instructed by the March 8th 2016 memo from UH System President Lassner. While the March 8, 2016 memo noted that CES was for courses with more than 3 students, because we are NOT asking questions about gender and ethnicity and class standing will only be reported in the aggregate, all courses will be evaluated. Exceptions will be entertained for courses that are part of accredited programs, or programs leading to licensure for which more specific evaluations are needed.

**5. I team-teach a course and/or I am responsible for multiple sections or labs that have GAs. How does the CES function for team taught courses and multiple sections?**

Since CES is a *course evaluation* and not an individual faculty evaluation, the evaluation is based on the CRN for the course. If the course is taught by multiple faculty, questions about specific faculty will need to be added at the individual level (i.e. Faculty X was ..., Faculty Y was ...). Both faculty X and Y will see the results for individual questions.

Individual questions specific to a GA/TA would also need to be included.

Cross-listed courses that are team-taught would differ in that the instructor assigned to the relevant CRN would be evaluated by the students registered under that CRN.

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

Yes. The CES has 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. This refining of questions can be done in any semester.

**7. What are the common questions that appear on all evaluations?**

The creation of the Mānoa common questions was turned over to the Mānoa Faculty Senate's Committee on Academic Planning and Policy (CAPP). During the 2017-2018 academic year CAPP developed the common questions. Their work was prefaced by a campus-wide survey about course evaluations, focus groups on possible campus questions, extensive analysis of questions used by peer and benchmark universities, and detailed discussing by an ad hoc course evaluation committee regarding possible common questions.

The questions presented by CAPP for Mānoa are:

1. The instructor treats students with respect.
2. The instructor demonstrated knowledge of the course content.
3. This course challenged me intellectually.
4. The instructor both sets high standards and helps students achieve them.
5. The instructor was available for consultation.
6. Considering everything, how would you rate this course?

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

Departments must decide who will see the results of the course evaluations. Each Department must choose between:

- (a) All results will be shared with the faculty chair.
- (b) Only non-tenured faculty results will be shared with the faculty chair.
- (c) No results will be shared with the faculty chair.

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.

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

No. In the “Update on Implementation of Course Evaluation System (CES)” President Lassner stated that, “No results, aggregate or other, will be shared directly with administrators (Chancellors, VCs, Deans). Administrators will only see results that are publicly published by individual faculty or provided by the individual faculty member in the course of personnel procedures (e.g., tenure, promotion) in accord with applicable policies, procedures and collective bargaining agreements.”

**10. One reason President Lassner gave for switching from e-Cafe to a new course evaluation system was that e-Café had poor student response rates. How does the 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.

**11. 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. CES data receives the same level of protection as provided all sensitive UH data, including statutorily-protected personal and student data. At this time, 5 years of results will be kept (as was the case with e-Café).

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.

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

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, CES will let the instructor choose a different end date.