Evaluating Your Online Course

In the Evaluate module, you examined best practices for when and how to evaluate your online course. You also reflected on your role as an online instructor and explored the importance of strategically planning to make content adjustments in line with your findings.

Make Your Course the Best It Can Be

To determine which aspects are and are not working, review each element you’ve included as you’ve planned, developed, and taught your online course: content, page layout, assessments, digital tools, technology, and your personal teaching approach. A few elements you can include in your course evaluation process are self-created polls or surveys, university-provided class evaluations, course quality rubrics or checklists, course statistics, and self-reflection questions. Your intentional approach to course evaluation will help you ask the right questions, measure the right responses, analyze the results, and make changes so your course is the best it can be.

- Ask 10 questions or fewer
- Include purposeful questions that intentionally collect data for which you have a specified use
- Ensure all possible responses are represented
- Free response questions provide the opportunity for students to share their thoughts
- Set expectations for the user experience in the instructions
- Incentives, if you can offer them, can be powerful motivators for students to complete a survey
- Anonymous evaluations can incentivize students to be more honest with their responses

Course Quality Rubrics, Checklists, and Course Statistics

Existing resources can be valuable tools to gain insights into your course. The Quality Matters rubric establishes research-based standards to ensure the quality of online and blended courses. Course statistics, which can be found integrated with Learning Management Systems like Canvas, can reveal which course elements students engaged with most and may help you identify areas students underutilized.

Conducting Your Course Evaluation

Carefully consider when to implement your course evaluation by targeting the specific feedback you’re interested in receiving.

- Pre-semester
- Mid-semester
- Post-semester
- Emergency

Planning to Make Adjustments

Make changes according to the data you collect, when the time is right. Continuously updating your course as the semester progresses can potentially confuse students and take your focus away from facilitating learning. Unless a revision is urgent, keep a log of ideas for improvement that you can implement when the semester is over.