Frequently Asked Questions

What is an evaluation type?
An evaluation type is simply the evaluation form we present to your students to evaluate a course.

Why would a department want more than one evaluation type?
Some departments may want to use a certain set of questions (a form) to evaluate one group of courses, and a different set of questions (another form) to evaluate another group of classes. Think of the case where a department has graduate and undergraduate programs/degrees. It may be completely necessary and appropriate to ask different questions for undergraduate and graduate classes and having multiple evaluation types (forms) accommodates this need.

What is a course load?
While Franklin College provides course evaluations to 70% of UGA departments, we can’t simply load the entire student body in the system because there are lots of units on campus that do not use our system. Some colleges have their own homegrown system. We require each participating department provide us a list of courses they want evaluated each term. This information is provided to us through our course load form.

Most units only evaluate on the three standard academic terms: Spring, Fall and Summer. We include three course loads per year for each client as part of the standard agreement. However there are some units in larger programs that offer courses in a more diverse set of parts of terms including Summer Short I, Summer Short II, Summer Extended, etc. If we are asked to load course rolls for more than three terms per year, we charge an additional $300 per part of term.

Are online course evaluations anonymous?
Web-based course evaluations are anonymous although it may be possible to guess the identity of students by writing style especially in small course sections. This is true in the paper-based format as well.

Is my department’s course evaluation data confidential?
As per Franklin College policy, clients are stewards of their own course evaluation data. If OIT receives a request for your data, we will forward the request to you.

Are mid-term evaluations available?
Yes, mid-term evaluations are available. Please submit your request for us to load your course data no later than one full week before the start date of the mid-term evaluation. Due to the later withdraw deadline, OIT recommends monitoring course rolls more closely for mid-term evaluations than end-of-term evaluations. For small classes (and short timeframes), course evaluation administrators may want to create and populate the class themselves; however, for large classes, it is usually faster for OIT to provide this service.

Will we have access to our course evaluation data?
Units will have access to raw data in addition to averages, standard deviations, and aggregate response rates provided by the system.

Are response rates for online evaluations better than paper evaluations?
Although there is a lot of variability between courses, our most recent semester showed an average 55% response rate, with several departments receiving upwards of 70-80% response rates.

Here is a summary of some strategies that are being used to increase response rates:

- Set aside time on the last class meeting for students to submit their evaluation in class just like paper. The only difference is they will submit via their mobile or personal computing device. Our evaluation system is very mobile friendly and makes submitting online extremely simple.
- Some faculty offer incentives such as extra credit on the final exam or final grade.
- Some units increase the amount of time students have to complete the evaluation so faculty may provide students with in-class reminders over a period of several weeks.
- Students are receptive to verbal reminders AND e-mail reminders.
- Some units schedule evaluations in computer labs during class time.
- Some professors allow students to leave a few minutes early if they promise to complete evaluations.
- Units get the best response rates when faculty are advocates of the web-based model and reiterate the importance of the evaluations to their students.

There was also a recent paper published by Faruk Guder and Mary Malliaris from Loyola University which addresses ways to make online evaluations most effective. The paper concludes there were several strategies you can implement that might increase response rates including faculty encouragement, e-mail reminders, allowing students to complete evaluations during class time, and ensuring the number of questions results in the highest response rate. To see the complete paper, please visit the Clute Institute copy of the article.

For more information on getting better response rates, the UGATEACH listserv may be useful. (Subscribe by emailing the following command ‘subscribe ugateach FirstName LastName’ to listserv@listserv.uga.edu)