

## UTEI results - guidelines and notes

### UTEI DISSEMINATIONS - LANDING PAGE

Below is an example of a typical view of the UTEI reporting page. This is the index or landing page reached via the Staff Portal "UTEI Dissemination" link. In this case the staff member coordinated, and was the sole lecturer for, several units in two different locations for the Reporting Period (a 6-month period, typically equating to a semester).

Academic staff who are not coordinating units or courses, will usually have far fewer reports listed per Reporting Period, i.e., only for those unit offerings in which they teach.

The screenshot shows the 'Online Dissemination of UTEI Reports' interface for Edith Cowan University. The page is titled 'Welcome COLLINGS, David' and includes a navigation menu with 'Available Reporting Periods', 'University Reports', and 'UTEI Trends and Comparisons'. The main content area displays a list of reports for the reporting period 2015:RP1, filtered by unit code. The reports are organized into columns: Report Name, Your Role As, Report Details, and Report Link. The reports include UTEI Unit Report, UTEI Lecturer Report, and UTEI Tutor Report, each with a 'Report Link' icon. The page also features a search bar, a 'Display' dropdown set to 15, and a 'Go' button. A 'Switch Staff' button is visible for administrators. The page footer shows 'row(s) 1 - 15 of 27' and a 'Next' button.

**Available Reporting Periods**

- 2015:RP2 (Active)
- 2015:RP1
- 2014:RP2
- 2014:RP1
- 2013:RP2
- 2013:RP1
- 2012:RP2
- 2012:RP1
- 2011:RP2
- 2011:RP1
- 2010:RP2
- 2010:RP1

**University Reports**

Report Name	Report Link
ECU Unit Report	
ECU Lecturer Report	
ECU Tutor Report	
ECU Teaching Report	
ECU UTEI Report	
ECU Unit Report - all items	
ECU Lecturer Report - all items	
ECU Tutor Report - all items	

**UTEI Trends and Comparisons**

- Available UTEI Trends
- 1. University Trends
- 2. Faculty Trends
- 3. School Trends
- 4. Across Faculties
- 5. School Comparison
- 6. Unit OS
- 8. My Aggregate
- 12. My UTEI OS Summary
- 13. Unit Review Report (2012 units and prior)

**Report List:**

Report Name	Your Role As	Report Details	Report Link
UTEI Unit Report	Lecturer/Tutor	EBH1102_1 (JO)	
		EBH1102_1 (SMF) [Sem:0]	
		SPS2201_2 (JO)	
		SPS2201_2 (SMF)	
	Unit Coordinator	EBH1102_1 (JO)	
		EBH1102_1 (SMF) [Sem:0]	
		SPS2201_2 (JO)	
		SPS2201_2 (SMF)	
UTEI Lecturer Report	Lecturer	EBH1102_1 (JO)   BLOGGS, Joe	
		EBH1102_1 (SMF)   BLOGGS, Joe [Sem:0]	
		SPS2201_2 (JO)   BLOGGS, Joe	
		SPS2201_2 (SMF)   BLOGGS, Joe	
	Unit Coordinator	EBH1102_1 (JO)   BLOGGS, Joe	
		EBH1102_1 (SMF)   BLOGGS, Joe [Sem:0]	
		SPS2201_2 (JO)   BLOGGS, Joe	

**Callouts:**

- School and ECU level results are here**: Points to the 'University Reports' sidebar.
- Select the Reporting Period you need**: Points to the 'Available Reporting Periods' list.
- filter the report list by unit code and adjust # of reports per page**: Points to the search and 'Display' controls.
- Reports are listed in order of Unit, Lecturer, Tutor, School.**: Points to the report list.
- Lecturers/Tutors see their reports automatically. Unit Coordinators see all teaching reports in their unit. Course or Campus coordinator access must be set by the school in CUOS.**: Points to the report list.
- A range of university and school trends reports are available here**: Points to the 'UTEI Trends and Comparisons' sidebar.
- report #12 shows your overall satisfaction ratings for lecturer and tutor results over time**: Points to '12. My UTEI OS Summary' in the trends sidebar.
- reports can appear multiple times - one per viewing role**: Points to the multiple entries for the same unit in the report list.
- Course or School coordinators may have access to many individual and school reports. School reports (with various alternative views) are located at the end of the listing.**: Points to the 'all items' reports in the sidebar.

Figure 1. Screenshot of UTEI Dissemination results landing page

### WHO CAN SEE WHAT?

Individual teacher (lecturer or tutor) reports are available to the named teacher, as are the unit reports of the unit in which they taught. These are also viewable by the academic line manager, be that the unit, course or school coordinator, providing systems such as CAPS and CUOS are holding up-to-date information on these roles.

Course or school coordinators will often be presented with many individual unit and teacher reports per Reporting Period, but may find that the school-level reports (listed towards the end) or Trends/Comparisons report #7 provide a quick way to review results.

## HOW ARE THE RESULTS PRESENTED?

Each individual unit, lecturer and tutor report shows the distribution of ratings for each question along the five-point Likert scale. Benchmark results for the unit/school are shown further down the front page of this report. Student comments appear on subsequent pages. There are two alternative ways in which this distribution of individual ratings is summarised for each question: Mean and % Agree.


UTEI Lecturer Report									
UTEIRREP2n Generated on Monday, 4th July 2016 04:50pm									
2016:RP1 - 2016 SEMESTER 1						Page 1 of 2			
Lecturer Name [REDACTED]				Campus ML					
Unit Code [REDACTED]									
Student Responses	N valid	N n/a	Responses (%)					Mean	% Agree
			SD	D	N	A	SA		
1 The lecturer was well organised <i>(The lecturer was well prepared and the unit delivery reflected this)</i>	15	1	0	0	0	33	67	83	100
2 The lecturer communicated clearly <i>(The lectures presented, and instructions given, were able to be understood and followed)</i>	15	1	0	7	7	27	60	70	87

Figure 2. Extract from Lecturer report

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN SCORE AND % AGREE SCORE?

These are two alternative ways of summarising student ratings along the Likert-style response frame. (see figure 2). ECU has typically focused on the Mean score. The alternative metric, %Agree, represents the proportion of responses which are "Agree" or "Strongly Agree". The correlation between the two summary measures is very high ( $r > 0.95$ ). Figure 3 shows the two measures plotted against each other for 2014 units with response numbers of 10 or more. One advantage of the Mean is that it does not suffer the same ceiling effect experienced by the % Agree measure, and common in smaller classes. Arguably, the mean also preserves information by retaining the distinction between, for example, "Strongly Disagree" and "Neither Agree nor Disagree", a distinction which the %Agree measure discards. The %Agree measure, however, is arguably more intuitive, and often easier to report.

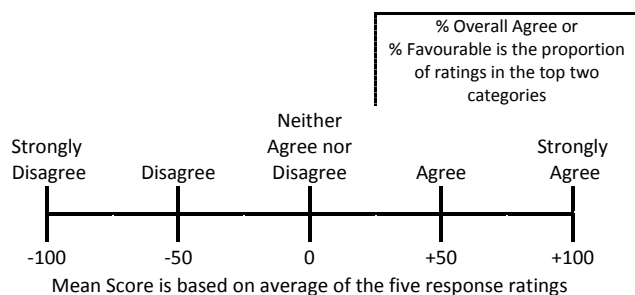


Figure 2. UTEI response scale

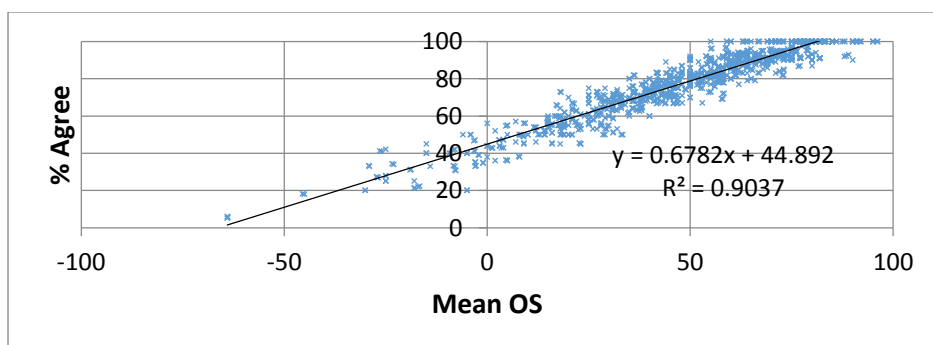


Figure 3. Unit Mean OS plotted against Unit %Agree OS (where N>9)

## WHAT IS A GOOD RESULT?

Since the mean scores are on a 200-point scale from -100 to +100, then if the mean score is close to 50, on average, respondents selected agree from the response scale. With larger numbers of responses, an average mean score of around 50 equates to roughly 80% overall agreement (i.e. 'strongly agree' or 'agree'). Overall ECU averages for "satisfied with the **unit**" are typically around 50, and for **lecturer and tutor**, around 60.

Some rules of thumb:

- Mean scores of around 30 or less (approx. 65% agreement) on either unit or teacher measures suggest room for improvement. Such scores fall roughly within the bottom 10% of unit ratings and bottom 5% of teacher ratings.
- At the other end of the scale, "satisfied with unit" scores above 65 (approx. 90% agree) suggest a unit in good health from a student point of view. Such scores are generally among the top one third of units. For teacher satisfaction ratings (lecturer and tutor), an equivalent level would be around 75 (approx 94% agreement), above which the top one third of teacher ratings typically lie.

Look at the distribution of ratings for each question, as well as the summary scores. There will generally be some variation in responses. Students have different experiences, and do not necessarily interact with questionnaires in the same way (one student's Strongly Agree is more freely given than another's). Significant polarising in ratings is worth having a think about: are there reasons for stark differences in student sentiment? If it is only one or two students who appear to provide poor ratings on a question, you need to assess whether or not that is worth paying a great deal of attention to.

## HOW DO MY RESULTS COMPARE?

Individual teacher/unit reports include a school Mean Overall Satisfaction score as a comparison. The University Reports to the right hand side of the landing page show these for each school, with the 'all items' reports located here also showing school-level results by each item on the standard UTEI questionnaires (not just the overall satisfied score).

Figures 4 and 5 show distributions of results over a year for the Overall Satisfied item for Unit and for Lecturer/Tutor respectively. They have been 'smoothed' by excluding results based on unit offerings with less than 10 responses, which tend to be far more variable and cluster around natural mean points (e.g. 0, 33, 50, 67, 100).

These distribution graphs are based on 2014 results, but are very typical of most years, and give a good sense of the spread of results across units and teachers. Clearly, ECU students are generally located toward the satisfied end of the scale.

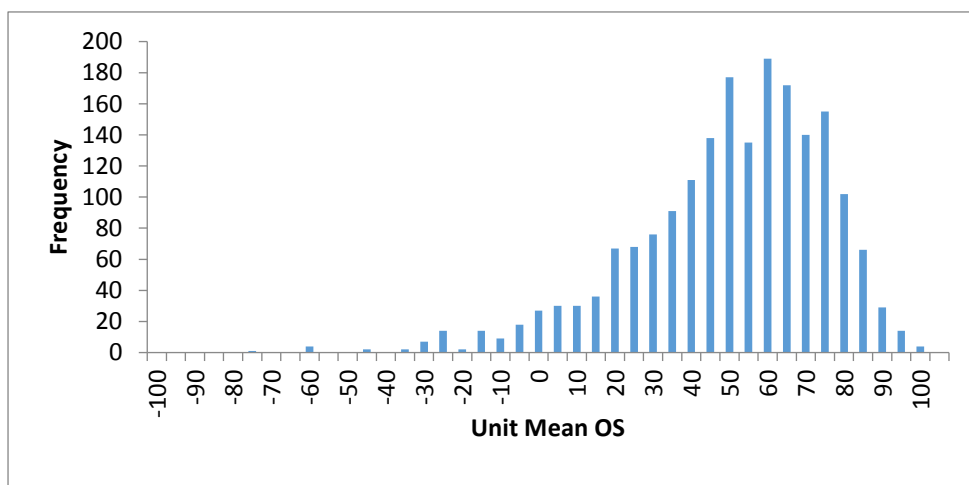
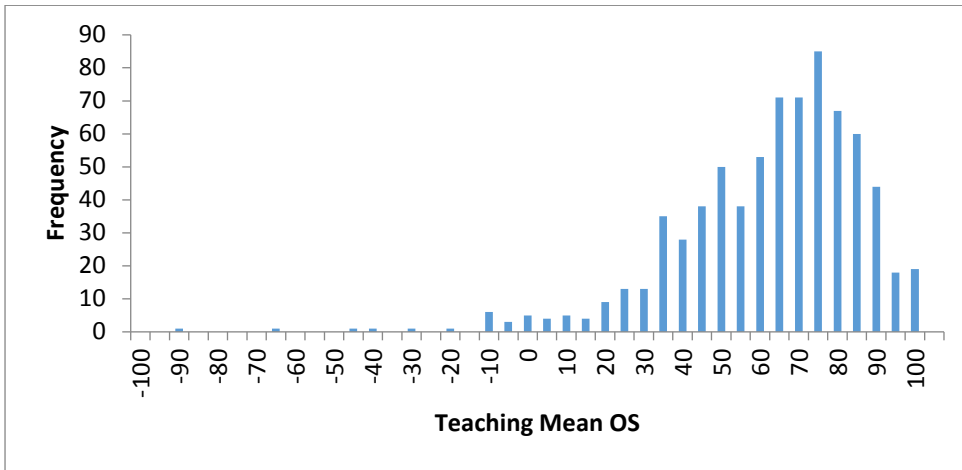


Figure 4. Distribution of Unit Mean OS results for 2014 units (where N > 9).



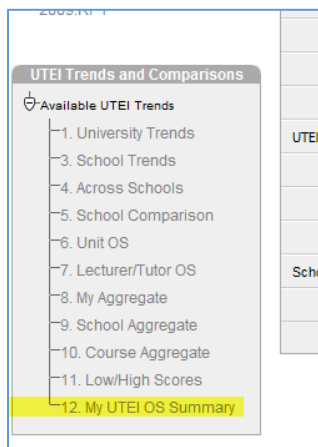
**Figure 5. Distribution of Teaching Mean OS 2014 results by teacher (where N >9)**

Note: While these results are from 2014, this distribution pattern is typical of any UTEI year.

### COMPARING DIFFERENT SCORES

In comparing results between surveys, or against benchmarks such as school averages, differences of less than 5 on the Meanscore, or 3% on the %Agree measure are generally trivial. For scores based on 20 or fewer responses, differences should be greater than, say, Meanscore = 10 or %Agree=5 to be regarded as non-negligible. Scores based on single figure response numbers become technically even less 'reliable', and should be treated even more cautiously.

### SCORES OVER TIME



Probably the best way to get a quick overview of your results over time is through the *My UTEI OS Summary* report.

This report is a single page, condensed view of Overall Satisfied results by unit over years. Individual teacher results are averaged over multiple units and semesters, and school and ECU averages are provided for comparison. For more detailed analysis, taking in multiple questionnaire items and student comments, it's best to make use of the full individual reports from the relevant units. And, of course, consider the context and how it might vary. (First time teaching the unit? Student cohort differences over time? Technical/logistical issues in the unit?)

### WHAT IS A GOOD RESPONSE RATE?

The average rate of response for UTEIs is around 30% to 40% for ECU overall (though this can vary widely from unit to unit). For larger units, or for aggregating results at school or course level, this is generally going to provide a reliable measure of student sentiment. However, for smaller units the aim should be to have a majority of students complete UTEIs. The smaller the number of responses, the more likely extreme ratings will impact the summary results. ECU tries to manage the number of surveys students are asked to complete, and prioritises UTEIs, but it can be difficult to persuade students that this is worthwhile exercise. The best response rates are typically found for units where teaching staff have stressed to students that they value the feedback and do consider it when reflecting on the unit and how improvements might be made. Providing new students with examples of real changes made that were informed by student feedback is even better. This can be done in-class and via blackboard and the unit plan.

Where results are based on small numbers of respondents, some level of caution should be applied to interpretation.. Like most surveys, we can never assume that measurement in UTEIs is error-free, even though most analyses indicates they are broadly valid and reliable. Technically, error due to sampling does become more of a concern with small numbers due to sampling bias. Such error can be either positive or negative in direction. If you tend to teach smaller classes, then it's important to try and scan for trends across multiple unit/teacher evaluations, even if your response rates are robust.

### **WHAT ABOUT STUDENT COMMENTS?**

While the ratings might help alert teachers to relative strengths or weaknesses in areas such as as clarity of goals, good organisation, approachability, many staff find that the real value of student feedback can be in the comments.

Approximately 70% of ECU students who complete UTEI surveys provide comments along with their ratings, which is a positive sign that most students completing UTEIs are actually engaging. It is worth looking to see if particular issues are cropping up in student comments. It's quite feasible that students in the same class may provide conflicting suggestions/comments. You will need to use your professional judgement in weighing what students say.

Occasionally you may see comments you think are unfair. The communications around the UTEIs (including the instructions alongside the comments text boxes, the student UTEI FAQ, and the invitation emails) do stress to students that they should be respectful and constructive in their feedback, and that ECU reserves the right to remove anything deemed offensive.

ECU does not attempt to censor students' UTEI comments prior to release, preferring to provide guidance about the appropriate way to engage in the feedback process. While identifying colourful language would be relatively straightforward, interpretation of comments can be very subjective and context-bound. Research on student evaluation comments suggests obviously identifiable unprofessional ad-hominem comments are relatively small in number. (e.g. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10734-014-9716-2>)

Nevertheless, many staff can feel quite vulnerable when perusing their student feedback. It's important to try and avoid taking critical feedback too personally. With over 20,000 students, we cannot expect every last one to be reasonable and balanced the whole time. This article offers some interesting perspectives on the issue <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/faculty-evaluation/cruel-student-comments-seven-ways-soothe-sting/>

### **FURTHER READING ON STUDENT RATINGS/EVALUTIONS**

One of the foremost researchers in student evaluations/ratings of teaching effectiveness is William E. Cashin. His 2014 summary of most of the key issues explored in the literature can be found here.

[http://www.ideaedu.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/IDEA%20Papers/IDEA%20Papers/PaperIDEA\\_50.pdf](http://www.ideaedu.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/IDEA%20Papers/IDEA%20Papers/PaperIDEA_50.pdf)

The summary touches on issues such as:

- Validity and reliability studies
- Ratings and their relationship to grades
- Difficulty/workload
- Class size

While the summary, and most of the research it cites, is broadly supportive of student evaluations of teaching, there is a general agreement that student evaluations should be seen as only one source of information regarding learning/teaching effectiveness. Teacher self-reports, student outcomes, teaching materials, supervisor/peer/colleague review are all potentially valuable.

## **DO YOU WANT TO DISCUSS YOUR UTEI RESULTS?**

You are encouraged to talk to trusted colleagues about your UTEI results. You are also welcome to contact the Centre for Learning and Teaching [clt@ecu.edu.au](mailto:clt@ecu.edu.au) or David Collings, Surveys Manager, PQESC [d.collings@ecu.edu.au](mailto:d.collings@ecu.edu.au).

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