Report of the UK Senate Teaching & Course Evaluation Implementation Ad-Hoc Committee

March 2016

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At the 9 March 2015 meeting of University Senate, senators voted to approve a new version of the Teaching and Course Evaluation (TCE; see Appendix A).The new version allows UK to have a common instrument to assess course and instructional quality, and ensures that all units and faculty members assess the curricular quality within their respective disciplines. In addition to a "standard" set of items, the new version will feature (a) a 5-point rating scale; and (b) summary reports detailing the total course enrollment, response count, mean/median scores, and graphical displays of ratings.

In the Spring of 2016, the UK Senate Council formed the Teacher Course Evaluation Implementation Ad-Hoc Committee (TCE-AIC) with the charge of developing an implementation plan for the entire university. It was expected that the recommendations of this committee would be presented to the Teaching Effectiveness Committee chaired by Dr. Lineberry. After discussion and approval, the recommendations would then be voted on by the University Senate.

The committee discussed and voted on a number of major issues and recommendations, including:

1) **Availability of TCE results**
TCE results (as approved by UK Faculty Senate rules) shall be made available to students and faculty as follows:

   a) Only numerical ratings shall be made available to students, i.e., no written comments; and
   b) Both numerical and written comments shall be made available to faculty, department chairs and deans.
   c) To safeguard student anonymity and comply with FERPA, any results (numerical ratings and written comments) for classes with < 5 TCE responses shall not be made available to anyone. However, results will contribute to aggregate UK, College, and Departmental TCE means.

2) **TCE Grade Release Policy**
   By a vote of 6-1, the TCE-AIC recommends:
Students who complete a TCE for a course will have access to the final course grade as soon as it becomes available. Students who do not complete a TCE for a given course (Note: combined lecture/lab courses involve two separate TCEs) will receive their corresponding grade 8 days after the deadline for the submissions of grades as set by the Registrar's office.

   Example: Spring 2016 deadline for the submissions of grades is midnight on May 9. Student failing to complete the TCE would have to wait until May 17 to get access to their grades.

The release of grade policy acts in a similar fashion to what are referred to as "holds" at UK; students receive a consequence for not fulfilling a specific requirement of the university. However, while the release of grade policy would delay the receipt of grades for 8 days, the 28 current "holds" at UK (see Appendix B) prevent a student from registering/dropping courses, as well as provide a warning notification to Admissions should a former student with an active hold reapply for admission. Finally, the Office of the Registrar will not release a transcript or diploma for students with these holds.

Note: other schools that have a university-wide delayed grading policy include Harvard, Yale, Ball State Northern Kentucky University, the University of Oregon, Michigan State, Stanford University, and Boston College. Specific examples of these existing policies are presented in Appendix C.

Any student wishing to appeal this policy could file an appeal to a TCE Appeals Committee following the guidelines that would be determined for that committee.

3) **TCE Form**

    a. **Opt-Out Alternative for Questions**
    By a vote of 5-0, it was agreed that each question will provide an "opt-out" option.

    b. **Opt-Out Alternative Label**
    By a vote of 8-0, it was agreed that the "opt-out" option will be "choose not to rate".

4) **Procedural Issues for Completing TCE**
    a. **Location of Filling out TCE**
    By a vote of 7-0, the TCE-AIC recommends:

    Course instructors will decide whether or not to dedicate in-class time to completing TCEs.

    b. **Instructor Presence**
    By a vote of 7-0, the TCE-AIC recommends:

    If class time is used to administer TCEs, all instructors must not be present in the classroom.

    c. **Incentives for students**
    By a vote of 7-0, the TCE-AIC recommends:

    Instructors may not offer additional incentives (e.g., food, extra credit) for TCE completion.

5) **Additional TCE Questions**

a. **Institutional Evaluation Questions (Required)**
Any required questions from university units (e.g., UKCore, Distance Learning) to be included in the TCE will adopt the same 5-point scale approved by the University Senate for the TCE.

b. **Supplemental Evaluation Questions (Optional)**
By a vote of 6-0, the TCE-AIC recommends that no more than 10 additional questions be allowed from Colleges, Departments, and/or individual instructors; allocation of these items, when necessary, should be determined within each academic unit.

Optional supplemental questions shall be added sparingly and should not replicate existing content; these questions might focus on discipline-specific and course-specific pedagogical innovations.

Again, supplemental questions will use the same 5-point scale approved by the Senate for the TCE, where applicable.

c. **Submitting Questions**
By a vote of 6-0, the TCE-AIC recommends that all supplemental questions must be submitted to UKAT by the first day of each semester.

d. **Ordering of TCE Questions**
The Standard 15 questions approved by the Senate will always appear first on the TCE – prior to any additional items.

e. **TCE Completion**
By a vote of 5-1, the TCE-AIC recommends that all questions (i.e., Standard + Institutional + Supplemental) be answered for a student to have immediate access to their grades.

6) **Exemptions to Completing the TCE**
By a vote of 7-1 the TCE-AIC recommends that certain courses with non-traditional delivery, such as those listed below, be exempt from using the UK Senate-approved TCE (alternative assessments of curricular and instructional quality are presumed):

Independent Study
Field-Based Study
Experiential Education
Clinical Practicum (e.g., medical clerkships)
Study Abroad
Residential courses (e.g., 748, 749, 767, 768)
Research courses

7) Changing the Campus Culture about the TCE

The TCE-AIC was unanimous in its view that these recommendations alone may not achieve the desired results, and that a concomitant change is needed in the campus culture regarding the TCE. Historically, it appears that students often do not take the TCE seriously and, as a result, do not provide valuable feedback on course and instructional quality. For example, at UK for Fall 2015, there were 1141 reports that were not generated because of less than 5 responses. Of these, 553 reports would have be generated if the number of students invited (this was 5 or more) would have responded. Compounding this problem is prior data from UK and other schools that suggest moving from a paper to an online format typically decreases response rates. A concerted effort should be made to highlight for learners the value of the TCE - both with regard to course design and delivery improvements, and for promotion and tenure decisions.

It is equally important to educate faculty about the TCE and how resulting data are used for administrative purposes. In addition, our committee strongly encourages all UK units to view TCE results as only *one* means of evaluating courses and instructors - and that additional performance metrics be used toward this end, particularly in P&T decisions.

To initiate a campus-wide culture change regarding the TCE process, it will be necessary for a standing University Senate committee, a unit on campus (e.g., Provost's office), or a joint committee to:

    a. spearhead efforts to publicize the importance of the TCE
    b. develop a TCE website with instructions and FAQs for faculty and students
    c. introduce the topic during K-Week informational sessions
    d. offer guidelines for faculty discussions about the TCE to classes
    e. offer informational sessions on stakeholders and uses of TCE data at UK
    f. determine the nature of TCE email reminders to students and faculty
    g. determine the language to be used as a prelude to the TCE itself
    h. strategically imbed positively-worded language concerning the TCE on webpages with high student traffic
    i. coordinate annual reviews of the TCE process and deal with any related problems, issues, or concerns
    j. develop a set of faculty guidelines on the merits of completing the TCE in class versus remotely.

Please note that whichever of the three options option is chosen, representatives from CELT and the Registrar should be included

While we applaud and recognize the complete redesign of the TCE as long overdue, and have tried to reflect deeply on its use and the culture in which any such system is embedded, it must be acknowledged that no perfect set of TCE questions or process of implementation exists. More challenging still is the transformation of the broader campus culture surrounding the TCE.

However, we feel strongly that student learning, curricular improvement, and justifiable P&T decisions are most attainable with the revised TCE and the aforementioned

recommendations. Indeed, these recommendations must be considered as a work in progress and should be subject to rigorous, ongoing, and systematic evaluation. We welcome productive suggestions for further improvements to the TCE implementation and future efforts to positively impact the local culture regarding this endeavor. Only in this manner can we hope to make useful changes that will meet the needs of all relevant stakeholders.

Appendix A
University Senate approved version of the Teaching and Course Evaluation (TCE

Student Items
1-S) My classification is _____ (year in school as undergrad, year in school as grad)
2-S) My main reason(s) for taking this course is that it _____.
    (is required course, is elective, covers a topic I am interested in)
    Note: students will be able to select more than one answer
3-S) My expected grade in the course is a(n) _____.
4-S) Hours I spent per week on the course (excluding class time)
Common Items
Course Organization and Planning
1-C) The course was well organized.
2-C) The instructor was prepared for class.

Clarity, Communication Skills
3-C) The instructor presented material clearly.
4-C) The instructor responded to questions in a manner that aided my understanding of the material.
5-C) The instructor provided material at an appropriate pace.

Student-Instructor Interaction, Rapport
6-C) The instructor treated students with respect.
7-C) Class meetings contributed to my learning of course content.
8-C) The instructor asked questions that stimulated deep consideration of the course content.

Grading and Examinations, Evaluation
9-C) Grading in the course was fair.
10-C) Assessments (e.g., tests, quizzes, papers, homework, projects) reflected course material.
11-C) I understood why I received my grade in the course

Summary Items
12-C) I consider NAME OF COURSE to be a quality course.
13-C) INSTRUCTOR NAME provided quality teaching.

Open-Ended Comments
1-OEC) Which aspects of the course/instructor were most helpful and why?
2-OEC) Which aspects of the course/instructor would you change and why/how?
3-OEC) Other comments?

Appendix B

The following financial and the CATS safety survey holds programmatically prevent a student from registering/dropping courses, as well as provide a warning notification to Admissions should a former student with an active hold reapply for admission. The Office of the Registrar will not release a transcript or diploma for students with these holds.

Hold	Hold Type (Description)	Message Text
9211	Col of Design Studio Keys	Col of Design Studio Keys Hold - Call 257-7617
9220	C.A.T.S. Hold	C.A.T.S. #seesafety Incomplete: questions see www.uky.edu/CATSseesafety
9502	Past Due Student Account	Delinquent Account - please view balance online or call (859) 257-3406
9503	Agricultural Library Hold	Agriculture Library Hold - Call 257-2758
9504	Young Library Hold	Young Library Hold - Call (859) 218-2025
9505	Law Library Hold	Law Library Hold - Call 257-8359
9506	Medical Library Hold	Medical Library Hold - Call 323-5309
9507	Fraternity/Sorority Hold	Fraternity/Sorority Hold - Call 257-3151
9508	Loan Exit Counseling Hold	Required Loan Exit Counseling not completed - Call (859) 257-3406
9509	FHP Loan Past Due	Federal Health Professions Long-Term Loan Past Due - Call (859) 257-3406
9510	Perkins Loan Past Due	Federal Perkins Long-Term Loan Past Due - Call (859) 257-3406
9511	Parking Citation Hold	Unpaid Parking Citation Fees Hold - Call 257-5757
9512	Univ Hlth Svcs Acct Hold	Health Services Past Due Account Hold - Call 218-3204
9514	School of Music Hold	School of Music Hold - Call 257-8181
9515	MS Uniform Acct Hold	MS Uniforms Hold - Call 257-3847
9516	Art Equipment Hold	Art Equipment Hold - Call 859-257-8151
9517	UK Band Dept Hold	UK Band Department Hold - Call 257-2263
9518	Real Property Hold	Real Property Hold - Call 257-8649
9519	Long Term Loans	Long Term Loans Hold - Call (859) 257-3406
9520	Housing Apartments	Housing Apartments Hold - Call 7-3721
9521	Housing	Housing Hold - Call 7-1866
9522	IT Telephone Charge Hold	IT Telephone Charge Hold - Call 257-4595
9524	Ret Chk Dining/Plus Acct	Plus Account Hold - please call the PLUS account office 257-6159
9525	Stu Acct Ext Collection	Student Account External Collection - please call (859) 257-3406
9526	Agricul Equip or Camp Fee	College of Agriculture Hold for Equip or Camp Fee - call 859-257-3468
9527	Student Acct Payment Due	Student account payment is due. Review account balance for details.
9528	Student Loan Past Due	Student Loan Past Due - call (859) 257-3406
9529	KY Dept of Revenue	KY Dept of Revenue Collection - please call (859) 257-3406

Appendix C
Examples of Existing University-wide Grade-Release Policies

Harvard University

http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~evals/evaluate.htm

If you can't complete your evaluations all at once, don't worry - we'll save your responses until you come back. Course evaluations remain open until after exams end. Beginning December 23, if you have completed all of your evaluations, your grades will be released to you (as they are submitted by the faculty member). On January 4, all grades will be released (if they have been submitted by the faculty member).

Yale University

http://www.yale.edu/sfas/registrar/oce_faqs_student.html

Do I have to complete the evaluation?

You are expected to complete an online evaluation, or to decline to do so on the online form, for every eligible course. Yale College regulations state:

For the advancement of teaching in Yale College, anonymous teaching evaluations are made available through the Yale University Student Information Systems. Students are expected to participate in this evaluation process for any Yale College course in which they are enrolled. Students who withdraw from a course after midterm are invited (but not required) to participate. (Academic Regulations, Enrollment in Courses)

and

Early access to recorded grades is available on line to students in any Yale College course for which they have completed or actively declined to complete the online course evaluation form through the Yale University Student Information Systems. (Academic Regulations, General Regulations Concerning Grades and Transcripts)

Ball State University

http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/provost/facresources/crseresponsefaqs#21

Are students required to complete an evaluation to get a grade?

No, students are not required to submit an evaluation. However, in fall 2012, students who do not complete evaluations will have access to their final grades delayed by several days. This change is meant to encourage complete participation in the course evaluation process, which provides

feedback critical to improving the learning experiences of future students. We know that this feedback is important to the faculty, and we want to be sure that you have what you need.

Northern Kentucky University (see page 16)

http://admissions.nku.edu/content/dam/adultlearner/docs/17588EdCoutreachSBSstudentHandbook.pdf

Course Evaluations
Students are **required** to complete online course evaluations at the end of each semester for each enrolled SBS class. You may access the evaluation site at *eval.nku.edu*. Students who do not complete these evaluations (or opt out) should expect a hold (beyond the normal date of availability) on their grade and transcript access via myNKU.

University of Oregon

https://registrar.uoregon.edu/course-evaluations/faq

How does the grade release system work?

Students who complete (or decline) each of their evaluations by 7:00am Monday morning before Finals Week, will be able to begin viewing their grades Monday evening of Finals Week. Students who do not complete (or decline) each of their evaluations by the deadline will have a "grade hold" placed on their record. This means that all grades from all terms, including official and unofficial transcripts, will be unavailable to the student until the Friday after the grading deadline (the week following Finals week). Grade holds are automatically released for all students on that Friday.