

Summary of FLEX student feedback

Overview

This document provides an initial summary of feedback from CQU distance education students about the print and online learning materials they have experience at CQU. The feedback was gathered in late 2007.

Background

In mid-November 2007 an email was sent to all Central Queensland University (CQU) students enrolled in T2, 2007 as a FLEX (i.e. distance education) student. The students were asked to give feedback on the print and online learning materials they have experienced at CQU.

Student feedback was given via an anonymous discussion forum made up of two main sections "Print Materials" and "Online or web-based learning". Each of these sections contained three discussion boards with the titles:

- What did you like or find useful?
- What caused you problems?
- What would you like to see?

The students were asked to post whatever they thought appropriate reflecting on their experience studying via distance education at CQU. All student contributions are anonymous.

A follow up email was sent two weeks after the initial invitation. As of the 14th of December 2007, 522 students have visited the forum with a total 753 student contributions.

Viewing student contributions

Staff: Most CQU staff should be able to view a copy of this discussion forum using their normal login details at the following URL http://webfuse.cqu.edu.au/YaBB/Discussion/Staff_View_Student_Experience/

This is not the forum the students are contributing to, it is a copy and retains the students' anonymity. Staff are able to post to this forum, however, their posts will also be anonymous.

Students: CQU students can see the comments and contribute their own perspective at the original discussion forum located here http://webfuse.cqu.edu.au/YaBB/Discussion/Student_Experience

If there are any problems with accessing these forums, please contact David Jones (d.jones@cqu.edu.au)

About the analysis

The following summary of results was generated through a simple quantitative content analysis process in late November. At that stage there had been just over 700 posts by students and 439 students visiting the forum.

The simple content analysis process used these steps:

- All the comments by students placed into a spreadsheet.
- Each comment assigned multiple "tags" based on what was mentioned.
The "video" tag was associated with any comment that mentioned some form of online lectures be it video,

audio, podcast, downloadable etc. A + or – was added to the tag to indicate a positive or negative mention. e.g. "video-" would indicate someone said they hated video lectures or had bad experiences with them.

- An individual comment could be assigned multiple tags as students mentioned multiple topics.
- The topics mentioned were then added up and a small amount of merging of smaller topics (less than 2 or 3 counts).

A single person performed this initial analysis in late November. It is not the final analysis. Early in 2008 a small group will perform a more disciplined analysis.

Summary

The following table gives a summary of the tag count in descending order. Unless indicated the student comments all indicate a positive comment.

Tag	Count	Description
video	106	Some form of online lecture in video, audio or whatever format makes it easy and simply for DE students to get the "insights" given in a lecture
response	86	Student queries get quick, effective and polite responses from academics.
Clarity	66	Clear information about the expectations of the course and assignments. Including making copies of previous assignments and exams available to students. Also includes consistency of information between different sources and also up to date information
Guides	55	Request for study guides. (which could be combined with "Print" to get to a count of 88)
Feedback	53	Good quality, consistent feedback on assignments provided in a timely manner
Print	33	Resources that are essentially print documents (study guides, course profiles etc) should be distributed as print documents, not online.
discussionBoard	30	A well-used, responsive discussion board.
Oasis	27	Online assignment submission and return of assignments
examResults	25	Much more information available about exams including copies of old exams, results breakdowns of how students went on the exam and students receiving copies of their exams.
Ready	21	Having all material ready at least by the start of term, if not earlier
Webmail	17	Comments about the CQU student webmail system. (mix of negative and positive)
Library	17	Comments about the library (mix of negative and positive)
dvd/downloadable	17	Having course material available for download and/or on a DVD/CD.
Books	16	Issues around textbooks including unsuitability, cost, purchase etc (mix of negative and positive)
Solutions	13	Having solutions to study guide and tutorial questions available from the start.
sameCost	12	Concerns that distance students incur the same cost as on-campus students but don't get equivalent service.
groupWork	8	Comments around group work (mix of negative and positive)
Monday	6	Having assignments due on Monday, rather than Friday.
Teletutorial	4	Comments about the benefits of tele-tutorials
Schedules	4	Comments about the benefits of good study schedules.
Erolment	4	Comments about the e-rolment system (mix of negative and positive)
Clc	4	Positive comments about the communications learning centre and its staff.
t3	3	Requests for more courses to be available over Term 3.

Tag	Count	Description
Gradebook	3	Requests for more staff to use Blackboard's or other systems to make grades/results available to students.
Flexibility	3	Requests for greater flexibility in courses and delivery.
Courses	3	Issues around the selection of courses
communicationSkills	3	The need for and benefits from courses providing assistance in essay writing etc.
chat	3	Use of online chat
mycqu	3	Comments about MyCQU (mix of negative and positive)
format	2	Issues around Office 2007 and other electronic file formats
campus	2	Requests to make use of international campuses by DE students