

Guidelines
Open-Ended Mid-Term and End-of-Term Student Evaluations
NMSU Teaching Academy

To get richer feedback from students, you can administer a mid-term evaluation at least once, and repeat its use at the end of the semester, along with your departmental evaluation. Mid-term evaluations are important because your current students are an important source of feedback that can help you to adjust your teaching for that specific group of students. Open-ended evaluations are also important at the end of term to collect richer data for the entirety of the course.

1. Schedule your mid-term evaluation after your students have had some form of assessment (a quiz, test or assignment) so they have an idea about how well they are performing in your course.
2. These evaluations should be given at the beginning—not the end—of class so students can take their time with it. Ask students *verbally* to write at least one full paragraph for each question so you will have a fuller picture of their experience in your class. Then, step into the hall to wait until they tell you they are done. It takes about 10 minutes of class time to conduct the evaluation this way.
3. To protect anonymity in a small class, you may choose to administer this instrument online—or have the Teaching Academy (teaching@nmsu.edu) tabulate and summarize the evals for you. To do that, the Academy needs to know when you are going to give the evals, in advance, because evals need to be turned around in 48 hours.
4. Alternately, you might want to have the students discuss what they wrote in groups and summarize their findings for you. Students speak for their groups with more confidence than they speak for themselves. And you can ask students questions. For example, if they say you give unclear instructions, you can say “Please give me an example so that I can make it clearer to you.” Then you can go home and think about that set of instructions and make it clearer in the next class. Do not respond to anything they say on this first day; just listen to their feedback and ask questions to clarify. When you communicate with your class in this way, it is a real moment of truth for the class. It takes about 15-20 minutes of class time to conduct the evaluation this way.
5. After class, read the evaluations and summarize them. To summarize the comments, keep a list of how many times each comment was made and pay most attention to the frequent comments.
6. Reflect on the most common responses to the open-ended questions. How can you address some of them without compromising your educational objectives?
7. Then, summarize the information on the bottom part of the form. Generally, on a four-point scale, anything above 3.5 means your course is going very well and anything below a 3.0 means it is going less well. You will also want to look at the distribution and make sure that it is not bi-polar, e.g. half high and half low.
8. As for minutes studied, 30 minutes of study *per day* is about the national norm (Hutchins, Marchese, and Wright, 1991) so anything above 60 minutes means your course is rigorous; anything below 30 minutes means you may need to expect more of your students.
9. Finally, in the next class meeting, open class by announcing the changes you will be making. Post them on the board and stick with your promises like glue. If there are any changes they ask for that you will not be making because you don’t want to compromise their education, tell them so and why. Mention any changes they suggested that would help their own learning as well.
10. Note that your evaluations will usually be higher at the end of the semester than they were at mid-term—because they can see how hard you are trying (Cohen 1980).

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This rubric is updated regularly. Please use the latest form, which can be found at
teaching.nmsu.edu/resources/rubrics.

