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| **Policy Title:** | Student Evaluations Policy |
| **Description:** | The purpose of evaluations is to provide information that will improve the quality of the educational experience of current and future students in MIE. This policy identifies how student evaluations are used by students, staff and Marino Institute of Education Leadership Team. |
| **Author (Position):** | Registrar and Vice President of Academic Affairs |
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| **Approved By:** | MIE Governing Body |
| **Policy Approval Date:** | September 2020 |
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# Student Evaluations Policy

## 1. Context

Marino Institute of Education (MIE) is a linked provider institute of Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin (hereafter referred to as Trinity), where Trinity is the Designated Awarding Body (DAB). As a DAB Trinity is required under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012 to ensure that each Award it makes is recognised within the National Framework of Qualifications (see §43. (3)) and that a learner acquires the standard of knowledge, skill or competence associated with the level of award within the Framework before the award is made (see §43. (4)).

Student evaluation on undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses is essential for ongoing improvement and is a key component of the Institute's Quality Assurance procedure. Multiple methods of feedback may be used, including hard copy questionnaires, online surveys, focus groups and meetings with class representatives to provide students with the opportunity to give evaluations on their academic and educational experience.

This complements feedback on students' experience and on programmes, and modules that is received from external examiners and regular programme reviews. These are not covered by this policy. Data from the externally validated National StudentSurvey.ie is analysed separately and considered by Academic Council and MIE ACDC. However, because the content of National StudentSurvey.ie is not designed by MIE it falls outside the scope of this policy.

## 2. Purpose

2.1. The purpose of evaluations is to provide information that will improve the quality of the educational experience of current and future students in MIE.

2.2. This policy affirms MIE's commitment to monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning on programmes it delivers.

2.3. This policy identifies how student evaluations will be used by students, staff and the MIE Leadership Team.[1]

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[1] See Leadership and Heads of Department Forum Terms of Reference

## 3. Benefits

3.1. The quality of students' learning experience should be monitored on an on-going basis by MIE.

3.2. Student evaluations provide students with the opportunity to give feedback on their experience of the module including placement, assessment, programme, services and other aspects of their experience at MIE.

## 4. Scope

This document sets out guidelines and procedures which may be followed for the preparation and conduct of focus groups, surveys/questionnaires or other methods for the purpose of evaluations on student modules, subjects and/or programmes.

Refer to the MIE External Examiner and Quality Assurance of Validated Programmes policies for information on external evaluations of programmes. The student evaluations described here complement findings from the National StudentSurvey.ie.

## 5. Principles

5.1. The purpose of evaluations is to provide information that will improve the quality of the educational experience of current and future students in MIE.

5.2. All modules should be evaluated summatively and formatively (e.g. midway) so that current students as well as future students can see the benefits of evaluations during a module.

5.3. Both staff and students should be comfortable with student evaluations and both should see the benefits of giving and receiving feedback.

5.4. All facilitators and participants must follow the MIE Dignity and Respect Policy.

5.5. In order to help lecturers understand and respond appropriately to student evaluations, training and/or support should be provided to maximise the impact of the feedback.

5.6. Feedback is not an end in itself, it should be used to enhance the quality of the module, subject or programme. Students should always receive feedback, especially on any changes that have been introduced as a result of the feedback they provided.

## 6. Definitions

6.1. <u>Focus Group</u>: A focus group is a means to gather information and feedback from a small group (typically five to eight) of students regarding a module, subject or programme of study. Focus groups may be used as a stand-alone method of student evaluation or may be used in conjunction with other methods such as surveys, feedback from student representatives, feedback from the Staff-Student Liaison Council[2] etc.

## 7. Policy

Methods for obtaining student evaluations may be individual or in a group/class setting and include:

i. Oral individual evaluation (synchronous): This can be face to face or an online or virtual meeting e.g. Zoom, Virtual Classroom etc.;

ii. Written evaluation: This can be in the form of a feedback form which may be completed in hard copy, via email or online;

iii. Audio and Video evaluation (asynchronous): Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)[3] tools could be used to record audio evaluations;

iv. Questionnaires/Surveys: This could be in the form of a virtual learning environment[3] quiz e.g. on Moodle, SurveyMonkey etc., or via the Quality Assurance Office via a Qualtrics Survey link;

v. Focus Groups: This can be face to face or an online or virtual meeting e.g. Zoom, Virtual Classroom etc.

These methods of evaluations can be used as a stand-alone method of student feedback or in conjunction with each other.

## 8. Procedure

8.1. Focus Groups

8.1.1 Focus groups should be organised and facilitated by an independent facilitator (e.g.postgraduate student trained in leading a focus group could facilitate an undergraduate student group or a part-time lecturer on another course could facilitate undergraduate or postgraduate groups)

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[2] See Staff-Student Liaison Council Policy
[3] See Virtual Learning Environment Policy

8.1.2 Consider the timing of the focus group, e.g. if a focus group is to be used in conjunction with online or hard-copy surveys, then time should be allowed to analyse the survey results and identify theme/s to be discussed by the focus group facilitator.

8.1.3 Students and facilitators should be notified of a focus group meeting two weeks in advance and they should be organised during term times. Focus group participants should be invited via class representatives.

8.1.4 An information sheet will be provided to participants in advance of the focus group meeting outlining the purpose of the focus group, what participation means and how the focus group will contributions to evaluations on the subject, module or programme e.g. if comments/quotes will be anonymous (see Appendix 1).

8.1.5 Focus groups will be formed to represent a diversity of the target group of students.

## 8.2 Timing

8.2.1 Students are informed through their Course Handbook on the arrangements for module, subject or programme evaluations available to that module, subject or programme. This information includes

i.   When feedback is sought;
ii.  The format the feedback will take, i.e. online survey, hard-copy survey, focus-groups, meetings with class-representatives etc.

8.2.2 All modules should be evaluated formatively early to mid-way through the module so that feedback can help improve the experience for current students. This will be initiated by the module lecturer.  Possible ways of doing this are using flashcards at the end of a class, e-mail, anonymous surveys, and/or focus group or interview if necessary.

8.2.2 Class time should be allocated to formative assessment to maximise participation.

8.2.3 Varied approaches to module evaluations should be used to make the process more engaging for students. Intended approaches should be discussed and coordinated at programme board level.

8.3 Follow-up

8.3.1 After the formative evaluation, lecturers should inform students about their response to the evaluation so that students can see how their feedback is leading to changes in a module.

8.3.2 At the start of a module, lecturers should inform students if/how a module has been amended or modified in light of feedback from the previous year's students.

## 9. Responsibility

The Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs oversees the processes for student evaluations at MIE. This document will be reviewed on a regular basis and updated as required.

## 10. Related Documents

10.1. [Leadership and Heads of Department Forum Terms of Reference](#)

10.2. [Staff-Student Liaison Council Policy](#)

10.3. [Dignity and Respect Policy](#)

## Appendix 1 – Template Information Sheet for Student Evaluations

**Information for Participants**

Dear student you are invited to participate in a student evaluations group to provide feedback on <Module Title>/<Programme Title>. Student feedback on their academic and education experience is an Institute requirement. We are seeking participants who represent the broad profile of students in the <Module Title>/<Programme Title> to ensure we have a diversity of views.

The student evaluation group will be held on '<Day>' '<Date>' in <Room Number, Level, Building Name> and will start at <Time> and last approximately <Time/Minutes/Hour>.

The student evaluation group will be facilitated by an independent facilitator, <Title> <Name>. A note taker will be present to record the key points from the meeting so the outcomes can inform actions, if any, to be taken in response to feedback. Participants will not be identified by name or gender, however anonymous students quotes e.g. Student 1 or a Junior Fresh student may be used.

**What is the Purpose of the Student Evaluation Group?**

We are interested in <Topic>

We wish to find out about:

- Point 1

- Point 2

- Point 3

**Do I Have to Take Part?**

No, you do not have to take part. Your participation would be voluntary. If you wish to withdraw after agreeing to take part, you can do so at any time, and you don't have to give a reason.

**Contact**

If you have any additional questions about what taking part means for you, please contact:

<Name>, <Phone No>, <Email Address> and include the Student Evaluation Group for <Module Name>/<Programme Name> in the subject heading of the email.