

University of Maine
Student Evaluation of Teaching Policies and Procedures
Last Updated Nov 12, 2021

Acknowledging that student input is essential in improvement of instruction, the AFUM contract states that faculty conduct student evaluations in each course taught. Specifically, the contract states (Article 10B2):

The parties agree that student input is essential in the improvement of instruction and shall be considered during evaluation. Further, student input is a meaningful part of evaluation. Consequently, Unit members shall conduct evaluations in each course taught.

I. Online Student Evaluation of Teaching System

UMaine implemented the Explorance Blue Course Evaluation System in December 2016. This system includes support for multiple instructors, dynamic timing, and customized survey questions (configurable by instructor, course, department, and/or college), and permits distributed reports based on complex permission settings. UMaine deployed Blue for all online courses at UMaine & UMM starting in spring 2017. Since spring 2017, an increasing number of academic units have also moved to Blue for evaluating in-person courses. As of spring 2020, UMaine and UMM are now using Blue for evaluating all courses – online and in-person.

Currently, UMaine, USM, UMFK, UMA, UMPI and UMM use Explorance Blue for online Student Evaluations of Teaching. Access to Blue through the portal is implemented through UMaine's authentication service and the Blue hosted data center is SOC 2 Type 2 certified.

II. Evaluation Form Items

The AFUM contract indicates that forms must contain a series of questions, each confined to a limited aspect of the unit member's teaching performance. Academic units may develop or revise their own evaluation form or procedure (Article 10, Section B2). Consequently, instructors must use the form identified by their unit, which could be the default form (the 19-item short form for UMaine or the 12-item form for UMM) or a custom form. Instructors are given the option of adding customized questions during a question personalization period.

III. Signed Comments

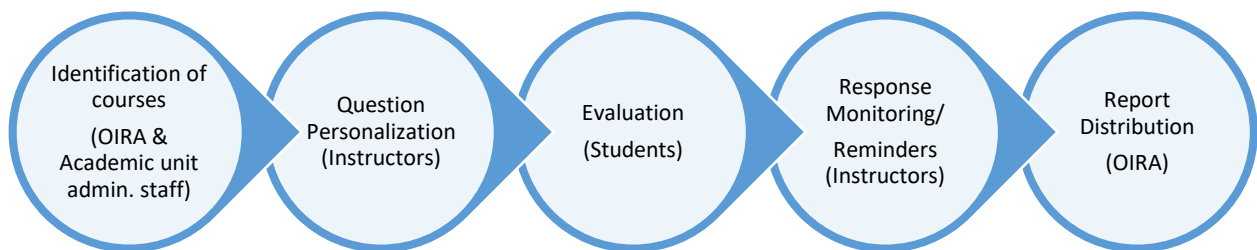
Per the AFUM contract, items that consist of broad solicitation, without limit or direction, to evaluate the instructor's performance shall only be placed in the personnel file when signed by the student who has conducted the evaluation. Consequently, students are given the opportunity to sign their evaluations. In Blue, students are provided a check box item to indicate that they have signed the form and therefore would like their open-ended comments to be included in the instructor's personnel file. De-identified rater-scale results for all students are included in the report for the instructor's personnel file.

IV. Multiple-instructor courses

In cases where courses have multiple instructors, students are asked to evaluate each instructor. There are two sets of questions: a common set of questions relevant to the course and individual sets of questions for instructors. Instructors listed in MaineStreet for administrative purposes only can be excluded from evaluations by request.

V. Online Student Evaluation of Teaching process

The online SET process requires multiple steps as shown in the following figure and described below.



Identification of courses to be evaluated: Courses and associated instructors listed in MaineStreet for a particular semester are automatically evaluated, with the following exceptions: Any course section with fewer than three (3) students will be excluded from the evaluation process, and any of the following course listings (regardless of enrollment) will also be excluded:

- Independent Study (Course Component IND)
- Thesis credits (Course Component THS)
- Travel Abroad (Subject ABD)

Note: If a course section is cross-listed with another in MaineStreet we will not apply the enrollment threshold.

Departments needing an exception to the above course inclusion policy for accreditation compliance or other reasons can make that request by filling out the following form: [SET Departmental Inclusion Requests](#)

Timing. Course lists are added to Blue at the start of each semester and updates in MaineStreet are synced with Blue daily.

Question personalization: Instructors have an opportunity to design personalized questions prior to the evaluation period.

Timing: For standard semester-length courses, question personalization will open at least two weeks prior to the evaluation period – four weeks prior to the end of the course.

Instructors receive an initial email invitation and one reminder prompt. Question personalization closes one hour before the evaluation period begins.

Evaluation: Students are sent emails directing them to Blue for evaluating their courses. The emails include directions for completing the form. Students are also reminded to complete their evaluations when they log into Brightspace.

Timing: Per the AFUM contract (Article 10, Section B2b). For courses scheduled for a full term, the evaluation window is the last two weeks of **classes**. Students receive an invitation email to complete their evaluations the Monday of the second to last week of classes. They receive two additional reminders. Evaluations close at midnight on the last day of classes. Evaluations are not open during finals week. (Alternative schedules are arranged for courses with alternative lengths/schedules.)

To ensure adequate response rates, instructors are encouraged to provide students class time to complete the online SETs, as they would for the paper form.

Response rate monitoring: Instructors can monitor their response rates throughout the evaluation period. They receive an initial email invitation directing them to the response rate monitor in Blue. The email is followed up with two reminders during the evaluation period.

Distribution of Reports. Reports are generated in Blue within two weeks after end-of-semester grades are due to be submitted to the Office of Student Records.

Reports: *Two sets of individualized instructor reports are generated: One report includes the quantitative items from the academic unit form, as well as signed comments. This report is shared with the instructor, academic unit chair/director, and administrative support staff for the unit. The second report includes the personalized questions and unsigned comments. This report is only shared with the instructor.* Instructors receive an email indicating that their reports are ready and are directed to Blue for access. *Reports will not be generated for courses with fewer than two responses.*

In addition, a departmental summary report with question statistics pooled over all courses in a department is shared with department chairs, and a college-level report showing rater-scale results for each instructor in a college is shared with deans.

Data Storage and Access

Confidentiality: Student identity is confidential and not included with responses in instructor reports, except signed comments, which include student names if signed. Student information is deleted from data downloaded from Blue for the purpose of calculating departmental and college norms.

Access to Data:

Reports: Instructor, departmental and dean-level reports are securely stored within Blue or OneDrive. Access is controlled by user-defined roles such that only current instructors, chairs, deans, and administrative staff have access to each level of reporting. OIRA staff

with administrative accounts in Blue also have access to all reports. Access is available via the Blue icon on the UMaine Portal or directly via <https://maine.bluera.com/maine>. Reports can be downloaded as PDF for local storage. In addition, reports for departmental use prior to fall 2019 were downloaded from Blue and stored in UMaine's secure cloud storage solution (currently OneDrive). OIRA staff also have access to this OneDrive folder. Since fall 2019, the academic unit chair/director as well as the unit's administrative support staff member have had direct access to instructor and departmental reports in Blue.

Raw data: Data downloaded from Blue for the purpose of calculating unit and college norms is stored in OneDrive and managed by staff members of the OIRA. Evaluation data collected through the paper forms are combined with the data collected through Blue. Only OIRA staff members have access to these data.